

## History Y5 Su1 Plans

### Unit Rationale

The NC's focus is on 10th C Benin which creates problems for us. Not only are the resources sparse for this period, there is also little by way of written record, and hence very little described action. Whilst it is crucially important to study this indigenous African society before its encounters with Europeans, it does make sense to look at two other phases of Benin's history, notably the 15th and 16th century, when most surviving Bronzes were made, and the late Victorian period within the context of the empire.

### National Curriculum Objectives:

a non-European society that provides contrasts with British history – one study chosen from: early Islamic civilization, including a study of Baghdad c. AD 900; Mayan civilization c. AD 900; **Benin (West Africa) c. AD 900-1300.**

### Cross Curricular Links:

Geography - West Africa  
PSHE - learning about different cultures

### Trips/Visits:

The British Museum - to see the Benin Bronzes (FREE)  
<https://www.britishmuseum.org/about-us/british-museum-story/contested-objects-collection/benin-bronzes>  
The British Museum - workshop (£2.50 per child)  
<https://www.britishmuseum.org/learn/schools/ages-7-11/africa/school-presentation-people-benin>

### Modern Day Links:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-62456366> - Horniman to return the Benin Bronzes

### Prior Learning:

Y3 Au - compare with use of bronze in Britain  
Y3 Sp - building on skills of looking at another culture (Shang) and building a picture of what life was like there  
Y4 Au - Ancient Greeks, another different culture to learn about

### Substantive Knowledge:

- The Kingdom of Benin is located in a region of Nigeria
- The time of the Kingdom was 900-1300AD
- Obas were the rulers of the kingdoms
- There is very little physical evidence about Benin from before the 16thC
- The rise of Benin began before the Europeans arrived.
- The objects were looted from Benin City in 1897
- The British Empire invaded Benin and looted from them.

### Big ideas/Disciplinary Knowledge

### What next?

Interpretations Using evidence Similarity and difference	Y6 Su1 - examining different perspectives of the British Empire, comparing the Benin Empire to the British and revisiting the concept of invasion from Europeans and the changes that come as a result.
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Lesson	WALT	What should the children remember?	Lesson plan and outcome	Key Vocabulary	Key Questions
Lesson 1	explain why we learn about Benin in school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupils are able to locate Benin region of Nigeria on world map and the period when it was at its height on a pre-marked timeline containing other periods they have studied</li> <li>- Pupils grasp that this was a civilization of cities and towns, powerful kings and a large empire which traded over long distances.</li> <li>- They learn that craftsmen</li> </ul>	<p>Quiz: What topics have you studied in history this year? How do they link to other topics you have covered? What are some skills that a historian needs?</p> <p>Start by locating Benin in time and place on world map and timeline. Mark on the timeline all the other periods pupils have studied so far. Draw comparisons especially with societies nearest in time e.g. Anglo-Saxons.</p> <p>Introduce pupils to slide 2. What do pupils think they are? Explain that this image holds the clue to Benin's significance. By the end of the lesson pupils will be able to say why.</p> <p>Use slides 3 and 4 to place Benin in its geographical and historical context. Slide 4 shows that we are primarily studying the 10-12th centuries but Benin was also important later as referenced in slides 5 and 6. This will help develop pupils' chronological understanding.</p> <p>Rather than paint too detailed a picture for the pupils, invite them to work out some ideas for themselves. Why do they think Benin might be important? Slides 2 and 7-12 offer some hints. So, place these around the room as if an art gallery and ask pupils, in pairs, to visit each of them. This will free you to support those who need help. RS1 and RS2 give background information and further clues to help pupils to interpret the images.</p>	<p>empire civilisation cities towns smelting bronzes culture</p>	

