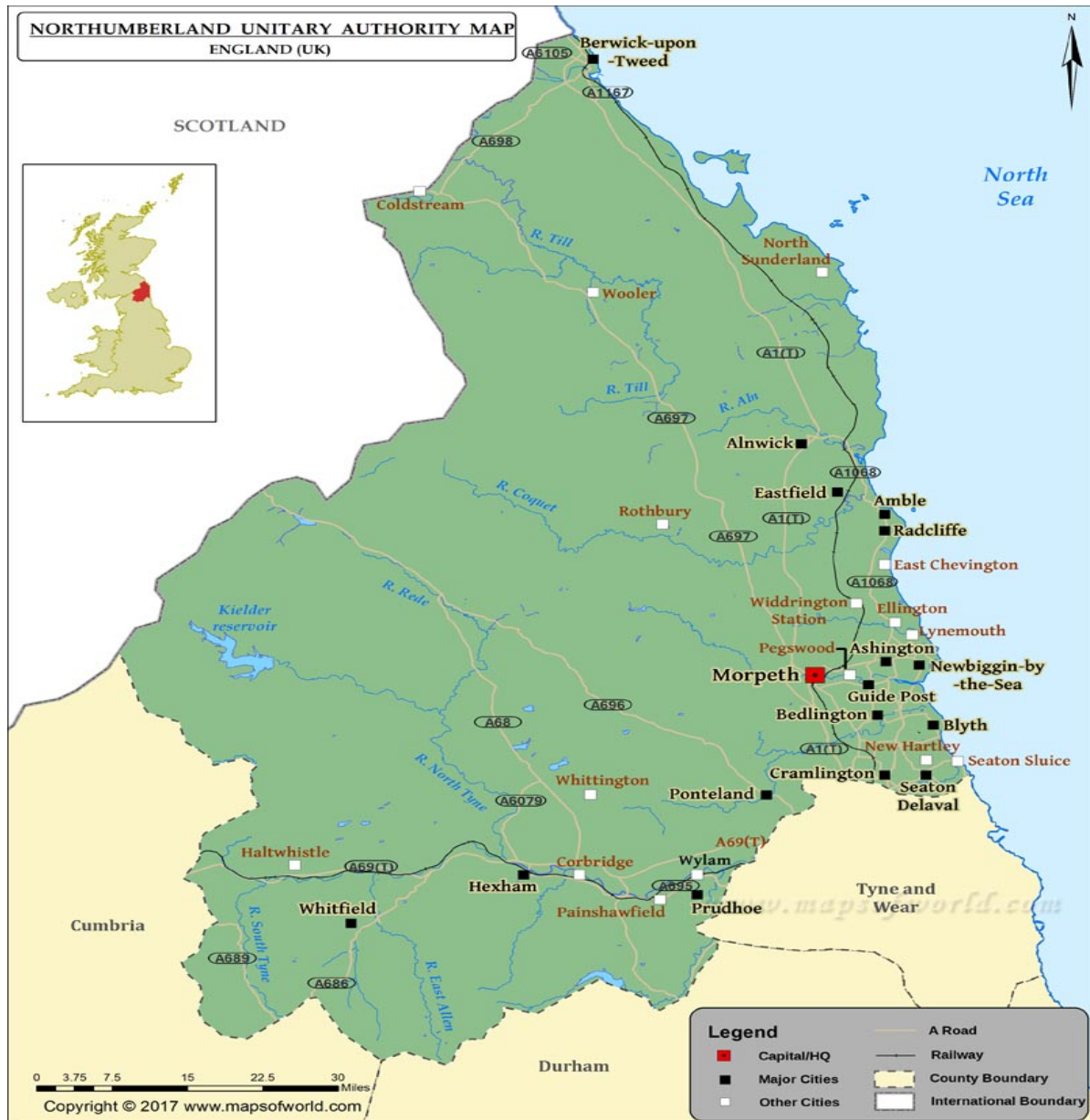


### Optional Project 3 – The Geography of Northumberland

If we had been in school, our topic this term would have been about Northumberland and its geography! Here's a map of modern day Northumberland!



