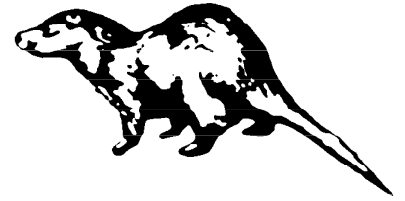


NUFFIELD PRIMARY HISTORY



ROMANS, ANGLO-SAXONS AND VIKINGS IN BRITAIN

CAESAR LANDS

TEACHERS' NOTES

The lesson was the fourth in a term's course on Invaders and Settlers for a class of 32 Year 5 / 6 mixed age and gender pupils. The school has a semi-rural setting. It is located in a small village on the edge of a small industrial town, with a kilometre of fields between it and the built-up area. Pupils are drawn from rural, village and urban homes.

We had taught the same lesson three years earlier to a Year 3 / 4 class: we built on this experience to organise the teaching more effectively.

The class had a clear objective – an understanding of Caesar's landing in Britain, using Caesar's own account in translation. This meant that the pupils had to understand a difficult and challenging text. To engage the pupils we used visualisation, breaking into the text at the paragraph level, and using expressive movement to make sense of the whole text from an enactive perspective. The class teacher, Lorna, and I taught the lesson.

Year group / class

Years 5 and 6. A class of 32 children split evenly between the year groups. The children were benign: we had taught half of them the year before. Fred, the only potentially disruptive pupil, was involved, cheerful and co-operative throughout. All the children were adequate to good readers and writers.

Teaching time

One hour – the lesson was truncated due to the starting of a half-hour French lesson for the class, split into two groups of 15 minutes each.

Learning objectives

For the children to:

- understand what the Roman landing might have meant from the perspective of a Roman soldier in relation to the Celtic pattern of fighting
- deepen their understanding of a difficult and challenging text through engaging with the text via visualisation, précis, and expressive movement
- develop the ability to extract and organise information from these sources and to present it in the form of a written report.

Key Question

- What might it have been like to have been with Caesar as he and his troops landed in Britain?

Resources

Caesar's account of the invasion: one copy per pupil [previously we had tape-recorded it and played the tape to the class]

A3 version of the text, cut up into paragraphs

Pictures of a Roman galley; many topic books contain pictures of Roman ships. There is also a gallery of Roman warships on this Italian website: <http://www.romaeterna.org/galleria/sala2/index.html>

A Peter Connolly reconstruction of the Romans' landing on the beach, based on Caesar's text, in full colour and with exquisite detail. [In April 2003 Nuffield are looking for this picture in order to make it available to go with this lesson.]

Two websites give useful accounts of Caesar's invasions which you may want to use for your own knowledge:

<http://www.athenapub.com/caesar1.htm>

http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_invasion_of_Britain

The Teaching

The children's main learning activity was the use of expressive movement to act out the scenes described by Caesar. The expressive movement was done from the perspective of soldiers on a Roman galley. In expressive movement the children freeze-frame each separate scene, a tableau, as if they were in a photograph. In reading the text we used two techniques: visualisation and the précis of each paragraph in a single phrase or sentence.

Episode 1

Focus: Breaking into the text – ‘Caesar invades’

We gave each pupil a copy of the text, *Caesar invades* and a picture of a Roman galley similar to those Caesar used – this was to aid mental reconstruction and visualisation, and to develop initial understanding.

Visualisation and accuracy: the class was told to shut their eyes so as to visualise each scene in turn, that is, to create a picture of the scene in their minds. To do this, we read through the text a paragraph at a time, giving time for them to try and mentally reconstruct each scene, that is to visualise it.

Next we asked the children to skim read the text, skipping any words or phrases they did not know. They had to come up with a single word or phrase which summed up the text, saying what it was about: this could be a simple reaction to what they had read.

We put the words on the board as an information web, with the title *Caesar lands* at the centre of the network, and the words and phrases in a fan around the centre. This helped the children to build up a holistic mental picture at the word and phrase level.

Episode 2

Focus: Working on a paragraph in groups – expressive movement

Having created an initial understanding, we now wanted to move deeper into the text at paragraph level. We had blown up the text to A3 size and cut it up into eight paragraphs, **A–H**.