		<p>were skilful in bronze and ivory.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They learn to make deductions and inferences based on visual clues.</li> <li>- They appreciate the religious belief systems such as the one to ensure good harvest.</li> <li>- They learn that West Africa invented the smelting of copper and zinc ores and the casting of bronze as early as 10th century.</li> <li>- Pupils realise that Benin still exists as a civilization with its Oba, palaces</li> </ul>	<p>Pupils feedback on their emerging ideas. They will be pretty sketchy at this stage. After all, if they knew, why would they need to do the activity. The idea is to encourage involvement and stimulate curiosity.</p> <p>Gallery: Pupils tour the room set up as an art gallery of a number of images of Benin life. Working in pairs they have to make deductions. e.g. we learn about them because of the quality of the bronze figures. Images can be found here: <a href="http://www.metmuseum.org/">http://www.metmuseum.org/</a> has over 300 artefacts online for you to make your selection or <a href="http://www.britishmuseum.org/pdf/KingdomOfBenin_Presentation">http://www.britishmuseum.org/pdf/KingdomOfBenin_Presentation</a></p> <p>Spectrum: Pupils are given 10 possible reasons for studying Benin at school printed on cards which they have to discuss and place on a spectrum ranging from least to MOST important reason.</p> <p>Task: Pupils have to write an interview response to the interviewer saying 'I hear you are studying Benin in your school as a new topic. Why do you think it is important to know about this civilization?' Or Pupils write a response to their spectrum choices e.g. I chose ____ as the most important reason because...</p>		
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		court, artist etc.			
Lesson 2	use evidence to suggest what Benin was like 1000 years ago.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupils grasp that we have to rely on written accounts that come from a later period mainly four or five hundred years later.</li> <li>- They learn that Dutch and Portuguese were impressed by the order of the city. esp. of the palace which comprised about a third of city.</li> <li>- Pupils are able to use site plan of Benin city to locate important landmarks</li> </ul>	<p>Quiz: What is smelting? When have you learnt about this before in history? What were the craftsmen in the Kingdom of Benin skilled in? Do you think the people of Benin were religious? Use evidence to support your answer.</p> <p>In this lesson, pupils are introduced to the idea of a society from a distant time about which very little evidence remains. This can be frustrating for pupils who crave a clear picture of this past society. To make it come alive for them we have invested time in selecting some key artists' illustrations and written descriptions which pupils need to draw on in order to have to design a time traveller's tourist trail.</p> <p>Use slide 2 and 3 to introduce the main activity, to design a time traveller's tourist trail and to offer ideas as to what the key places to visit might be. Slides 4, 5, 6 and 7 offer some lovely drawings to stimulate pupils' imaginations.</p> <p>The idea is to get pupils to work collaboratively to think about not just the physical buildings but also the sights sounds and smells that might have been heard in 11C Benin City. Although help is offered in the form of written descriptions such as RS1 and RS2, and guided notes RS3, you will want to encourage pupils to use a wider range of reference works.</p> <p>In terms of what they might come up with in relation to sights, sounds and smells, I offer a list of ideas below.</p>	monarchy Oba trade barter	

		<p>e.g. Oba's palace.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupils grasp that the brass plaques are a rich source of evidence. We rely a lot on these 15th plaques but they show only men. They realise that some illustrations from a later period might not be accurate by pointing out weaknesses in visual sources. The artists might not even have been there.</li> <li>- Pupils are aware that evidence we have does not show how the ordinary</li> </ul>	<p>For smell, they might visit the market where they might smell pepper. They might experience smoke from the furnaces or animal skins stinking in the leatherworkers' ward where drums are made.</p> <p>Sounds: craftsmen working the brasses, hammering, voices in the market/hundreds laughing and talking – use a few words; music and dancing from the Oba's palace; sounds of the horn blown during a ceremony or procession; the clanging of the later bell.</p> <p>Sight: the imposing Oba's palace; the colours of the goods at the market; brasses glowing red-hot; the mud walls around the town.</p> <p>Now turn pupils' attention to thinking about how we know any of this information on which we have based our guides. How did the artist know how to draw the pictures? This will be the focus of the next two sessions, but it is worth raising the question now, using slide 8 to help.</p> <p>Pupils will realise that the pictures they have been shown on slides 4-7 are the product of the creative imagination of a historian and an artist who have not just dreamt the picture up but have tried to create the image on the lid of a jigsaw puzzle, based on the pieces we have left to us.</p> <p>Task: Pupils to produce a short leaflet , a time-travellers' guide to Benin 1,000 year ago, illustrated where necessary but drawing heavily on the work they have done on the senses.</p> <p>Some good websites for teacher reference: <a href="http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/exhibitions/benin/exhibit_hemes">http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/exhibitions/benin/exhibit_hemes</a></p>		
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		<p>people lived in villages outside the city as farmers, growers of yams and vegetables.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They know that the king was the most important person in the government and treated them with great respect. In the city there were two types of chief - palace chiefs and town chiefs.</li> </ul>	<p>See also British Museum 'The Oba inspects the craft Guilds' <a href="http://www.britishmuseum.org/pdf/KingdomOfBenin_Presentation">http://www.britishmuseum.org/pdf/KingdomOfBenin_Presentation</a></p>		
Lesson 3	examine artefacts and sources to make deductions about Benin society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupils grasp that there is very little physical evidence about Benin from before the 16thC. There are</li> </ul>	<p>N.B. Although the NC talks about Benin c 900 there is so little evidence from this time that we are forced to draw on 15 and 16th century objects to make this study interesting.</p> <p>Quiz: How reliable is the evidence that we looked at last week? What did it show? What did it not tell us?</p> <p>Introduction</p>	<p>culture evidence archeology trade Animism</p>	

