



When the Romans ruled

Bronwyn Tainui

Focus phonics

s written as c as in city, place, places, citizens, magnificent, citizen, exercise, ceremony

n written as gn as in designed, designs

Tricky words

because, could, friends, many, people, their, there, who, working, would

Book summary

Thousands of years ago the rulers of Rome built a formidable army and set forth to invade other lands. All the places they invaded became part of the mighty Roman empire. We look at different aspects of Roman life, including how the army operated, what the Romans built and day to day life.

Learning intention

Phonics: To decode words with the focus phonemes of /s/ spelt c and /n/ spelt gn, that feature in the text and extend to other known words with the same grapheme-phoneme correspondences, e.g. space, face; gnome, gnaw.

Comprehension:

- Retrieve and record information/key details from the text
- Explain the meaning of words in context
- Summarise main ideas
- Make inferences from the text
- Make predictions that fit with information given in the text
- Make connections (text to self, text to text, text to world)
- Ask questions
- Visualise

Fluency:

- Read at a natural speaking pace with minimal sounding out
- Pay attention to punctuation when reading, pausing and changing tone as appropriate
- Read with appropriate emphasis and intonation to support the meaning of the text

Before reading

Story discussion: Look at and discuss the cover and read the title together. Ask: What does the title mean? What is the photo of? Share any prior knowledge of Roman times. Who is the author? (Bronwyn Tainui) Have you read any other books by Bronwyn and what did you think of them? (e.g. other Reading Road titles Bronwyn has written are My farm jobs, One top dog, A robber at Pop's, On Fog Hill, Out of orbit, Make it!, Zed) Were they fiction or non-fiction? Do you think

this book is fiction or non-fiction and why? Why do you think the author chose this title? Make predictions about what kind of information might be given in this non-fiction text. Keep a note of predictions and return to them later. Flip through the book to get a sense of the contents. Read and discuss the blurb on the back cover.

Quick phonics warm-up: Read the words on the inside front cover together, with the focus phonemes of /s/ written as c and /n/ written as gn. Flip through the text to find and read words with these same phonemes. Discuss the meaning of these words. Build the focus word *place* with letter cards. Think of words that rhyme with *place* and read these together, e.g. trace, grace. Discuss their meaning.

Vocabulary check:

citizens p 3 people who live in a particular town or city

army p 2 group of people who fight to defend their land or attack other lands

Morphology: aqueducts p 16 channels built by people for moving water; aqua means water; duct means tube or passageway. Think of other words using the prefix aqua, e.g. aquarium, aquatic, aquaculture, aquafarm.

Etymology: battle p 5 "fight or hostile engagement between opposing forces", c1300, from Old French "bataille".

Tricky word practice: Display the tricky words *because* and *working*. Ask: What are the tricky parts of these words?

because – the tricky parts are au which says /o/ and se that says /z/.

working – the tricky part is or which says /ur/.

Practise reading and spelling these tricky words.

During reading

Read the story: This book may not fit into a single reading session. The end of p 15 is a good point to break the reading. Students can finish the book in a second group session or for homework.

Reading could follow one or more of the following approaches:

- Start by reading the text with students, then invite them to take over the reading.
- Students read silently at their own pace; listen to each in turn as they read a brief passage.
- Divide the book up between groups or individual students; they read a section each and then summarise the main ideas and report back on it.

Phonics support: Remind students to sound out and blend the letters as necessary to read any unfamiliar words, but encourage them to read words with familiar letters and sounds fluently on sight if they can, without sounding out. If students get stuck on a word, model how to sound out and blend the sounds in the word. Encourage students to help each other with sounding out and blending and praise good use of this strategy especially words with the focus phonemes of /s/ written as c and /n/ written as gn.

Comprehension support: Pause occasionally to talk about the story and encourage students to find and retrieve key details from the text, e.g. on p 6, ask: What are "tactics"? (ways of doing things) What does "employed" mean? (used) What are some of the ways the army attacked a city? (stopped supplies getting in, knocked down the gates, dug tunnels under the walls) What is a catapult? (a weapon that shoots rocks at city walls) On p 8, ask: What is a battering ram? (a heavy beam swung on a rope to batter down city gates) How do you think the people felt when they were in the city with the army trying to get into it? How do you think the people in the army felt?

After reading

Apply learning: Discuss the text. Ask: What new information have you learned about Roman times and when the Romans ruled? What would have been your favourite thing to do in Roman times? What did Bronwyn (the author) need to know before writing this text? How does it compare to any of her other books? Is it similar or different?

Comprehension: Review the predictions made earlier. Were they correct? Were there any surprises? Ask: What could you learn from this text? On p 21, what is the same/different about what Roman children wore compared to what children wear today? On p 23, what is the same/different about what Roman children learned and played with in Roman times compared to children today? What are some differences between rich and poor people in Roman times? (e.g. rich people had a bath at home, poorer people used public baths; children from rich families were often educated at home, other children went to school)

Retelling the text. Ask students to choose a heading and retell part of the text.

Read and discuss the questions on the inside back cover.

The word "invaded" on p 2 is the past tense of "invade". Find other words that have -ed on the end to make the past tense, e.g. employed. Look at the word "wore" on p 5. This is the past tense of "wear". Find other verbs that do not have -ed, but are the past tense, e.g. "had" is the past tense of "has" or "have"; "made" is the past tense of "make".

Locate words with adjacent consonants in the text. Read them and discuss their meaning, e.g. stopped, skilled.

Find words with double consonants in the text. Read them and discuss their meaning, e.g. battle, different, attack, battering. Notice that usually the double letters make the same sound as if they were a single letter.

Find words with two or more syllables. Count and clap the syllables, and say the words, e.g. em/pire, cit/i/zen, arch/i/tect, col/oss/e/um.

Fluency: Choose a passage from the book and model how to read it fluently/with appropriate emphasis and intonation to support the meaning of the text. Students read the same passage, copying your reading. (echo-reading) Students choose another brief passage and read it in the same manner to their partner, then swap over. Read parts of the text together (choral-read) to build fluency and self-confidence. Students practise speed-reading the list of the focus words from the inside front cover of the text to encourage automatic recall (words that can be recalled automatically have been orthographically mapped to students long term memory).

Spelling and writing through dictation: Read out the following passage for students to write. It uses words and sentences from the text as these are decodable. The focus is on encoding (spelling) rather than creating content.

(page 2)

The city of Rome in Italy is very old. It has existed for nearly 3,000 years. The rulers who lived there long ago formed a strong army. The Roman army was sent out to invade other lands so that the Romans could rule over them. The places they ruled over were called the 'Roman empire'. Men could join the Roman army at 17 years old. If Romans stayed in the army for 20 years, they were given cash and sometimes land. This was a good reason to join the army. Men from invaded lands joined the Roman army, too. You might wonder why.

(page 3)

Well, after 25 years, they could become Roman citizens. People wanted to be Roman citizens because then they would be looked after by the empire of Rome. These benefits helped the Roman army to grow.

Follow-up activities

Students complete the follow-up activities:

Worksheet 1: Phonics

/s/ spelt c (soft c). /n/ spelt gn.

Soft and hard c.

Complete sentences.

Definitions.

Worksheet 2: Comprehension

Vocabulary – word meanings and write sentences.

Write summary sentences.

Worksheet 3: History

Fill in facts on graphic organiser.

Worksheet 4: Science/Technology

Write sentences about structures, and illustrate.