

Boudicas rebellion against roman rule



Additional material

Our lesson slides contain visual elements, such as historical images or timelines, associated with rich explanations. This document provides the verbal explanation that accompanies these visual elements - otherwise known as a narrative. The narrative and slides are matched via this icon:

Client rulers



Emperor Claudius invaded Britain in 43 CE. His Roman armies were well trained, used clever tactics and quickly defeated the **Celtic** tribes who lived in the south east of Britain.

After this, the **Celtic** tribes had to make a difficult decision. Should they fight back and start a **rebellion** against the Romans? If they did, they might end up dead or enslaved! Or should they make peace with the Romans and do as they said? One **Celtic** king who decided to fight back was Caratacus. He fought the Romans in England and Wales in a **rebellion** but couldn't defeat them. In the end, Caratacus was taken to Rome in chains.

Many other **Celtic** rulers chose to make peace with the Romans instead. They followed Roman laws and paid taxes to the Roman governor of Britain. These **Celtic** rulers were allowed to keep their lands and saved their people from violence. However, they had to do what the Romans said. Historians call these **Celtic** rulers 'client rulers' because their power depended on the Romans allowing them to rule.

Over time, some of these client rulers grew angry. They were fed up with paying lots of money to the Romans and having to obey Roman laws. One of these rulers who was fed up with Roman rule was the queen of the Iceni tribe. Her name was **Boudica** and she brought the Romans to their knees, roughly twenty years after Caratacus.

Boudica's rebellion



The people of the Iceni tribe lived in the east of England. Here the Romans had built a large town called Camulodunum (today it is known as Colchester). It was the most

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important town in Roman Britain, protected by many legionaries. This did not scare **Boudica** and this was where she began her **rebellion**. She formed a huge army and marched to Camulodunum. **Boudica's** army was merciless. They killed every Roman they found and set fire to Camulodunum's many buildings. When the fires died down, nothing was left.

The Roman Governor of Britain was shocked. How had **Boudica** managed it? She had to be stopped. Roman rule in Britain was under threat. Other client rulers might rise up against Roman rule too if **Boudica** was not dealt with. Word was sent to the Roman legion in Wales. They would march east to stop **Boudica**. But **Boudica** had other ideas! While the Roman legion began its long march, she attacked the Roman town of Londinium (today it is known as London). Once again, **Boudica's** army burnt the Roman buildings to the ground!

By the time the Roman legion reached the south of England, **Boudica's** army was far larger than they had expected. She had convinced other tribes to join her **rebellion**. The Romans had been joined by two more legions during their journey but **Boudica** still outnumbered them.

The **Celtic** warriors were so sure they would beat the Romans that they had brought their families with them to watch the battle. The families sat in wagons behind **Boudica's** army. But the Romans had a plan. They often used clever tactics, like the testudo, to win battles. They had another tactic, their legionaries would charge forward in a big wedge shape that would scatter the enemy army. This is what they did to **Boudica's Celtic** army.

Boudica's huge army was hard to control. With so many soldiers, she couldn't tell them all what to do. The legionaries formed their wedge shape and charged at the Celts. The sides of the Roman army were protected by woodlands. Trapped by their own wagons, the Celts couldn't turn around and run away. They didn't stand a chance.

The Romans killed every Celt they could find. They remembered how **Boudica** had killed everyone in Camulodunum. They remembered how she had burnt the Roman buildings in Londinium and they wanted revenge. They wanted to show the **Celtic** people that they should not rebel.

When she realised she had lost, **Boudica** poisoned herself. She would rather die than be taken to Rome in chains like Caratacus. After seeing what had happened to **Boudica**,

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very few Celts chose to rebel against the Romans in the following years. They obeyed Roman laws and paid them money. Through many more years of Roman rule, life changed a lot for the people in Britain.