		<p>some parts of the walls, moats and ditches, that's all.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- So we have to rely on stories and archaeology rather than written records.</li> <li>- They grasp the importance of the Oba e.g. bronze heads with strings of precious coral beads show his wealth and status.</li> <li>- Pupils make deductions of increasing sophistication as they learn more about the context of 10th century Benin and the arrival of the European</li> </ul>	<p>By way of a more arresting start to the session, show pupils the image on slide 2 of the PowerPoint presentation. In pairs can they play Fastest Finger First? With a copy of the picture in front of them, pupils take it in turn to find something in the picture that they think tells us about 11th century Benin. They point at the relevant part of the image and then have to say simply what it is. This quick, 'easy access', task is designed to give lower-attaining pupils some confidence using the unfamiliar material. Ask for quick feedback, keeping the pace brisk and avoiding the temptation to dwell on misconceptions. Some ideas will be very rudimentary at this stage, but they will be refined as the lesson progresses. The more able should be encouraged to use more specialist language e.g. I think that man is the Oba, or I think this is a procession.</p> <p>Step 1: Mining for Meaning Now ask the question: What can we learn from this artist's illustration? Can pupils come up with 5 top deductions? Share their ideas, adding your own when the well runs dry. Use the animations on slide 2 of the PowerPoint to draw attention to the most significant. The sort of things you might expect them to say might include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Oba's palace</li> <li>2 One of the Oba's important officials</li> <li>3 A sun-shade for important people</li> <li>4 The Oba</li> <li>5 Leopards. These show that the Oba was powerful and strong</li> <li>6 Rattle stick</li> <li>7 Blowhorn</li> <li>8 Villagers watching the procession</li> </ol> <p>Step 2</p>		
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		<p>traders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupils are able to create plausible alternative explanations for meaning of objects, keeping consistent with the characteristic features of the time.</li> <li>- Pupils understand the symbolic use of leopards etc on brasses. Crocodiles, policemen of the waters when shown on a plaque probably stand for the king's authority to punish wrongdoers</li> </ul>	<p>Now ask the question, How did the artist know what to draw? Ask the pupils to think about the sorts of evidence an historian covering this period might use. As a gentle way into this demanding, but important question, ask pupils to consider the wealth of evidence available to historians in the future who might want to study Nigerian society of today. This will get them talking freely. Now return to the original question. Listed on Resource Sheet 1 are 10 possible sources. Which do they think would have been available to historians studying the 11th century Benin? Ask all pupils to complete the list but ask the more able to consider which would have been most useful. Rank them 1-5 the most useful being 5. Discuss their ideas using slide 2 to help. Now tie the pupils' thinking on evidence to a more physical image. How did the artist know about each of the features numbered on slide 2? Slide 4 helpfully shows some examples: a photograph of a figure blowing a horn; a bronze plaque of an Oba; a model of a leopard with slide 5 offering a more detailed explanation. Slide 6 shows a Dutch engraving from the 17th century. Can pupils see the ways in which the modern artist has used its detail?</p> <p>Step 3: Call my Bluff          Now it's time to be a little more creative. Pupils are shown four mystery objects singly on slides 7, 8, 9, and 10 and then as a composite slide 11. In their teams of three, they each have to come up with a possible plausible identification and explanation of use of four separate objects for which they have been given images. They work collaboratively, but must each come up with their own plausible explanation. This presents a wonderful opportunity to develop pupils' persuasive speaking. Pupils will benefit from you having modelled this. Three objects they are given are sufficiently similar to things they might have seen in the world around them today to enable them to make an educated guess.</p>		
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			<p>Image 4 is designed to be more obscure, offering greater challenge to the more able. When all groups have offered their explanations, it is time to get the answers. Who was right? Use the notes below and slides 12-15 to to give an explanation of each item (horn, altar bell, armlet and rattle staff). This really helps pupils to see the link between the object and the society that produced it. Below you'll find details on each object.</p> <p>Notes on objects</p> <p>Note that no scale is offered to pupils, thereby giving even more scope for pupils to be imaginative. When you feedback, it will be important to stress the size of each.</p> <p>Object 1 This is a horn. The more observant might remember this from the picture they saw of the Oba's procession.</p> <p>Object 2 This is an armlet shown in context on slide 14.</p> <p>Object 3 This is an altar or clapper bell. It was made of brass and was used for processions or in ceremonies. Can the pupils spot one in the picture of the procession they have seen before? The bell has a clapper fixed inside that swings when it is shaken. Chiefs wore these bells on their chest. Often they hung them from leopard tooth necklaces. They believed this protected them when they went into battle. Bells were also rung to signal victory. As it is very difficult to control the sound made, it is very unlikely that it was used as a musical instrument.</p> <p>Object 4</p>		
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			<p>This is an Ukhurhe or rattle staff. It was made of ivory and was used for calling up the spirits. It is carved to look like a bamboo cane. There is a carved slot at the bottom end which holds a small rod. It is this rod that makes the stick rattle when the sick is shaken up and down. At the other end of the stick is a clenched fist. This shows that the owner was a powerful person. By holding up an ukhurhe, the Oba showed he had taken on the power of the Obas of the past. They were often used in ceremonies. Tapping it on the ground called the world of the spirits.</p> <p>You could instead use these images to play Call My Bluff or use additional images you find for yourself. Here are further instructions.</p> <p>You will have made sure that each group of three has a different image. So, when no-one is watching, smuggle the correct answer to one child in each of the groups. Tell the pupils you give it to not to tell anyone else that they have been given the true one, and to keep a poker face. You'll need to use all your guile not to draw attention to them. If I suspect that some kids are wising up to what's going on often use a decoy to make it seem that I'm giving the true one to someone when I'm not.</p> <p>When the first of the groups of three speak their three options where only one is the given truth, ask the rest of the class to guess who is telling the truth. Repeat for the other groups.</p> <p>Step 4: Quality captions Pupils draw and annotate each of the objects and underneath write a quality caption, using the stem phrase. This object is... It comes from (place and time). You can see the detail such as...It tells us that...</p>		
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			<p>Step 5: Curator’s dilemma</p> <p>Pupils now go into role as with the Mantle of the Expert approach. Their job is to advise a group of museum curators who are facing severe cuts in the number of objects they can display at any one time and advise as to the star object to make the centrepiece of the museum display. Tough decisions have to be made and good reasons given for the choices. Start by showing pupils 6 images (slides 17-22) they are to comment on, from which they have to select just 4. Criteria might include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;The object is beautiful in its own right</li> <li>&gt;It shows the most typical features of the Benin culture</li> <li>&gt;It is interesting with lots of detail</li> <li>&gt;Lots of people will come to the museum to see it</li> <li>&gt;It’s very skilfully made.</li> </ul> <p>They might also want to add some of their own that they have really admired from their wider browsing or from the Call My Bluff activities. Initially pupils whittle the number down to 4 and then they subject each to careful analysis.</p> <p>Support sheet RS2 reminds pupils of these criteria and then offers a grid on which to record the marks they give to each object.</p> <p>There are no ‘right answers’ for this. More important is the discussion and the chance for lower-attaining pupils to make points every bit as valid as the most able.</p> <p>Task: Conclude this activity with a brief letter to the curator explaining their choice of the 4 objects and the one they think should be the centrepiece.</p>		
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<p>Lesson 4</p>	<p>identify the changes that took place when the European traders started settling.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupils understand that the rise of Benin began before the Europeans arrived.</li> <li>- Pupils understand that Benin supplied the Portuguese with pepper, ivory, leopard skins and slaves as they were ideally suited for trade both on coast and inland.</li> <li>- They know that this encouraged growth of brass casting for European market. Portuguese especially wanted manillas - bracelets which were</li> </ul>	<p>Quiz: Why is it difficult for us to learn about Benin in 900BC? Which of the following is not a type of evidence that we can rely on from Benin in 900BC</p> <p>stories archeology written records</p> <p>How do we know the Oba was an important figure in Benin society?</p> <p>Start by showing pupils slide 2 which presents two 16th century bronzes. One depicts indigenous Benin society, the other a European figure. Can the pupils explain how they know which is which? Remind them of the timeline using slide 3. Make sure that pupils understand the concept of voyages of exploration and encounter at the end of the 15th century. Relate to events in Britain they may have studied perhaps when covering the Tudors. Using this knowledge can they come up with a likely date for the Benin bronze shown on slide 4 artist's impression on slide 5? Both late 15th century as it was the arrival of the Europeans that saw the production of the bronzes.</p> <p>With slide 6 showing, remind pupils that Benin bronzes were a key source for historians of this period for both the Benin society itself and for their reaction to the Portuguese traders. Slide 7 gives additional information that can be gleaned from the image. Work through the 5 animated labels. Slide 8 broadens the discussion to list some of the products the European brought with them. Although this topic, as designed by the makers of the National Curriculum, focuses on the period a few centuries earlier, it is still vital for what follows for pupils to know that most evidence comes from a time after the encounter with Europeans. From the 15th century onwards, Benin's contact with Europe</p>	<p>merchants colonisation trade</p>	
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		<p>made in Holland traded throughout West Africa as a type of currency and melted down by brass workers in Benin.</p>	<p>was both friendly and unbroken: first the Portuguese, then the Dutch, the French and finally (and unhappily at the end), the British. It was based on mutually beneficial trade especially in ivory brass and copper, but also cowrie shell, coral, firearms and hats! Benin tended to treat European goods as raw materials to be turned into objects of interest to the royal court.</p> <p>Step 1 Start with using slide 9. Now ask pupils to consider why Benin people would have wanted to create so many bronzes. Play Who Wants to Be a Millionaire, offering the options on slide 9.</p> <p>Pupils collaborate in small teams of 4 to come up with their best answer. If they all agree, then the team scores 5 points: otherwise, just 1 point for each correct answer. This should encourage persuasive speaking and listening! Make sure you go over the options explaining why one answer is better than the others.</p> <p>Step 2 Zones of inference.</p> <p>Pupils are shown an image of a bronze on slide 11. They are then given a template on which to record their thoughts RS1. They have to build their understanding of what the image signifies in three distinct stages. They start in the first, or innermost, zone with what they can see and record their ideas there. These ideas will inevitably be simple, quite literal observations Then move to the next zone with what they can work out, prompting them to infer and make deductions. They end with outer zone, what I need to know/don't understand. Some pupils will benefit from having this modelled for them. Pupils then frame questions</p>		
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**Ambition Collaboration Fairness Respect**