We told the class that we were going to split into eight groups in order to make sense of the text and produce a tableau, a freeze frame, like a photograph, of each scene. The freeze frames would then be put together to provide a moving rendition of the invasion: the pupils would start at scene A, then move to scene B, then C and so on, until they reached H.

Organising the eight groups: Lorna sorted out eight good readers to come to the front. These we numbered 1–8. The rest of the pupils were also numbered 1–8, and they formed themselves into the eight numbered groups, with four pupils to a group.

Episode 3

Focus: The tableaux / freeze frames

In turn we called up the groups in random order, as we wanted the rest of the class to guess which particular paragraph in the text the group was presenting in its freeze frame.

Each group did its freeze frame, then the rest of the class had to guess what the freeze frame represented. At every point the pupils had to scan

Caesar's account to try and match the freeze frame with the right paragraph. This part of the lesson went well – much laughter, and, we hope, effective learning.

Episode 4

Focus: *The pupils précis the paragraph, and then read out their paragraphs to provide a summary of the whole text*

We now wanted to work at the phrase or sentence level of the text in terms of each paragraph. We also wanted to use this as a simple way of providing a short account of Caesar's text which we could use for the expressive movement.

Each group had to agree on a phrase or sentence that summed up their paragraph. These they read out in turn to the rest of the class, until we had a complete account of the text. Six of the eight groups worked successfully in producing their précis; two cut and pasted words and phrases. This worked well as a quick way of creating a deeper understanding of the text.

Para +/-	Phrase or sentence [+: précis, - : copied words/sentence]
A+	The Celts send forward their Cavalry and a group of chariots, which they use in fighting
B+	The Romans had to jump into the shallow waters of the sea in full armour ready to fight
C-	'I ordered the warships to be rowed hard and run aground' [quote]
D-	'Jump down comrades unless you want to surrender our eagle to the enemy'[quote]
E+	At this the Romans jumped to fight the enemy and win and kill! So they jumped and died! Because they jumped into the hands of the enemy
F	[missing]
G+	All the soldiers knew the shallows, so they had lots of cavalry whilst throwing spears <i>and</i> So when they saw small parties of soldiers landing from the boats one by one Caesar ordered the warships' boat and other small vessels while the Romans [Celts?] were throwing spears and charging
H+	They stood waiting on the beach for their comrades then they charged!

Episode 5

Focus: Expressive movement – building up the drama

We asked the children to sit along one side of the room – we had moved the tables to create space. As Romans, they were all standing on the side of the boat as it approached the shore. Here we had to stress that they were in role as Romans on the ship – the précis had revealed that some groups had taken a Celtic perspective.

In turn, each group came out and did the freeze frame of its paragraph. There was some re-jigging here, as again some groups were doing the freeze frame from the Celtic perspective. But we managed to get them all to operate from the Roman perspective.

When the group did its freeze frame, the rest of the class had to imitate it. The expressive movement element involved the whole class moving from the first to the second frame, then from the second to the third and so on.

Episode 6

Focus: Creating the expressive movement of Caesar's account

We now built up the expressive movement further, moving from scene to scene. We thought that it would be good for a pupil to read the original text – Ione did this for paragraphs A–D. When she had finished, Ben did the same for paragraphs E–H.

Finally we put all the scenes together, with the teacher reading out firstly the précised texts for the paragraphs, and then getting Ben to read the whole text, with the children moving into a new frozen scene at each new paragraph.

Learning outcomes

The children:

- developed knowledge and understanding of Celtic Britain from an information text
- were able to interpret a contemporary document, and recreate the various scenes it covered.
- were engaged with the problems that faced Caesar and the Romans when invading the island.
- engaged in a co-operative, whole class task requiring a considerable amount of self-discipline, the ability to listen, comprehend and follow complex instructions.

- learned that history can be an enjoyable and stimulating subject which excites and intrigues.

Reflection

The lesson was very positive in that the whole class was fully involved, participating actively in a highly complicated and sophisticated piece of teaching and writing.

Nuffield Primary History project

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