

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____

Iron Age Information

- The Iron Age in Britain was from 800 BCE to 43 CE, the time of the Roman Conquest.
- Average life expectancy was around 35 years.
- There is little evidence for what Iron Age Britons looked like – they rarely carved or made images of people.
- Clothing has not survived to the present day.
- Britain was a rural community consisting of farms and small villages – people dwelt in wooden round houses with thatched roofs.
- Iron replaced brass and was used for knives, nails, plough tips, tyres and sickles.
- Most pottery was of a basic, undecorated design.
- Most people lived on bread, vegetable stews, porridge and beer.
- Most Iron Age people didn't bury their dead.
- There are no surviving religious carvings or images.
- There are no surviving religious temples.
- Offerings of weapons, animals, pots and tools were made in rivers, lakes and bogs. Human sacrifices were included.
- The existence of numerous hillforts suggests war.
- Warriors used spears, shields and swords. Armour was not worn.
- Horses were highly valued as metal harness and chariot parts were highly decorated.
- Although rare, some evidence exists of skilled metalworking towards the end of the Iron Age – Great Torc from Snettisham 100 BCE (below).
- Evidence is based on archaeology.



Think like a Historian

1. How long did the Iron Age last?

2. What event took place that ended the Iron Age way of life?

3. Why would this event have changed the way people lived?

4. What kind of food was rarely eaten in the Iron Age?

5. How would archaeology prove this?

6. Why do you think there is very little evidence of Iron Age people and the way they lived?

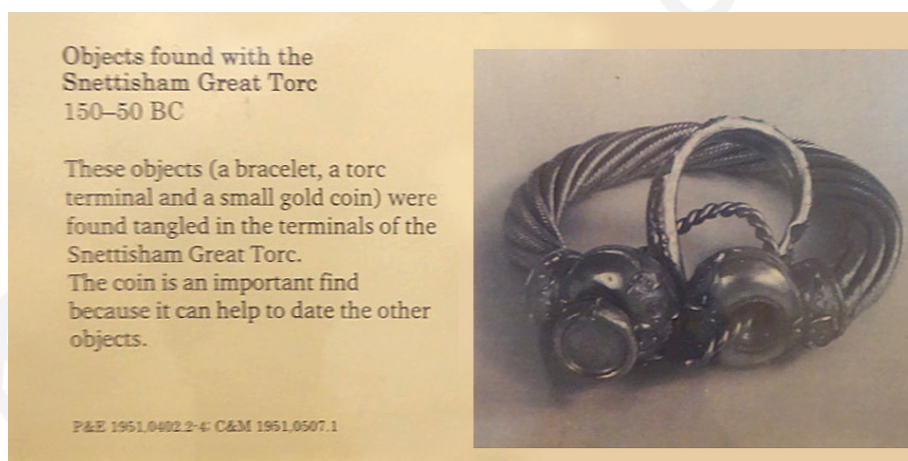
7. Re-read the Iron Age Information statements and then choose one to write about. You can:
 - work out what the evidence might be to support the statementor
 - explain why the statement might not be accurateI think the statement about

is/is not true because

If the Great Torc looks too good to be true...

How does this label help prove that the Torc is from the Iron Age?

What doesn't it prove?



8. Read the following information:

Pytheas of Massalia (now Marseilles), a Greek merchant and explorer, circumnavigated the British Isles between about 330 and 320 BCE and produced the first written record of the islands.

Pytheas' original text no longer exists, but he is quoted by other writers. In 30 BCE Diodorus quoted what Pytheas said about Britain.

Britain is cold and subject to frosts... The numerous population of natives live in thatched cottages, store their grain in subterranean caches and bake bread from it. They are "of simple manners" and are content with plain fare. They are ruled by many kings and princes who live in peace with each other. Their troops fight from chariots, as did the Greeks in the Trojan War.

How does this text affect your opinion of the Iron Age Information statements?

- How long after Pytheas is Diodorus writing?
- How reliable is Diodorus?

9. What evidence would you like to see from Iron Age Britain to describe their way of life accurately? Give reasons for your choices.