			<p>in pairs to pose to you in the hot seat.</p> <p>Step 3 Now show slide 12 of a different bronze. Can pupils work out what it tells us? Put yourself in role as the person who made the bronze.</p> <p>Hot seating you as person who made the bronze? Try to stay in role to build a sense of period.</p> <p>To help you field their questions, RS2 gives you some background information and a few suggestions for responses during this Q&amp;A session. Don't be afraid to say 'I can't remember why I did that, my memory's fading!!'</p>		
Lesson 5	debate whether the Benin Bronzes should be returned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The objects were looted from Benin City in 1897</li> <li>- The taking of the Bronzes could be seen as another example of European countries have exploited Africa</li> <li>- Some people say that it is important to have the objects in</li> </ul>	<p>This lesson is guaranteed to provoke a lively debate. Armed with all the contextual knowledge they need, and stimulated by some thought-provoking quotations, pupils work in teams to advocate a particular course of action. By way of preparation, they have to speculate as to likely arguments first before being given some 'influence cards' to deepen their thinking. Recently, in August 2022 the Horseman museum agreed to return a large number of Benin bronzes to Nigeria as this link shows: <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-62456366">https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-62456366</a> Yet another example of how history constantly needs to be rewritten in the context of the times.</p> <p>Introduction This Benin bronze (slide2) is housed in a museum in Exeter. The British museum has hundreds more. But should they be there, or should they be returned to Benin? Clearly emotions run high on these matters. Slide 3 and 4 offer a couple of typical perspectives. But what do the pupils think? It is likely</p>		

