

How did the Romans change Britain?

When the Romans invaded Britain in AD 43 under Emperor Claudius, they set in motion one of the most significant transformations the island had ever seen. The indigenous Celtic population had lived in tribal communities, constructing roundhouses, practising oral traditions and exchanging goods through a system of barter.

Roman engineers revolutionised infrastructure by constructing an extensive road network of approximately 9,000 miles. These precisely engineered, well-drained roads enabled the rapid movement of legions, supported trade and linked newly founded towns across the province they called Britannia.

Urban life expanded rapidly. Roman towns were laid out on a grid pattern and equipped with forums, basilicas (public halls used for administration and justice), bathhouses, amphitheatres and sophisticated underground sewers. Settlements such as Londinium (London), Eboracum (York) and Aquae Sulis (Bath) became thriving centres of commerce and Roman culture.

Construction techniques advanced considerably, with stone, fired brick and concrete replacing the timber and thatch of Iron Age Britain. Hadrian's Wall, commissioned in AD 122, remains a remarkable testament to Roman engineering ambition.

Daily life also changed significantly. New agricultural methods, crops such as turnips and leeks, and the introduction of a standardised currency all modernised the economy. Latin became the language of administration, law and education, laying linguistic foundations that influenced the development of English for centuries to come.

Questions

1. Which Roman Emperor ordered the invasion of Britain in AD 43?
2. What name did the Romans give to their province of Britain?
3. Approximately how many miles of road did the Romans build in Britain?
4. What is a basilica and what was it used for?
5. Describe how Roman towns were laid out.
6. Give the Roman names for London and York.
7. In which year was Hadrian's Wall commissioned?
8. Name two new crops introduced to Britain by the Romans.
9. What replaced the barter system under Roman rule?
10. The article says that Latin "laid linguistic foundations that influenced the development of English for centuries." Can you think of a reason why the language used in law and education might have had such a lasting effect on everyday English?



Text D Quiz



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