

# HEMBURY HILLFORT

## LESSON IDEA

FOR KEY STAGE ONE

Hembury Hillfort, near Payhembury in the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is an excellent site to use to introduce children to life in the Iron Age. This lesson uses Noni the Blacksmith, a book available digitally for free, to introduce life in the Iron Age on the Blackdown Hills and then goes on to explore the hillfort at Hembury in more detail.



### NONI THE BLACKSMITH

Available here:

<http://www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk/metal-makers>

The lesson can be used in association with a sequence of lessons which aim to enable children to learn about the historic landscape of the Blackdown Hills AONB and iron working in the Iron Age through narrative, music and creative experiences. The lesson ideas focus on the unique and special landscape of the AONB. A place which, in the past, provided everything people needed to make iron. <http://www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk/metal-makers/preschool-ks1>

The lesson idea is linked to the National Curriculum in England, Key Stage 1 History Programme of Study. The Iron Age can be studied as an example of 'events beyond living memory that are significant nationally'. For pupils who live on or near the Blackdown Hills, the lessons could be part of a local study which looks at 'significant historical events, people and places in their own locality'. (National Curriculum in England 2013)

Year Group	Subject
Year 1 and Year 2	History
<b>Key Learning Objectives</b>	
To identify similarities and differences between life in the Iron Age and the present day. To begin to understand why people built hillforts in the Iron Age	
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	
Children will be able to list a range of differences between their lives and those in the Iron Age. Children will be able to describe what a hillfort looks like and explain why people built forts on the top of hills in the Iron Age	

Teaching Sequence	Key Questions
<p><b>Whole class</b></p> <p>Show the class the aerial photograph (resource 1) and ask them to think about what the picture shows. Explain the photo was taken from an aeroplane and that they are looking down on the ground below.</p>	<p>What can you see in the aerial photograph?</p> <p>What shapes can you see?</p> <p>Is there anything you recognise?</p> <p>What natural things can you see?</p> <p>What man-made things can you see?</p>
<p>Explain that over 2000 years ago, in the Iron Age, this hill was a very important place. People spent a long time changing the shape of the hill by adding deep ditches and high earthen banks - they turned the hill in to a fort.</p> <p>Show when the Iron Age period (c.800 BC to 43 AD) was on a class timeline.</p>	<p>Why do you think the Iron Age was called the Iron Age?</p>
<p>Read <i>Noni the Blacksmith</i> to the class.</p> <p><a href="http://www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk/metal-makers">http://www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk/metal-makers</a></p> <p>Explain that Noni lived on the Blackdown Hills during the Iron Age when life was very different. Ask the class to think about what we have today that Noni did not have in the Iron Age. <i>For example: cars, electricity, plastic, computers, mobile phones, internet etc.</i></p>	<p>How was Noni's life different to yours?</p>
<p>Explain that during the Iron Age people built lots of hillforts and several can be found in the Blackdown Hills AONB. Noni, in the story, lived close to Dumpdon Hillfort. Dumpdon Hillfort is close to Hembury Hillfort. Show the location of the two hillforts on the map (resource 2)</p> <p>Explain that from the top of the hillfort people would be able to see for miles around.</p> <p>They built big ditches and earthen banks (ramparts) which would have meant that people could only get into the hillfort through defended entrances. It would mean, once you were inside, you would be in a safe place.</p> <p>Other examples of hillforts and reconstruction drawings showing what they may have looked like in the Iron Age can be found here.</p> <p><a href="http://www.heritage-explorer.co.uk/web/he/imagebytheme.aspx?ctid=123">http://www.heritage-explorer.co.uk/web/he/imagebytheme.aspx?ctid=123</a></p>	<p>Why did they build hillforts in the Iron Age?</p> <p>What did Iron Age people do to change the shape of the hill?</p> <p>What is the advantage of being at the top of a hill?</p>

Teaching Sequence	Key Questions
<p><b>Build a miniature hillfort</b></p> <p>As a class, build your own hillfort. Ideally do this outside using soil, or use a bag of damp compost on a large play tray. Build a mound to represent the hill. Explain that it would be difficult for people to run up the sides of the hill but to make it even harder, people in the Iron Age dug ditches and made high banks.</p> <p>Around the sides of the soil mound, dig out ditches to begin to turn the hill into a defended hill. Spoons or lollypop sticks can be useful for digging the miniature ditches. Use the soil from the ditches to build up earthen mounds (ramparts). At the top, add a fence made of twigs. Leave a space for two small entrances.</p>	<p>How long do you think it would take to dig the ditches at Hembury?</p> <p>How many people would you need?</p>
<p>Ask the class why they think inside the hillfort would be a safe place to be? Emphasise that from the top of the hill, people would be able to see a long way and therefore see anybody approaching the hillfort. The big ditches and earthen bank would be very difficult to climb over and even if they managed that, there would be a large fence that would be difficult to get over without anyone knocking you off or throwing things at you. At Hembury, they found lots of small pebbles that would have been used as sling shots to attack anyone attempting to get into the hillfort.</p>	<p>What have you learnt from Iron Age fort builders?</p> <p>What would you borrow from them when you design your own hillfort?</p>
<p><b>Independent Work</b></p> <p>In pairs or small groups, ask the children to design their own fort. Where would they put it? What would they use as defences? The children could either make them using soil/sand and photograph them or draw their designs on paper.</p>	
<p><b>Plenary</b></p>	
<p>Ask the children to share their designs with the rest of the class. How have they defended their fort? Where would they position it? Why? How does it compare to the hillfort built in the Iron Age?</p>	
Extension	Resources
<p>Add details to the inside of the hillfort such as roundhouses, hearths, people and animals.</p> <p>Look on the British Museum website at Iron Age objects to give the class an idea of the types of artefacts people in the Iron Age used. A useful powerpoint presentation can be downloaded from here.</p> <p><a href="http://www.britishmuseum.org/learning/schools_and_teachers/resources/all_resources/iron_age_people.aspx">http://www.britishmuseum.org/learning/schools_and_teachers/resources/all_resources/iron_age_people.aspx</a></p>	<p><i>Noni the Blacksmith</i> book available at <a href="http://www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk/metal-makers">http://www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk/metal-makers</a></p> <p><b>Resource 1</b> – Aerial photograph of Hembury Hillfort</p> <p><b>Resource 2</b> – Map showing Hembury and Dumpdon Hillfort</p>

## USEFUL CONTACTS

### **Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**

[www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk](http://www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk)

For information on all aspects of visiting and understanding this special area.

### **Devon County Council Historic Environment**

<https://new.devon.gov.uk/historicenvironment>

Includes further resources for schools and a link to an online map of environmental data in Devon (including archaeological sites, historic buildings and landscapes and historic mapping and aerial photographs).

### **Hembury Fort Management Team**

[www.hemburyfort.co.uk](http://www.hemburyfort.co.uk)

Updates on changes to public access due to management works and latest archaeological investigations.

### **Heritage Gateway**

[www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/default.aspx](http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/default.aspx)

Details of local and national records on the historic environment, including Devon Historic Environment Record, the National Trust and Historic England.

### **Historic England**

[www.historicengland.org.uk](http://www.historicengland.org.uk)

Entry listing for Hembury Fort as a nationally important Scheduled Monument.

### **Royal Albert Museum Memorial Museum & Art Gallery**

[www.rammuseum.org.uk](http://www.rammuseum.org.uk)

For workshops in schools and other educational services.

### **South West Heritage Trust learning team**

[www.swheritage.org.uk](http://www.swheritage.org.uk)

'Loans for Learning' and other education services for schools.



### **Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership**

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