In the year 55BC, 55 years before Jesus was born, Julius Caesar came to Britain with a small fleet of ships. He sent men into the countryside and they reported to him that the land was green and fertile, and food was plentiful. There were people who could be taken as slaves, and minerals such as gold, silver, iron and tin could be taken from the ground.

Julius Caesar decided that he would go back to Rome, gather a greater fleet and many soldiers and invade Britain. He tried this the following year, with limited success. Although he defeated some of the tribes in southern Britain and took some prisoners back to Rome as slaves, he had to abandon his attempt.

It was not until AD43 that the Romans gathered a large enough army to conquer Britain, under the Emperor Claudius. One of the worst battles was at Colchester where a British leader called Caractacus was captured and taken to Rome.

The Romans were good rulers and built new roads, houses, bridges and forts. They encouraged the Britons to live in a more civilised way.

But the Roman army had to work hard to keep their power. Queen Boudicca, leader of the Iceni tribe in eastern Britain, led a rebellion against the Romans. The Romans defeated her, and Boudicca poisoned herself rather than be captured.

The tribes of Scotland led many raids against the Romans and so, in AD122, the Emperor Hadrian ordered the Roman army to build a great wall across the north of England to separate the land under Roman rule from these fierce tribes. This wall was named Hadrian's Wall, and some parts of it can still be seen today, together with the ruins of some of the forts which were built along the wall.

Legions of soldiers were stationed in the forts, ready to go out and defend Roman Britain from attack.

The Romans ruled Britain for over 400 years, but then their armies left to fight in Europe. The British were left to defend themselves, and much of the good that the Romans did was lost.

Answer these questions in sentences. Write the answers in your book.

1. List the reasons why Julius Caesar decided that he would invade Britain.
2. Why didn't he try to invade in 55BC?
3. What did Julius Caesar achieve in 54BC?
4. How long was it until Emperor Claudius invaded Britain?
5. List some of the improvements the Romans made in Britain.
6. Who was the woman who led a rebellion against the Romans?
7. Why did Hadrian order a wall to be built?
8. Why did the Romans leave Britain?
Answers to Invasion reading comprehension

1. The land was fertile so crops could be grown, there were people who could be slaves and there were precious metals such as gold, silver, iron and tin.

2. He didn’t have enough soldiers.

3. He defeated some of the tribes in Southern Britain and took some prisoners back to Rome as slaves.

4. It was 97 years until Emperor Claudius invaded.

5. The Romans built new roads, house, bridges and forts.


7. To separate the north of England from the Scottish tribes.

8. To go and fight in Europe.
Use the story of the Roman invasion to solve the crossword.

Clues for ACROSS
1. Tribes from this country attacked the Romans.
2. The meaning of “sc”
3. The name given to a group of Roman soldiers
4. The name of the leader who was captured
5. A tribe who lived in eastern Britain
6. Boudicca did this to herself rather than be captured.

Clues for DOWN
2. The name of the Roman Emperor who conquered Britain
3. The name of the Roman leader who came to Britain in 55bc.
4. The place the invaders came from
5. The name of the Emperor who ordered the wall to be built
6. The soldiers lived in these on the wall.
7. A large battle took place here.
8. The Romans would take the people as
9. The name of the leader of the eastern tribe
10. One of the important things that the Romans built