

## Teaching notes

This exercise is designed to get students thinking about the relative success and 'heroism' of key figures in the 'battle for Britain' in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is a useful resource in the wider context of relations between the various countries in Britain in the later middle ages.

## Suggestions

Students read through the information sheets on the four key figures (pp. 3-6) and record judgements on their relative success by filling in the table (p. 2). They then decide which individual to 'champion' and design a fitting tribute in the form of a statue. This is presented to the rest of the class, either using a 'model' (student in pose, with or without props), or a drawing on a sheet of A3, or even both! Finally, students decide which statue proposal deserves to win lottery funding.

This exercise lends itself to a group activity, although the initial reading and grid exercise could be done individually.

Alternatively, since there is a lot of material to read through, students could be allocated one figure to focus on and asked to provide a convincing argument for why this individual should be venerated as the 'true hero in the battle for Britain'.

## Possible extension questions

- Why did Edward treat his enemies so harshly?
- Was William Wallace simply a murderer?
- Would Edward I have defeated Bruce had he not died?

## Who was the true hero in the battle for Britain?

As you read about the four heroes, complete this table about them. A couple of examples have been done for you.

Heroic trait	Edward I	Prince Llewellyn	William Wallace	Robert the Bruce
Victorious		No - lost most of his land and power to Edward I.		
Brave				
Intelligent				
Righteous				
Martyr			Yes - died at the hands of the English when he refused to bow down to Edward I and give up his rebellion.	
Who would see him as a hero?				

# Prince Llywelyn ap Gruffydd



Since 1066 Wales has been ruled by several Welsh princes. Those Normans left us alone. They chose strong Norman barons to control the land on the border - the 'marches'. Gradually these 'Marcher Lords' took over the flat lands in the south of Wales but my ancestors, the princes of Gwynedd who controlled the north, never swore fealty to the English kings!

I decided to win back the land in the south from the English. By 1267 I had conquered much of the land you know as Wales. To make sure the English left me alone, I agreed to swear fealty to King Henry III and in return he gave me the title 'Prince of Wales'. I now controlled Wales!

When the new king, Edward, was crowned in 1274, I had more important things to do than attend his coronation. Apparently Edward took this as an insult and was furious. Wales is a separate country - why should I have to pay homage to a new king?! Edward decided to use force to try to get me to obey him. He sent three armies into North Wales. Edward also sent a fleet of ships that cut off our food supply from Anglesey. We were forced to hide in the high mountains of Snowdonia but we couldn't stay there for ever. As more of my men froze and starved to death, I was forced to surrender. Edward took away most of my land and power. He built royal castles throughout my lands - at Rhuddlan, Flint, Aberystwyth and Builth - to strengthen his position.

But the Welsh never give up! In 1282 my people rebelled again, led by my brother David. We were no match for Edward's well organised troops. Our soldiers were defeated and my brother and I were captured. The English cut open David's belly and removed his intestines. They then cut off his arms and legs and sent them around England. The rest of his body was hung from the walls of London.

In 1282 I had my head cut off and it was sent to London to be put on a spike on the gates of the Tower of London. Welsh independence was at an end.

# William Wallace



I hated the influence the English had in my country of Scotland. In 1291 I was declared an outlaw for killing one of those foreigners.

The year before, our three-year-old queen Margaret died, and our Scottish nobles asked King Edward of England who should be the next monarch of Scotland. In 1292 he nominated John Balliol and then insisted he pay homage to him as overlord. Edward now effectively controlled Scotland!

Edward imprisoned Scottish nobles, imposed heavy taxes, and forced Scotsmen to fight in the English war against France. By 1295 we could take no more. King John rebelled but Edward sent an army north, crushed the rebellion, and locked John up in the Tower of London.

We fought on. I personally killed the English Sheriff of Lanark in May 1297. Our soldiers fought a series of skirmishes with the English until we finally met outside Stirling. In September 1297, we fought the battle on Stirling Bridge. I was one of several Scottish lords who led our armies to victory over the English.

I was knighted and appointed 'Guardian of Scotland'. It was now my job to keep Scotland an independent country. I took the war to the English, marching south and capturing Newcastle. Edward sent a fresh army to Scotland in 1298. Due to his trickery my army was destroyed in the battle of Falkirk and I had to flee for my life.

In 1305 I was betrayed and captured by the English. I was taken to London, tried and executed. I will leave it to the chronicler Matthew of Westminster to describe my death.

