

# HEMBURY HILLFORT

## LESSON IDEAS

FOR KEY STAGE TWO



## TEACHER'S NOTES

Hembury Hillfort, near Payhembury in the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), is a nationally important archaeological site used by people in both the prehistoric and Roman periods.

Hembury Hillfort is a nationally important archaeological site. Due to its rarity, survival and significance, it has been designated as a Scheduled Monument. It is protected in law against damaging it by burning, dumping, digging or metal detecting.

A summary of the archaeological importance of Hembury is available here

<https://new.devon.gov.uk/historicenvironment/schools-resources/hembury-iron-age-hillfort>

A sequence of letters (Resource 1) has been written as a device for initiating archaeological enquiry. The letters can be adapted, rewritten or not used depending on the requirements of the class and whether the lessons are being taught in sequence or individually.

These lessons demonstrate how archaeological enquiry can be used to investigate local prehistoric sites. Elements of the lessons could be adapted and used to investigate other archaeological sites. A list of sites in England can be found at <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/>

Hembury Hillfort is accessible to the public. There is a car park and public right of way to the southern part of the site. Please check access arrangements and health and safety issues before visiting.

This sequence of four lessons explores its significance in prehistory through a process of archaeological enquiry.

## Lesson Sequence Overview

The lesson ideas are linked to the National Curriculum in England, Key Stage 2 History Programme of Study, focusing mainly on ‘changes in Britain from the Stone to the Iron Age’ (National Curriculum in England 2013).

NC Learning objective	Enquiry questions	Activity	Learning outcome
<p>1. Understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.</p> <p>Develop a chronologically secure understanding of British prehistory.</p>	<p>What is the role of an archaeologist?</p> <p>How do we find out about the prehistoric period if there are no written sources?</p> <p>What can an object tell us about the past?</p>	<p>Explore at the role of an archaeologist.</p> <p>Examine photos of archaeological finds and list what the items tell us about people in the past. Generate questions about the objects.</p>	<p>Children will be able to list a range of sources that archaeologists use to investigate prehistory. Children will begin to develop a chronologically secure understanding of prehistory.</p>
<p>2. Construct informed responses that involve thoughtful selection of prehistorical information.</p> <p>Develop a chronologically secure understanding of British prehistory.</p>	<p>Why did people choose to use Hembury during prehistoric and Roman periods?</p>	<p>Look at maps and an aerial photograph to try to find evidence to explain why Hembury was used in prehistory.</p>	<p>Children will be able to name different prehistoric periods.</p> <p>Children will understand how maps and aerial photographs can be used as a source of information about the past and select appropriate information from them.</p>
<p>3. Understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.</p> <p>Address and sometimes devise historically valid questions about similarity and difference.</p>	<p>What do the archaeological finds tell us about how people lived during the Neolithic at Hembury?</p>	<p>Look at a range of archaeological finds from Hembury. Use them to construct a picture of what life was like in the Neolithic.</p>	<p>Children will be able to use a range of objects as a source to inform us about life in the Neolithic at Hembury.</p> <p>Children will be able to contrast our lives with those in the Neolithic.</p>
<p>4. Understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources. Understand how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been made.</p>	<p>Why was a hillfort built at Hembury during the Iron Age?</p>	<p>Find Iron Age evidence from Hembury and other hillforts to support a range of interpretations about why Hembury Hillfort was built.</p>	<p>Children will be able to select evidence to support different interpretations as to why a hillfort was built at Hembury in the Iron Age.</p>

