

# Does Rome need another province?

IT IS AD43. You are the Emperor Claudius. Your position as Emperor is not secure. There has already been one attempted rebellion against you, and there is a shortage of grain in Rome.

As you can see from Source 2 on the previous page, GAUL has been conquered. It has been a Roman PROVINCE for 90 years. If the Empire is going to keep expanding, Britain is the obvious next step. Previous emperors thought the same. Augustus even raised an invasion army – but he had to put down a rebellion in Gaul and never got to Britain.

Now it's your turn. What should you do about Britain? Should you invade it?

There are a number of things you need to take into account to decide whether to invade:

- Can you keep up a profitable trade with Britain if you don't invade?
- Will an invasion be successful? Can you beat the Britons? A victory would do your reputation good. Every Emperor needs a military victory to help win support back in Rome.
- Will it be worth it financially? Are you likely to get more money in taxes from the Britons than it would cost you to keep Britain under control?
- Will it help security on your borders?
- Does Britain have resources that you want to exploit?

Sources 1–8 show some of the information you know about Britain. Read through them all and answer the questions before deciding whether to invade Britain.

1. Read Sources 1–4. What kind of place do the writers think Britain was?
2. Are some of the descriptions more reliable than others? Explain why.
3. What do the sources disagree about? Why do you think they disagree?
4. Write down three facts that Claudius would have known about Britain from Sources 1–4, and three opinions.

**SOURCE 1** A description written in the first century BC by a Roman poet, Horace. He never visited Britain

*“Britain is at the very end of the earth. The Britons are savage towards foreigners. The seas around Britain are full of sea-monsters.”*

**SOURCE 2** From Julius Caesar's accounts of his invasions of Britain in 55BC and in 54BC. He invaded because British tribes were helping the Gauls in their fight against Roman rule

*“All Britons dye themselves with woad, which produces a blue dye and makes them look wild in battle.”*

*The population of Britain is very large, and there are many farmhouses. There is a large number of cattle. Most of the tribes living inland do not grow grain. They live on milk and meat and wear skins.*

*For coins they use bronze, gold or iron. Tin is found inland and small quantities of iron near the coast. The bronze they use is imported. There is timber of every kind.*

*The Britons' method of fighting is from chariots, dashing about all over the battle field hurling their spears. Our men were unnerved by these tactics, which were strange to them.”*

**SOURCE 3** Written by the Roman politician Cicero at the time of Caesar's invasion. He had not been to Britain

*“We know there is not a trace of silver in the island, and that the only hope of plunder is slaves.”*

**SOURCE 4** A description written 60 years after Caesar's invasion by the Greek writer Strabo. He did not visit Britain

*“Their way of life is a bit like that of the Gauls but much cruder and more barbaric. For example, although they have plenty of milk, some of them do not know how to make cheese. Nor do they know anything about farming.”*

*They have more rain than snow, and on days when there is no rain the fog hangs about for so long that the sun shines for about three or four hours a day.*

*Grain, cattle, gold, silver and iron are found in Britain. They are exported with hides, slaves and excellent hunting dogs.”*



**SOURCE 5** Two events in Britain in AD41

- a) *Cunobelinus, chief of the Catuvellauni tribe, died. His sons were anti-Roman.*
- b) *A Briton called Berikos was driven out of the island as a result of the civil war, and came to Rome to try to persuade Claudius to send a force to invade.”*



**SOURCE 6** A Roman coin showing a picture of a Celtic chieftain that the Romans had defeated. The Celts were the people who lived in Britain and Gaul

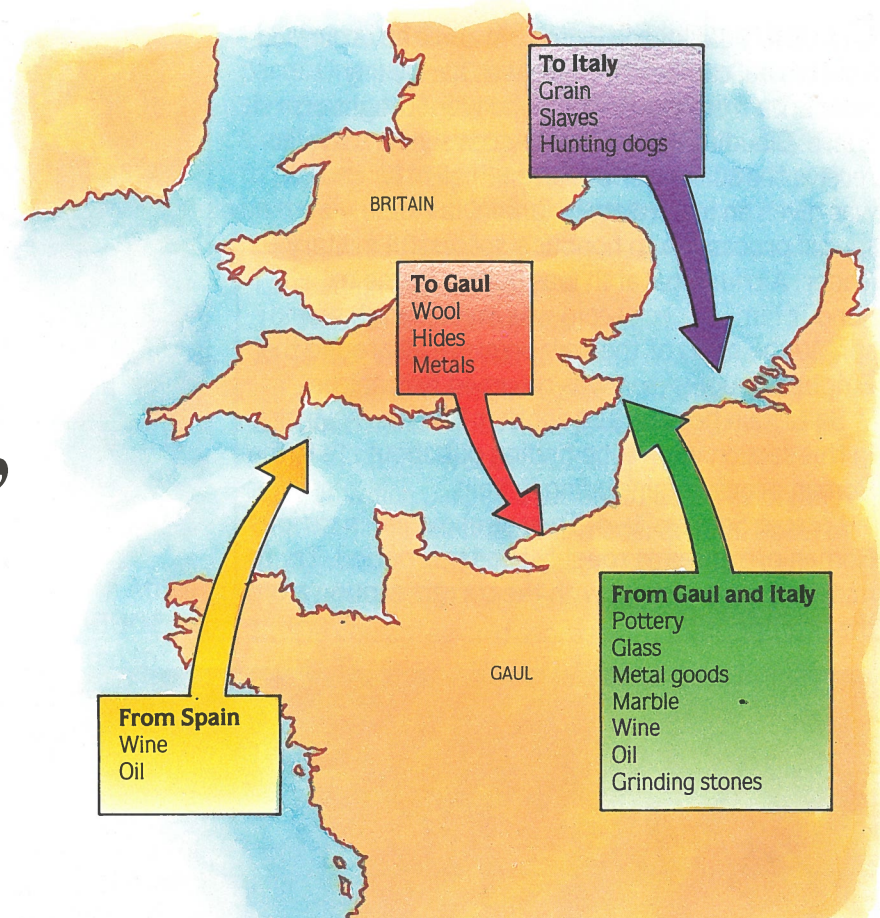
**SOURCE 8** Written by the historian Strabo just after Augustus had called off his planned invasion of Britain in 26BC

*“Although the Romans could have possessed Britain, they scorned to do so. They saw there was nothing at all to fear from the Britons, since they are not strong enough to cross over the ocean and attack us.”*

*Some of the British chieftains have become friends to Augustus. They have made the island virtually a Roman possession.*

*The Britons are likely to put up with heavy duties on their imports and exports. There is no need to keep troops there.*

*It would require at least one legion [5000 soldiers] to collect taxes from them. The cost of the troops would be as much as the Britons would pay in taxes. Besides, there would be some danger in using force.”*



**SOURCE 7** Map showing trade that was probably going on between Britain and the Roman Empire in AD40

5. Add to your list any new facts that Sources 5–8 tell you about Britain.

## Activity

Now decide whether it is a good idea to invade Britain. Get into pairs.

1. On a scale of one to five indicate whether a successful invasion might be good or bad for:
 

	Bad	Good
■ trade	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
■ security of the border	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
■ making you more popular	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
2. How likely are you to win? Very likely? Don't know? Very unlikely?
3. What's your decision? Will you invade?
4. Now, on your own, write a speech explaining your decision. Say which of the reasons was most important in influencing you for or against an invasion.