

Knowledge organiser

Spring 2025

Anglo-Saxons and Vikings

Anglo-Saxon England

Anglo-Saxon England was divided into seven kingdoms.

Each kingdom was ruled by a different king. Earls ruled areas on behalf of the king.



Romans leave Britain in 410CE. Anglo-Saxon period begins.

It became easier for people to invade England.

Historians believe some Britons asked Anglo-Saxons to come and help fight the Picts and Scots.

Anglo-Saxon customs, language, and laws became used throughout England.

The Anglo-Saxon ended in 1066.

Anglo-Saxon beliefs

- Some monks were made saints for spreading the word of Christianity.
- Monasteries offered education to the monks that lived there.
- Anglo-Saxons were pagans and believed in many different gods.
- King Ethelbert became the first Anglo-Saxon king to convert to Christianity.
- Christian buildings were built in stone.
- Christianity increased formal education and literacy.

Discovery

- Sutton Hoo was discovered in 1939.
- The main literary sources of information about the Anglo-Saxon period are from Bede and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.



Iron helmet

Alfred the Great...

- became king in 870CE
- defeated the Danes and ruled half of England in Wessex
- created laws to promote order and justice
- had an army and navy to protect the country from invasion.



Daily life

took on specific roles and jobs to support the village

many Anglo-Saxons lived in small villages.

Anglo-Saxon people

abandoned Roman building and left them to ruin

were involved in agriculture



Key Vocabulary

Anglo-Saxons – People who came from parts of Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands and settled in Britain long ago.

Settlement – A place where people move to live, build homes, and start a community.

Kingdom – An area ruled by a king (there were several Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, not just one).

Village – A small group of houses where families lived, farmed, and worked together.

Warrior – A person trained to fight and protect their land and people.

Pagan – The religion many Anglo-Saxons followed at first, before Christianity.

Wergild – A law that said people paid money as a fine if they hurt someone.

Who were the Vikings?

- Vikings left their homes in Scandinavia and sailed in longships to other parts of Europe.
- Longships could sail in shallow water, so they could travel up rivers and across seas.
- Vikings lived simply and comfortably with their families in longhouses.



Danelaw

After King Alfred's victory at the Battle of Edington, Guthrum withdrew from Wessex and agreed to divide England.

The Vikings settled in the Danelaw, where York was the most important city.

Many Anglo-Saxons lived peacefully in the Danelaw as long as they followed Danish law.

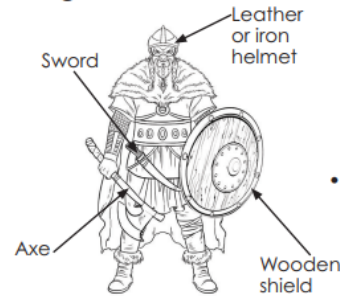
Edward the Elder and his sister Aethelflaed conquered the Danelaw.



Trade

- The Vikings travelled buying and selling many goods.
- Excavations and analysis of Viking hoards show us how far the Vikings travelled and traded.

Viking raids



- In England, Vikings raided religious buildings. These were easy to find and contained gold and silver.
- Vikings believed dying in battle would help them reach Valhalla (heaven).

Viking rule

Edward's son, Athelstan, was the first king of all England.



Edward the Confessor

In the late 10th century, Viking raids began again. King Ethelred fought them using the Danegeld.

Danish king Sweyn Forkbeard conquered England. His son, King Cnut, ruled England, Denmark, and Norway peacefully.

In 1042, Edward the Confessor became king after 25 years of Danish rule.

790CE
Viking age began

874CE
Vikings had conquered all English kingdoms except Wessex

1042
Edward the Confessor became king

1066
Viking period ended

Key Vocabulary

Viking – A person from Scandinavia who sailed, traded, and sometimes raided.

Longship – A long, fast boat used by Vikings for travel and raids.

Trader – Someone who swaps or sells goods.

Warrior – A fighter who takes part in battles.

Jarl – A powerful Viking leader or chief.

Saga – A long story about Viking heroes and adventures.

Monastery – A place where monks live, work, and pray.

Valhalla – A special place in Viking beliefs where brave warriors go after they die.

TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

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| 410AD Romans leave Britain. | 450 AD The Saxons row across the seas to invade Britain. | 556AD Seven kingdoms created in England. | 597AD Augustine began converting Anglo-Saxons to Christians. | 793AD The Vikings raid the monastery on Lindisfarne and kill monks. | 866AD Danes captured York (Jorvik) and rule there. | 886AD Alfred the Great was King of Wessex. | 927AD King Athelstan became first King of united England. | 1016AD King Cnut became King of England. | 1042AD Edward the Confessor became King of England. | 1066AD Battle of Hastings. William the Conqueror is crowned king. | 1100AD End of the Viking age. |
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