



Year  
The Vikings

### Builds on Knowledge and Skills

In Year 5, we learnt about the Anglo-Saxons. Around the end of the 8th century, Anglo-Saxon history tells of many Viking raids. These marked the start of a long struggle between the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings for control of Britain. After Alfred the Great, English kings gradually recaptured more and more land from the Vikings. Alfred's son Edward fought for control of the Danelaw and Alfred's grandson, Athelstan, pushed English power north as far as Scotland. In 954, the Anglo-Saxons drove out Eric Bloodaxe, the last Viking king of Jorvik. Later, when Eric was killed in battle, the Vikings agreed to be ruled by England's king. The most powerful Anglo-Saxon king was Edgar. Welsh and Scottish rulers obeyed him as well as the English, and his court at Winchester was one of the most splendid in Europe. Anglo-Saxon England reached its peak during Edgar's reign. In the 9th century, the English king Alfred the Great stopped the Vikings taking over all of England. He agreed to peace with them and some Vikings settled down to live in their own area of eastern England, called the Danelaw. The Anglo-Saxons and Vikings became neighbours in Britain, but they didn't always.



### Books, texts, primary and secondary sources you may use:

- The Vicious Vikings (Horrible Histories)
- Viking Boy by Tony Bradman
- Anglo-Saxons & Vikings by Hazel Maskell
- DK Find Out Vikings
- Viking (DK Eyewitness) by DK
- The Story of the Vikings Picture Book by Megan Cullis
- Suggested family experience
- Visit Jersey Museum — "[The Vikings are Back!](#)"

### Vocabulary you will use:

Word	Definition
colonise	Go and live somewhere and take control of it
conquest	Something that is gained by force
danegeld	An amount of money paid so that Vikings
Danelaw	The Eastern area of England ruled by the
invade	To enter by force
Lindisfarne	Also known as Holy Island, was one of the
longboat	Medieval ship, which has a long, narrow, open
monastery	Buildings occupied by a community of monks
navigation	Finding a way around
Pagan	A person holding different beliefs to other
reputation	Beliefs held about someone
Scandinavia	Norway, Sweden and Denmark
seaborne	Carried on a ship

### National Curriculum

The Viking and Anglo-Saxon struggle for the Kingdom of England to the time of Edward the Confessor.

Viking raids and invasion.

Resistance by Alfred the Great and Athelstan, the first King of England.

Further Viking invasions and Danegeld.

Edward the Confessor and his death in 1066.



### Local History Links

In the 860s, the Great Heathen Army invaded the Midlands. Peace was agreed with the Anglo-Saxon King, Alfred the Great, in the 870s. The agreement established the Danelaw where Viking laws and government reigned, giving the Vikings half of England to rule.

### National

From the 990s, fleets of Viking warships started to reappear in English waters, and they repeatedly attacked and invaded, demanding huge amounts of money from local people. In 1013, a Danish king called Svein Forkbeard conquered all of England. Your name could be descended from the Vikings if your surname ends in 'son' or 'sen'. For example, Rogerson.

### International

Viking expansion was the historical movement which led Vikings, to sail most of the North Atlantic, reaching south as far as North Africa, east as far as Russia, through the Mediterranean as far as Constantinople, through the Middle East.

### Quick Summary

The Vikings, from Scandinavia, were excellent sailors, explorers and warriors. They colonised large parts of Europe between 790 and 1100 CE and were involved in a long and bloody battle with the Anglo-Saxons for control of Britain. Also known as Norsemen (men from the north), the Vikings belonged to many different clans, led by chiefs who ruled over the lands they had conquered. After battles, the Vikings often forced local rulers to pay a tribute called Danegeld (meaning Danish tax), a large amount of money that had to be paid so that the Vikings would not attack the locals and destroy their land.

### Main Events



954: Last Viking king of Jorvik (York) killed in battle

1066: Harold Hardrada, King of Norway defeated by King Harold at the Battle of Stamford Bridge

1066: King Harold defeated by William at the Battle of Hastings

Questions we'll ask you throughout the unit to check your knowledge and understanding

Describe a typical Viking raid or invasion.

Why did Alfred the Great and Athelstan resist the invasions?

What was the purpose of Danegeld?

Explain how the Vikings navigated their expeditions.

