



**THE EUROPEAN WAY**

**Subject : HISTORY**

**Topic: THE CELTS**

**Addressee: 2° year- students / first year Italian secondary school**

**Timing: 2 classes- 45' each**

**Type of activities: brainstorming, pair work, video presentation, reading**

**Key Vocabulary/ Useful language : invasion- bias- empire- tools- weapons- '...they took over...' '....they lived on...'**

### **Teacher's Notes**

**Warming Up** The teacher recaps from previous classes- the Bronze Age . Ask students questions. Class discussion .

She writes IRON AGE on the board- she elicits from students what the main difference between bronze and iron is.

Expected answer: iron is stronger.

Then she shows pictures of Celtic jewelry and let the students listen to some music from you tube. They likely would say it is about the Celts.

### **Presentation**

#### **Activity 1**

What do you know about the Celts? Talk to your partner .

They might probably say they conquered England and Ireland. They were warriors.

Questions the teacher then ask :

- a) they built their villages mostly by a lake- why?
- b) they did not have a chief- what does this mean?

#### **Activity 2**

Read the text and answer the questions:

### **Practice/ Follow- up**

**Activity 3** Just to enjoy and reinforce language and main features, teacher shows the video : <https://youtu.be/fPv0UuHoQe8>

#### **Activity 4**

How do we know about the Celts -

Students guess. Teacher writes on the board.

- through stories and legends
- bodies found in bogs
- jewellery- artifacts
- annales written by monks soon after the end of the Celt civilization
- Romans and Greek later wrote about them

#### **Production**

Students are asked to think about legends they were told when they were children and write a short summary.

Then they have to find at least 3 things which help them to learn more about the Celts.

#### **Lesson Material**

### **The Arrival of the Celts**

As the Bronze Age in Ireland drew to a close, there appeared in Ireland a new cultural influence. Developing in the Alps of central Europe, the Celts spread their culture across modern-day Germany and France and into the Balkans as far as Turkey. They arrived in Britain and Ireland around 500BC and within a few hundred years, Ireland's Bronze Age culture had all but disappeared, and Celtic culture was in place across the entire island

The map shows how Europe looked around 400BC. Celtic influences (for it was a culture, not an empire) had spread across much of central Europe and spread into Iberia and the British Isles. The Celts called Britain and Ireland the "Pretanic Islands" which evolved into the modern word "Britain". The word "Celt" comes from the Greeks, who called the tribes to their north the "Kelttoi", but there is no evidence that the Celts ever referred to themselves by that name. To the south a small upstart republic, with its capital at Rome, was minding its own business. However it was these Romans who, a few centuries later, would supercede Celtic culture across most of Europe when they built their huge Roman Empire, which stretched from Palestine to England.

The Celts had one major advantage - they had discovered Iron. Iron had been introduced to the Celtic peoples in Europe around 1000 to 700BC, thus giving them the technological edge to spread as they did. Iron was a far superior metal to bronze, being stronger and more durable. On the other hand, it required much hotter fires to extract it from its ore and so it took a fair degree of skill to use iron. None of this is to be taken to mean that bronze fell out of use. Rather, iron simply became an alternative metal and many bronze objects have been found that were made in the Iron Age.

Whether or not the arrival of the Celts in Ireland was an actual invasion, or a more gradual assimilation, is an open question [1]. On the one hand, the Celts - who were by no means pacifists - must have arrived in sufficiently large numbers to obliterate the existing culture in Ireland within a few hundred years. On the other hand, other better documented invasions of Ireland - such as the Viking invasions of the 7th and 8th centuries AD - failed to have the effect of changing the culture on an islandwide scale. Current academic opinion favours the theory that the Celts arrived in Ireland over the course of several centuries, beginning in the late Bronze Age with Celts of the early iron-using Hallstatt group of people, to be followed after 300BC by Celts of the La Tène cultural group which formed within the Hallstatt group.

Some have postulated that, as the Romans invaded and took control of the continental Celtic territories of Gaul [France] and Iberia [Spain and Portugal], some of the displaced Celts travelled to unconquered Celtic lands such as Britain and Ireland. The medieval "Book of Invasions" talks about Milesians and Fír Bolg arriving in Ireland. These have been identified with displaced Celts from Spain and Belgium, respectively, although this is conjecture



Map produced for The Ireland Story. This map may be used elsewhere provided a link is given to [www.irelandstory.com](http://www.irelandstory.com), the site is non-profit and the map is not modified.

[1].