## LESSON 1

Year Group	Subject
KS2	History
<b>Key Learning Objectives</b>	
<p>Understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.</p> <p>Develop chronologically secure understanding of British prehistory.</p>	
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	
<p>Children will be able to list a range of sources that archaeologists use to investigate prehistory.</p> <p>Children will begin to develop a chronologically secure understanding of prehistory.</p>	
Teaching Sequence	Key Questions
<p><b>Whole class</b></p> <p>Start the lesson by reading email 1 to the class (resource 1).</p> <p>Explain to the class that for the next few lessons they will need to be archaeologists.</p>	
<p><b>What is the role of an archaeologist?</b></p> <p>Explain that archaeologists find out about people in the past by studying material culture (items that people used in the past). Archaeologists use a range of skills to discover what happened in the past including excavation, looking carefully at maps and aerial photographs, examining objects found in the ground. They then carefully piece together the clues that they have found to begin to explain what happened in the past.</p> <p>Depending on time, there are a number of activities that you could do with the class/ or in groups to give an insight into the role of an archaeologist (see resource 4).</p>	<p>What does an archaeologist do?</p>
<p><b>Explain what prehistory means</b></p> <p>Prehistory refers to the time before writing. In Britain this is the period from when humans first arrived in Britain c. 800,000 years ago to the arrival of Romans in AD 43.</p> <p>Look at this vast amount of time on a class timeline. Roll out an 8m long piece of string and tell the children that one end represents the present day and the other end is when humans arrived in Britain (the beginning of prehistory). Measure 2 cm from the start of the timeline (present day) and explain that this is when the Romans arrived in Britain. Those 2 cm represent the historic period in Britain, the other 798cm represent the prehistoric period in Britain.</p>	<p>What does prehistoric mean?</p> <p>When was the prehistoric period in Britain?</p>

Teaching Sequence	Key Questions
<p>Ask the children to think about how we can find out about the prehistoric period if we have no written sources from that period.</p>	<p>How do we find out about the prehistoric period if there are no written sources?</p>
<p>Re-read email 1 (resource 1)</p> <p>Using resource 2, give each table a picture of one of the finds. Do not give out the object descriptions. Put the picture in the middle of a large piece of paper and ask the children to look carefully at the image. Explain that archaeologists use artefacts that they find in the ground to explain how people lived and what they did in the past.</p>	<p>What can an object tell us about the past?</p>
<p>Ask the children to look at the pictures and write down everything they can about the object. Prompt them with questions.</p> <p>What do you think it is made of?</p> <p>Is it broken or complete?</p> <p>What do you think it was used for?</p> <p>How was it made?</p> <p>Are there any markings on the item?</p> <p>They may find it difficult to answer all the questions but the idea is to get the class thinking about what the objects could tell them.</p>	<p>Why did the object survive in the ground?</p>
<p>Using another colour pen, ask each group to write down questions about the object. What else would they like to know about it?</p> <p>For example how old is the object? Where was it made? Who used it?</p> <p>Each table group then shares their object with the rest of the class.</p>	<p>What would you like to know about the object?</p>
<p>Do the objects tell us anything about Hembury? Try to draw some conclusions about what the objects could tell us about the past. For example, the fact that objects were found at Hembury shows that people used Hembury in the past. The pottery shows that the people collected clay, made pots and fired them.</p>	<p>Do the objects tell us anything about Hembury in the past?</p>

Teaching Sequence	Key Questions
<p>Explain to the class that it is important that any items found in the ground that are metal or look like they are very old should be shown to the local museum or a Finds Liaison Officer (a person who works for the Portable Antiquities Scheme <a href="https://finds.org.uk">https://finds.org.uk</a>). They can record the objects so other people will know about them and they can also give you lots of information about the objects.</p> <p>Explain that Hembury Hillfort is a very special archaeological site. It is of national importance and has been designated as a Scheduled Monument because of its rarity, survival, and significance. It is protected in law against damaging it by burning, dumping, digging or metal detecting.</p> <p>Many archaeological sites are protected and that means it is illegal to damage them or to metal detect upon them.</p>	
Plenary	
<p>As a class, write an email to Alex. Describe what the class has found out from looking at pictures of the objects.</p> <p>Add that Alex should leave any finds in-situ (in the ground where they were found) and just take photographs of the artefacts and make a location map showing exactly where the objects were found.</p> <p>Suggest that Alex should take his pictures and map to the local museum or the Finds Liaison Officer to find out more information about the objects.</p>	
Extension	Resources
<p>See 'Role of an Archaeologist' activities in resource 4.</p> <p>Locate objects around the school grounds that the children have to photograph in-situ (where they were found) and locate them on a map of the school.</p>	<p>Email 1 (resource 1)</p> <p>Pictures of objects (resource 2)</p> <p>Role of an Archaeologist (resource 4)</p>