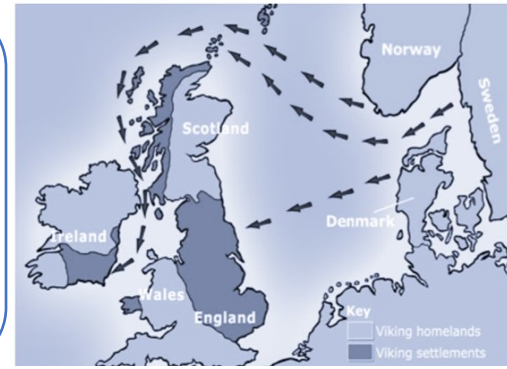
Why was Edward the Confessor's death important?

## Sailors



Unlike the Romans, who travelled on the roads, The Vikings typically travelled on longboats. Viking longboats often had a dragon's head carved from wood at the front of the ship, perhaps to scare spirits away.

The Vikings travelled in distinctive longboats made from curved wood that was overlapped and held together with iron rivets, which are like thick nails. This made the ships strong and flexible, which made them excellent for sailing on the open sea. There was little shelter; Vikings slept on deck. Longboats had a single, large square sail as well as oars. While on board, the Vikings are believed to have fixed their shields to the outside of the ship to protect them from the wind and rain as they rowed.



The Vikings were excellent sailors and very good at navigation. They found their way by using visual landmarks, including wildlife, and looking at the colour of the sea. They also sailed as close to the coastline as possible. It is also possible the Vikings invented a type of sunstone compass that helped them find their way in open water.

## Explorers

The Vikings travelled thousands of miles across the sea from their homeland of Scandinavia where they were farmers, fishermen, seafarers and traders. The Vikings were excellent sailors and explorers (known as Horsemen meaning 'people from the North') who travelled as far as North America in search of lands to colonise and trade with. The famous Viking explorer Leif Eriksson was the first European to set foot in North America, 500 years before Columbus.



The Vikings' ability to defend themselves and their goods meant that they were able to maintain a trading empire that stretched across northern and western Europe.

## Warriors



In Year 5, we have learned about the Anglo Saxons. The Vikings invaded Anglo-Saxon Britain and so the struggle for control over Britain began.

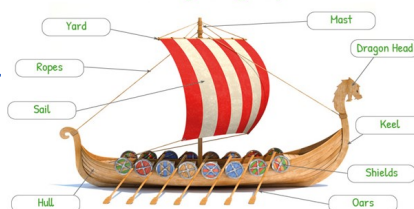
The balance of power in England was continually changing as Vikings from Denmark and Norway laid claim to England's throne. The Battle of Hastings in 1066 finally saw an end to these volatile times with the arrival of William, the Duke of Normandy and a direct descendant of Viking settlers in northern France.

The Battle of Hastings is one of the most important and well-known battles in English history. It took place on 14 October 1066 and was the start of the Norman Conquest of England. The Normans were the next group of people to rule England after the Anglo-Saxons. It was captured in the Bayeux Tapestry. A tapestry told the story in a way that everyone could understand.



In the 9th century, the English king Alfred the Great stopped the Vikings taking over all of England. He agreed to peace with them and some Vikings settled down to live in their own area of eastern England, called the Danelaw. After Alfred the Great, English kings gradually recaptured more and more land from the Vikings.

The longboat was an essential part of the Vikings' ability to travel and explore. Longboats were also perfect for raiding. They had banks of oars at either side and often had sails. As the name suggests, the longboats were long, but it was also symmetrical. This design allowed the sailors to reverse direction rather than turning around, this was very useful in battle. Longboats could sail right up to the coast, or even travel up rivers, and quickly escape. These crafts were able to hold a large group of warriors and whatever treasure and resources they took from a raid.



## Worshippers

The Viking language (Old Norse) was written with symbols called Runes, but some Runes were also believed to have magical powers.

The Vikings were mostly pagans, which means they worshipped several gods and goddesses. Many of their beliefs were linked to nature. However, many Vikings became Christians after settling in Christian countries such as England or Ireland.

Odin was the first of the Norse gods to exist, which makes him the father or king of all gods. He was very powerful and he created the Earth, sky and all living creatures. He is often shown as a one-eyed man with a long beard. He wears a cloak and a wide-brimmed hat and carries a spear.

