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| Year 6 – Term 1 – The Kingdom of Benin | | | |
| Prior Knowledge | | Prior Skills | |
| Children know that empires are built due to a quest for resources such as precious metals or land (Romans, Vikings, Anglo-Saxons and Greeks). Invading and occupying peoples build settlements, trade with others and leave behind architecture and elements of their culture. They understand the concept of invasion, battle and war. | | Knowing that invading and settling armies cause change over time. That there are similarities between invasions, but also differences depending on time of occurrence and motivation for invasion. They know that some are more significant than others and have more impact/a longer lasting legacy. | |
| Planned outcome: To know that the Kingdom of Benin began in the 900s when Edo people cut down trees to make clearings for settlements in the forest. Powerful Obas ruled their growing kingdoms, building vast armies that expanded from Ewuare’s rule in 1440 into an empire. Benin became rich due to trade with Portugal. After 150 years and the death of the last warrior king, the Benin empire began to shrink and was invaded by the British at the end of the 1800s. The British wanted to gain control of Benin’s palm oil and rubber. The Kingdom of Benin became part of the British Empire in 1897, although it is now part of the country of Nigeria.   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Hierarchy and Power | Community and Culture | Conflict and Conquest | Exploration and Invention | | Oba Ewuare was an absolute monarch of the Benin Kingdom. He became king because he was the child of a king. | Settlements in forest clearings grew into an empire. The Benin civilisation became wealthy through battles with other kingdoms and trade with Europe (particularly Portugal). Their metal art work and decorations show details of their civilisation. Many of these were stolen as part of the British invasion, and are now in museums around the world. | The Benin leaders were warrior kings who won many battles against local chiefs, and gained more land. They built an empire over time. When the last warrior king died, the empire began to shrink. Ultimately the British invaded after the Obas tried to prevent trade. The Kingdom became part of their empire. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Similarities and Differences | Chronology | Causation and Consequence | Changes over Time | Significance | Enquiry | | Compare Benin on a timeline with others periods of history – what was going on elsewhere in the world?  Global trade was building throughout the period  Compare Benin bronzes with other works of art from the period. | The Kingdom of Benin (900 – 1900) – after Romans and Greeks, overlap with Vikings and Anglo-Saxons, throughout Medieval period and Shakespeare’s time, ended with the Victorians.  Key events within the Benin time period on a simple timeline – built as learn about events. | The Benin kingdom was weakened when the warrior kings’ rules came to an end. Constant war was required to maintain the empire. The Benin kingdom came to an end when the Oba refused to continue trading with the British. The British invaded to get control of the palm oil and rubber resources.  Benin bronzes are in museums all over the world as a result of the British colonisation. | The Kingdom/Empire grew as a result of continued war. The 5 warrior kings built vast armies that were able to expand the kingdom.  Trade with northern Europe made Benin rich.  The invasion of the British in 1897 changed everything for Benin. The Oba of Benin leads religious ceremonies but no longer rules his people. | We study Benin because it is an example of an empire that sustained power with an absolute monarch over 500 years. It also resisted the forces of the slave trade and norther European colonial empires. | Why is the story of Benin so important?  What do the Benin bronzes tell us about the kingdom? | | | | |
| Learning journey – planned steps to ensure children meet the planned outcome  To understand the concepts of kingdom and empire by linking back to previously taught units. Know how they are different and the same, and what are examples of both.  Locate Benin on a map of Africa. Establish what children understand of Africa and possibly Benin.  The Kingdom of Benin began in the 900s when the Edo people settled in the rain forest of West Africa. They cut down trees to make clearings in the forest. Use timelines to compare with other events that were happening at the same time – Vikings in Britain have already been studied.  Introduce the concept of warrior king and the story of the 5 Obas starting with Ewuare that ruled and expanded the kingdom into an empire from 1440 – 1600. Compare on a timeline the events happening elsewhere. Children know about life in medieval Britain to compare with.  From 1440 African trade began with northern European countries, for Benin this was particularly with Portugal. This made the empire rich. Benin traded brass items, ivory, peppercorns, palm oil, rubber and enslaved people for cowrie shells and guns.  Using the Benin Bronzes and ivory carvings as examples of art and culture of the kingdom. What can we learn about their civilisation?  After the death of the last great warrior king, the Benin empire gradually started to shrink. Britain wanted to gain control of Benin’s lucrative palm oil and rubber resources, so invaded in 1897. The Oba had wanted to cut all contact with Britain, but Britain insisted on its right to trade. As a consequence of the invasion, Benin became part of the British Empire and much of its art was looted and sold.  Benin became part of the independent country of Nigeria in 1960. The Oba carries out religious ceremonies, but no longer rules his people. | Tier 1  king forest  Tier 2  empire kingdom trade  bronze warrior loot  independent  Tier 3  Oba Benin palm oil  rubber ivory brass | |