		<p>British museums so that people can learn about Benin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The objects show the real history of the British Empire which may not be understood if it were not in a museum for people all over the world to see.</li> </ul>	<p>that they will feel sympathy for the Benin people and advocate the bronzes return to Africa. But what arguments would they use. Put them into groups of 3 and ask them to think of any reasons for and against returning them.</p> <p>Step 1 Now gather pupils' early ideas and possibly record them on the IWB. Then introduce the idea of the debate using slide 5 to emphasise the need to not only advance their arguments but find ways of countering their opponents'.</p> <p>Step 2 Now divide the class into those who advocate and those who oppose return of the bronzes to Benin. Give pupils plenty of time to pool their early ideas.</p> <p>Step 3 Now add depth to the discussions by providing each group with a set of further ideas provided as RS1. To start with they might simply want to classify them into pro and anti. Encourage them to take this further by ranking them in terms of the punch they pack. Which are the three strongest arguments on each side, in which order? How would you weaken the opposing team's arguments?</p> <p>Step 4 The debate itself.</p>		
Lesson 6	answer the question, 'How can we learn about the Kingdom of Benin?'		<p>Quiz: Name one reasons for the Benin Bronzes being returned to Benin. Name one reason against the Bronzes being returned.</p> <p>Pupils to write a response to the question using their</p>		

			learning from the unit.		
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