## LESSON 2

Year Group	Subject	
KS2	History	
Key Learning Objectives		
<p>Construct informed responses that involve thoughtful selection of pre-historical information.</p> <p>Develop a chronologically secure understanding of British prehistory.</p>		
Learning Outcomes		
<p>Children will be able to name different prehistoric periods.</p> <p>Children will understand how maps and aerial photographs can be used as a source of information about the past and select appropriate information from them.</p>		
Teaching Sequence	Key Questions	
<p>Remind the class that during these lessons they need to think like archaeologists.</p>		
<p>Tell the class that Alex has responded to their last email. He has been in contact with the Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery and found out lots more information about the objects they looked at in the previous lesson.</p> <p>Read email 2 (resource 1) to the class. Look back at the pictures of the finds from lesson 1 (resources 2) and explain what the finds are (using resource 3).</p> <p>Highlight that these finds prove that people were using Hembury during the Neolithic (New Stone Age), the Iron Age and the Roman period. Look at these periods on a class timeline.</p>	<p>Why did people choose to use Hembury during prehistoric and Roman periods?</p> <p>Why did people keep going back to Hembury over 1000s of years?</p>	
<p>Ask the following question:</p> <p><b>Why did people choose to use Hembury during prehistoric and Roman periods?</b></p> <p>What sources could we use to help answer this question? Explain that archaeologists often look at aerial photographs and maps to help understand an archaeological site within the wider landscape. This can help to provide clues as to why it was important in the past.</p>	<p>What is special about Hembury?</p>	

Teaching Sequence	Key Questions
<p>Show the class the aerial photograph of Hembury (resource 5)</p> <p>See if they can identify the pear shape of the hill. What else can they see in the photograph? Are they modern features or would they have been there in prehistory? Can they spot the large earthen banks and ditches? (These were built in the Iron Age and form part of the Iron Age hillfort. They are mainly obscured by tree cover but a small section is visible on the south-eastern face of the hill.)</p>	<p>What do you think you could see from the top of the hill in prehistory?</p>
<p>Look at the Ordnance Survey maps of the area (resources 6). Allow time for the children to explore the maps and see what they can identify in the maps. Can they find places they know? Can they find Hembury?</p>	<p>Would it be the same as we can see today?</p>
<p>Discuss how the contours can show us how steep a slope is. The closer the contours are together the steeper the slope is. Discuss how the contours show us that Hembury has very steep sides and is relatively flat at the top.</p> <p>Highlight that Hembury is one of the highest points in the area and therefore has excellent views of the surrounding countryside.</p> <p>Ask them to look for local rivers such as the Otter.</p>	<p>What do the contours look like around Hembury?</p> <p>What natural features can you see on the map?</p>
<p>Encourage the class to extend their thinking and try to work out why the features discussed above may be important. For example:</p> <p>The steep sides of Hembury would have provided natural defenses.</p> <p>The flat top of Hembury would be easy for people to build on.</p> <p>There would have been far reaching views of the surrounding landscape and the Otter river valley and so it would be easy to see people approaching from a distance.</p> <p>The rivers would have been a valuable source of resources etc.</p>	<p>What would be the advantage of living at the top of a hill? Would there be any disadvantages?</p>
<p><b>Independent work</b></p> <p>Give the children the aerial photograph (resource 5).</p> <p>Ask them to mark all the features that are modern and would not have been there in the prehistoric period. (Roads, houses, hedges, fences etc.)</p> <p>Ask them to answer the following questions using evidence from the map and the aerial photograph.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Why did people choose to use Hembury during prehistoric and Roman periods?</li> <li>2. What do we use it for now?</li> </ol>	



**Plenary**

As a class, write an email back to Alex explaining why you think people would have chosen this hill as a special place in the past.

