

Why did the Anglo-Saxons come to Britain?

Lesson Objectives ~

The different reasons that the Anglo-Saxons travelled to Britain.
How to communicate meaning through movement.

Success Criteria ~

Use of dynamics to communicate meaning.
Use of levels and directions.

Warm up

Ask pupils to find a space and make a low shape. Ask them to rise up steadily as you count up to 8.

Repeat two or three times, encouraging them to find a different way of rising each time. They might include twists or turns, stretches or balances, etc.

Ask pupils to repeat the previous task but this time concentrate on making their actions very fluid - like water.

Repeat three or four times encouraging them to move in a smooth and continuous manner.

Ask pupils to repeat the task, this time deciding for themselves when they rise and how long they take ascending. Remind them to maintain the fluid and continuous dynamic.

Add some music and allow 1 to 2 minutes.

*Describe what you see the children doing - eg 'Dominic has included a turn as he rises.'
Or, 'Shula is wriggling her shoulders very smoothly.'*

Remind / inform pupils that it is thought that the Anglo-Saxons left their homelands because of rising floodwaters which meant that they were no longer able to grow crops.

Ask pupils to repeat the previous task with this in mind.

Add the music and allow another minute or two.

Continue to describe the actions and the effect this is communicating - eg 'Tia's soft, rippling actions in her back look like water flowing.' Or, 'Jai is showing great control as he rises - that looks like the water is steadily increasing.'

Rising and sinking - Control

Exploration and Composition

Ask pupils to identify the other reasons that the Anglo Saxons travelled to Britain:

- * To fight the Britons
- * To farm the land
- * To make new homes
- * They were invited to help battle the Scots and the Picts.

*** Fighting the Britons. Ask pupils to find a space and imagine that they are holding a sword which is big and heavy. Ask them to hold the sword in front of them. Can they swing the sword from side to side? Can they lunge forward with the sword? Can they raise the sword and swing it downwards?**

Remind pupils that they would also have held a shield to protect themselves. Can they block an attack coming from above? What would they do if someone lunged at them?

Ask pupils to take the next minute imagining that they have a sword and a shield. Can they use the sword to attack the opposition and the shield to defend themselves?

Add some music and allow 1 minute or so for pupils to explore swinging (swords) and blocking (shields) actions. Encourage them to use different levels and dynamics.

Directions / Levels / Control

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**Ask pupils to find a partner and get into a space together.
Ask them to imagine that one is a Briton, defending their settlement and the other is an Anglo-Saxon attempting to take over.**

Ask the pairs to devise three different still shapes showing the battle between them.

Allow up to 2 minutes to devise these.

Encourage them to demonstrate different levels, control and balance in holding their shapes and facial expression and tension to communicate the situation.

If you have an odd number of children you can include a group of three where two represent one group - eg the Britons - and the other child represents the other group.

Ask the pairs to show you Shape 1...then Shape 2...then Shape 3.

Ask the pairs to now think about linking the shapes together.

Encourage them to use Shape 1 as a starting position, then include some sword swinging or blocking actions to move into Shape 2. Then a change of level to connect Shape 2 to Shape 3.

It is possible that some pupils will get very absorbed into their 'fighting' actions and lose focus on the clarity of their shapes. Draw their attention back by guiding them when they should be in their three shapes. Keep the transitions brief and do not move on to the second transition until everyone is holding their second shape.

In a lesson lasting approximately 45 minutes it is likely you will now need to move to the Cool down. The remaining ideas could be used in subsequent lessons. Alternatively you could organise the class into different groups, each showing the different reasons for the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons.

*** Farming the land. Ask pupils to find a space and curl up in a small shape.**

Ask them to use one part of their body and slowly wriggle it upwards until each child is reaching to their fullest.

Repeat this three or four times, encouraging pupils to use a different leading body part each time.

Discuss with pupils what sort of crops the Anglo-Saxons might have grown - wheat, oats, barley - and how they would have harvested them.

Ask pupils to demonstrate the swinging action suggesting the use of a scythe or a sickle.

Encourage the children to twist fully as they repeatedly swing.

Ask them to put the two actions together. First curl up in a small shape, then using one body part gently grow upwards to fully extended. Then transfer to the swinging, twisting action of the harvesting of the crops.

With more able groups the concept of a plough could be included where they could work in pairs, travelling one behind the other, as the ox pulls the plough. The lead person guides where to travel, the rear person suggests the blade tilling the soil.

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Exploration and Composition	<p style="text-align: center;">* Make new homes. Ask pupils to get into groups of 3 or 4.</p> <p>Remind or inform them of how Anglo-Saxon houses typically looked: triangular shape; long, sloping roof; fire in the centre with a hole in the roof above to allow the smoke out; narrow slits for windows.</p> <p>Ask pupils to use their bodies to recreate the shape of an Anglo-Saxon house. Then add a following section showing the central fire and the smoke curling through the hole in the roof.</p> <p>Ask pupils to find a way of moving from their 'house' shape to their 'fire' shape. <i>You might wish to suggest that they include actions such as gathering wood for the fire or stirring the food in the cauldron to link one shape to the next. They might move one at a time (canon) to give greater clarity to the actions.</i></p>	Directions / Levels / Control
Performance	<p>Organise one group to watch the work of another in order to give feedback. Consider filming the work to promote deeper analytical conversations when feeding back.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ask the observing group to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Do the actions communicate their dance idea (projection)? * Is there enough variety of level and dynamics? <p style="text-align: center;">Do they use the space well - formations, proximity to each other, levels?</p> <p>After receiving feedback allow the groups more time to apply any helpful suggestions.</p>	Analysis
Performance	<p>Organise a sharing of work as appropriate to your group. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Selecting 2 or 3 groups as examples of good practice * Half the class performing to the other half <p>* Showing the group who gave feedback (have the changes been successfully applied?)</p>	Analysis
Cool down	<p style="text-align: center;">Ask pupils to find a space again and lie down.</p> <p>Remind the children of the warm up activity of rising for 8 counts in a watery way. Ask them to repeat this but also include sinking for 8 counts.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Count from 1 to 8 to encourage the rising actions; then from 8 to 1 to indicate sinking.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Repeat 3 or 4 times, each time counting a little slower.</i></p>	Rising and sinking

Suggested music:

'Woad to Ruin' - composer: Hans Zimmer
(Available to listen / watch on YouTube)