You may know lots about Northumberland already from visiting – we drove right through Hexham for our residential at Dukeshouse Wood, for instance. I used to live in Seaton Delaval once upon a time and my old car still sports the rather nifty looking Northumberland flag which is this:



Our topic was to look at Northumberland's geography along Hadrian's Wall which went through modern day Northumberland and Cumbria – we'll find out *lots and lots* more about Hadrian's Wall in our Summer 2 topic about the Invasion of Britain, but I have put some information about it below if you want to find out more now. Hadrian's Wall was built by invaders from Rome in Italy to basically say what was theirs and what wasn't. Here's a map to show you how far it went:



Also to help you out with some tasks, here are some physical maps

So you might be thinking... well, what could we do without leaving our houses? After all, I had a trip planned to visit the Wall and its countryside for our class that was sadly cancelled. Here are some ideas!

- 1) Have a look at the map at the top of modern day Northumberland at the top. **Where have you been before? What do you know already about some of these places? Can you find out more about them?**
- 2) **Go to Google Maps and pick a location along the wall. Find out where there are major towns and, using the little orange figure, you can use Street View to go through the streets! What do you notice?** You could look at Hexham (where Mrs Massey lives!) or you could find out more about Vindolanda!
- 3) You could make a **tourist brochure for Hadrian's Wall or Northumberland!**  
<https://www.visitnorthumberland.com> would be a great resource to try!

Roman History Context (taken from <https://englandsnortheast.co.uk/hadrians-wall/> with some minor changes by me)

## Why Hadrian's Wall was built

55 BC is the year in which the Romans first invaded Britain under Julius Caesar but it was not until almost a century later in 43 AD, in the reign of the Emperor Claudius, that the full-scale Roman conquest and occupation of Britain really began.



Hadrian's Wall near Steel Rigg Photo © 2018 David Simpson

By 70 AD, a powerful army led by the Roman Governor of Britain, Julius Agricola, had captured most of southern Britain and advanced into the northern part of our land. Here they defeated two great Celtic tribes, the Brigantes at Scotch Corner to the south of the Tees and the Picts at the Battle of Mons Grapius in Caledonia (Scotland). Victory over the Picts was not too challenging for the might of the Roman army, but the wild mountainous terrain of Caledonia made holding down these people far too difficult.

When the Roman Emperor Hadrian visited Britain in 122 AD he recognised the difficulties of establishing control in Caledonia and saw that it would be impossible to introduce the Picts to the Roman way of life. So the Emperor ordered the construction of a great defensive wall that would mark the northern limits of his empire and consolidate the hold on those parts of Britain already subdued. Hadrian's empire would not include Caledonia.

## A multi-cultural military zone

Hadrian's Wall was eighty miles long, six metres high, three metres wide and built of stone, (although the Cumbrian sections of the wall were originally built of turf).

The defences of the wall were supplemented by a northern ditch, a military road and an earthwork called the 'vallum'. Together these features formed a 'military zone' which restricted the movement of people to the north and south of the wall. This military zone was a 'no go' area for armed 'Barbarians'.

The defences of the military zone were supplemented by milecastles which housed garrisons of up to sixty men. These were built at intervals of one Roman mile and between each of these stood two smaller defensive towers called turrets which held small garrisons of four men.



A turret, Hadrian's Wall Photo © 2018 David Simpson

Most important of the military garrisons along the wall were of course the great forts, of which there were sixteen, each housing between five hundred and one thousand men. The men who occupied these forts and the other Hadrian's Wall defences were rarely recruited locally, and were often brought in from some distant corner of the Roman Empire.

Soldiers garrisoned on the wall, thus came from as far away as what are now Spain, Switzerland, Hungary, Germania, Romania and even North Africa. Surprisingly very few of the Roman soldiers originated from Rome or Italy. Instead the wall was a multi-cultural military zone whose people brought with them many different customs, languages and religions.