**Extension**

Look for other historic sites on Ordnance Survey maps. Are there lots of sites close to one another? Are there any clues as to why people have lived there/ chosen it as a special place in the past?

**Resources**

Email 2 (resource 1)  
Ordnance Survey maps (resources 6)  
Aerial photograph of Hembury (resource 5)

## LESSON 3

Year Group	Subject	
KS2	History	
Key Learning Objectives		
<p>Understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.</p> <p>Address and sometimes devise historically valid questions about similarity and difference.</p>		
Learning Outcomes		
<p>Children will be able to use a range of objects as a source to inform us about life in the Neolithic at Hembury.</p> <p>Children will be able to contrast our lives with those in the Neolithic.</p>		
Teaching Sequence	Key Questions	
<p><b>Whole class</b></p> <p>Read email 3 to class (resource 1).</p> <p>Look at the Neolithic period on a class timeline.</p> <p>Show the following short animation to the class to provide a basic introduction to what life was like in the Neolithic.</p> <p><a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01zfxgg">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01zfxgg</a></p> <p>After watching the animation, highlight some of the key changes that happened during the Neolithic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People began to farm in Britain.</li> <li>• They planted crops rather than just relying on the food they gathered or hunted.</li> <li>• They cut down trees to make space for fields.</li> <li>• People in the Neolithic raised livestock, such as sheep and cattle.</li> <li>• People began to settle in one place rather than moving from one camp to the next all the time.</li> <li>• They developed new technologies, such as making pottery.</li> <li>• They built monuments in the landscape such as burial mounds and enclosures.</li> </ul>	<p>What do the finds from the Neolithic at Hembury tell us about how people lived?</p> <p>What came before and after the Neolithic?</p>	

Teaching Sequence	Key Questions
<p>Explain that archaeological excavations at Hembury have provided lots of information about the Neolithic period. It can no longer be seen, but underneath the Iron Age hillfort, there was an impressive Neolithic earthwork called a causewayed enclosure. The causewayed enclosure was a row of ditches enclosing the southern part of Hembury with gaps or 'causeways' between them. It would have been an important site for early farming peoples, possibly a meeting place, a trading centre, a defended village or place to keep animals safe.</p>	
<p><b>What do the finds tell us about how people lived during the Neolithic at Hembury?</b></p> <p>Show the children the images of the finds (resource sheet 7). Cover up the descriptions to begin with so the children only see the images.</p> <p>Ask them to describe what they can see. Prompt them with a range of questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the object made of?</li> <li>• Describe the shape?</li> <li>• What colour(s) is it?</li> <li>• Is it decorated? How is it decorated?</li> <li>• Is it whole or is something missing?</li> <li>• What do you think it was used for?</li> <li>• What would you like to know about the object?</li> </ul>	<p>What would the modern equivalent of these objects be?</p>
<p>Give the children the descriptions of the objects. Do the descriptions answer any of their questions?</p>	<p>What does it tell us about the type of activities that people took part in during the Neolithic?</p>
<p>Ask the children to think carefully about what the objects tell us about the way people lived in the Neolithic. Ask the class to think about the different crafts and jobs the people in the Neolithic did, the food they ate, the natural resources they had access to etc.</p> <p><i>For example: the pottery fragments made from local clay shows that people would have collected clay, potters would have made the clay into pots and the pots would have been fired in a very hot fire; the hazel nuts show that people would have been gathering wild food; the charred grains and sickle show there were farmers who would have been digging the earth, sowing seeds and harvesting the crops; the axe head may have been used for chopping down trees and clearing the land for farming etc.</i></p>	<p>What Neolithic activity would you most like to try?</p>