'... he was suspended by a rope; but taken down while still alive, his bowels torn out and burned in a fire, his head then cut off, his body divided in four, and his quarters sent to four principle parts of Scotland.'

# Robert the Bruce



My grandfather should have been given the throne of Scotland in 1290, but that traitor John Balliol took it with the backing of Edward, King of England! The brave William Wallace tried to lead an uprising against the English but he was captured and executed in 1305. People gave cruel Edward the title 'Hammer of the Scots', but I showed him!

In 1306 a group of rebel Scottish nobles crowned me King of Scotland at Scone. Edward was outraged and sent yet another English army into Scotland to catch and punish me. I went into hiding, so that cowardly Edward decided to punish my family. Twenty of my cousins were executed, and my beautiful wife Elizabeth, and my darling daughter Marjorie, only 12 years old, were put in prison. My sisters were humiliated by being shut in cages and hung from the walls of Berwick castle.

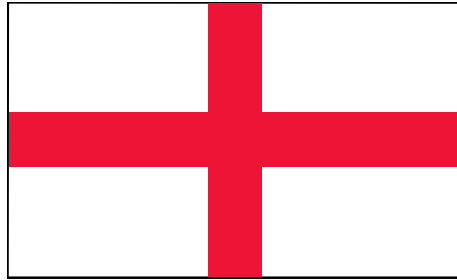
Many of my friends said that I should give up, but I decided that I must show the patience and determination! I began to launch constant raids on the English and their Scottish supporters. With their supplies and crops being burnt the English asked Edward to send another army to help them, but Edward died in 1307. His son, Edward II, was a coward and had no stomach for a fight.

My popularity grew and by 1313 I had reconquered the whole of Scotland. Only Stirling Castle remained in English hands. Now Edward II finally sent a huge army of 17,000 men to deal with me. We only had 6,000 but we were fighting for our homes!

Our two armies met on the boggy ground by Bannockburn ('burn' means a stream to you English)! The English knights, clad in heavy armour on thick set war horses, soon began to get stuck and sink into the mud. They were easy prey for my light-footed men. The English were soon beaten and those we did not butcher fled the field.

Yet still Edward refused to accept Scotland was an independent country, so I marched my army south to England. I forced English nobles to swear fealty to me! Finally, the next English King, Edward III, accepted Scotland as an independent country in 1327. I died two years later.

# Edward 'the Hammer of the Scots'



My father was a good man but a weak king. He ignored the barons' advice but I didn't make that mistake. I kept them involved. In fact I went further and called knights from the counties and rich burgesses from the towns to my Parliament. I kept them happy so they would pay all the taxes I needed for my wars.

It's strange that my nickname was 'the Hammer of the Scots'. After all, I never really controlled the Scots. However, I certainly beat the Welsh! Their chief Llewellyn and his brother David refused to accept me as their lord. In 1282 I finally forced my way into their mountain stronghold. Within a few months, both were dead.

Wales was mine! I built five massive new castles. No one had ever seen anything so fine. After that, the Welsh never really broke free of English control.

I am sure I could have taken full control of Scotland as well and I had already executed their leader William Wallace in 1305. Their new King, Robert the Bruce, would have fallen at my hands too. But I was old. I died as I led my army north. It was up to my son, Edward II, to finish the job.

## Who was the true hero in the battle for Britain?

Use your 'heroic traits' table to decide which person deserves to be remembered as the true hero in the battle for Britain.

We have decided that the person who most deserves to be remembered as the true hero of the Battle for Britain is ...

.....

This is because he ...

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### Sculpture task

Every hero deserves to be commemorated in a statue. Luckily, you are a world famous sculptor. The lottery fund has invited you to bid for a very large sum of money to create your statue, and they want to see your proposed design. You can sketch out your ideas in the box to the right.

You need to decide:

- what qualities of your hero you wish to show in your statue
- which event from this person's life you will portray in your statue
- which pose your hero will be in
- what objects he will hold
- how he will be dressed
- whether there will be any other figures in the statue, such as a horse or an enemy.



Who was the true hero in the battle for Britain?

It could be you!

Use this table to assess each group's final statue and decide who should be awarded the lottery grant of a squillion pounds! Give each group a score out of 10 for each category.

Group	How heroic / 10	Facts about his life / 10	Presentation / 10	Total