<b>Teaching Sequence</b>		<b>Key Questions</b>
<p><b>Independent Work</b></p> <p>Using one large roll of paper stuck to the floor, ask the children to create a picture of what life was like in the Neolithic based on the evidence of the finds from Hembury Hillfort. Encourage them to add as much detail as they can.</p> <p>The children could draw directly onto the paper or create their own pictures which they add to the paper to create a montage.</p>		<p>What have you included in your picture? What have you left out?</p>
<b>Plenary</b>		
<p>Photograph the picture of life in the Neolithic and email it to Alex.</p> <p>Compare the activities of people during the Neolithic with what we do today. Are there any similarities? What are the main differences?</p>		
<b>Extension</b>	<b>Resources</b>	
<p>Try to recreate some of the Neolithic activities described above. For example, try grinding grain with a pestle and mortar to see how long it takes to produce flour. Use clay to make Neolithic pots and add decoration using natural objects. Try carving a Neolithic arrow head out of a bar of soap (as a flint replacement). Can recreating objects from the Neolithic help inform us about the past?</p>	<p>Email 3 (resource 1)</p> <p>Neolithic finds from Hembury (resource 7)</p>	

## LESSON 4

Year Group	Subject	
KS2	History	
Key Learning Objectives		
<p>Understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.</p> <p>Understand how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been made.</p>		
Learning Outcomes		
<p>Children will be able to select evidence to support different interpretations as to why a hillfort was built at Hembury in the Iron Age.</p>		
Teaching Sequence	Key Questions	
<p><b>Whole class</b></p> <p>Read email 4 to the class (resource 1).</p> <p>Look at the Iron Age on a class timeline.</p> <p>Give a brief introduction to the class about what life was like in the Iron Age. The BBC animation about life in the Iron Age may be useful.  <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01zfx61">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01zfx61</a></p>	<p>Why was a hillfort built at Hembury during the Iron Age?</p>	
<p>After watching the BBC animation/ introducing Iron Age life, explain that there are many interpretations of what life was like in the past. Archaeologists have to piece clues together and so there can be several interpretations of what happened in the past.</p> <p>Explain that the class is going to look at a range of sources and make their own interpretation of why Hembury was transformed into a hillfort during the Iron Age.</p>	<p>What evidence can we use to find out about the Iron Age at Hembury?</p>	

Teaching Sequence	Key Questions
<p><b>Independent Work</b></p> <p>Split the class into groups and provide each group with a statement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The hillfort was built as a place to live.</li> <li>• The hillfort was used as a safe place to go when people were under attack.</li> <li>• The hillfort was used as a gathering place for markets and celebrations.</li> <li>• The hillfort was built to show how strong and powerful the people were.</li> </ul> <p>Provide each group with a copy of Evidence from the Iron Age on Hembury Hillfort (resource 8).</p> <p>What evidence can they find to support their statement? Explain that at the end of the lesson, each group will be presenting their evidence.</p> <p>You may also want to encourage them to look at other hillforts to compare with Hembury hillfort. A range of images showing reconstructions of what Iron Age hillforts may have looked like are available here: <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>There is a lot of evidence to suggest that the main purpose of Hembury hillfort was purely defensive. Groups looking at the other statements may need encouragement to extend their thinking about the unknown elements of the hillfort. The site has not been completely investigated and therefore there remains uncertainty as to its full purpose. The large defences are the most striking feature but the other uses of the hillfort are more difficult to find evidence for. Looking at examples of other hillforts may help them.</p>	<p>What evidence can you find to support the statement?</p> <p>Which sources are most useful?</p>
<p><b>Plenary</b></p>	
<p>Each group to present their findings to the class. Which statement has the most evidence to support it? Does the class think the answer is likely to be a combination of the statements?</p> <p>Write a final email back to Alex summarising their findings.</p>	
Extension	Resources
<p>Look at Ordnance Survey maps of East Devon and explore the Heritage Gateway <a href="http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk">http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk</a> to identify other Iron Age Hillforts in the area. Are there many close to Hembury Hillfort? Are there more in East Devon compared with other areas?</p>	<p>Email 4 (resource 1)</p> <p>Evidence from the Iron Age on Hembury Hillfort (resource 8)</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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