



The Vikings

Background Information

In AD865 an army of Vikings sailed across the North Sea. This time they wanted to conquer land rather than just raid it. Over several years the army battled through northern England and in 10 years almost all the kingdoms had fallen to the Vikings. All except for Wessex, which was ruled by Alfred the Great. After years of fighting, the Vikings and Alfred made a peace agreement. But even after this agreement, fighting went on for many more years. An imaginary dividing line was agreed to run across England, from London in the south towards Chester in the north west. The Anglo-Saxon lands were to the west and the Viking lands, known as the Danelaw, were roughly to the east.

In this unit the children will learn:

- Geographical skills linked to the Vikings
- To analyse different sources of information to form a balanced opinion
- Comparing the life of a child in Vikings times to modern day
- Chronology of the Viking period
- About Crime and Punishment and make links with previous learning.
- About the legacy left by the Vikings.



Timeline of Key Events:

- 793AD** - The Vikings attack and capture the city of York (Jorvik)
- 867- 878AD** - Series of Viking victories
- 871AD** - Alfred the Great becomes King of Wessex
- 886AD** - The Vikings and King Alfred divide England
- 954AD** - Eric Bloodaxe, the last King of Jorvik, is thrown out of York
- 1013AD** - Sweyn Forkbeard comes to the throne
- 1016AD** - King Canute (Cnut) of Denmark becomes King of England
- 1037AD** - Harold Harefoot becomes the next Viking King of England
- 1040AD** – Hardicanute becomes the last Viking to sit on the English throne
- 1042AD** - Edward the Confessor becomes king – England restored to Saxon rule
- 1066AD** - King Harold is killed in the Battle of Hastings William I (the Conqueror) crowned King of England
- 1100AD** - End of the Viking age

Historical Skills and Concepts:

- **Chronology** – key events in world history.
- **Questioning** – develop historical questioning skills.
- **Sources** – use a range of sources to explore our knowledge of the past.
- **Cause & Effect** – the impact of Historical events or developments.

Key People:

Sweyn Forkbeard: wrestled the throne from the then Saxon king Ethelred II and reigned Britain from 1013

King Canute: was the son of Sweyn and followed him to the British throne from 1016-1035. King Canute was succeeded by his unruly sons **Harold Harefoot** and **Hardicanute** after the death of the youngest son the English throne was restored to Saxon reign.



Key facts:

The Viking age in European history was from about AD700 to 1100. During this period many Vikings left Scandinavia and travelled by longboat to other countries, like Britain and Ireland.

When the people of Britain first saw the Viking longboats they came down to the shore to welcome them. However, the Vikings fought the local people, stealing from churches and burning buildings to the ground.

The name 'Viking' comes from a language called 'Old Norse' and means 'a pirate raid'. People who went off raiding in ships were said to be 'going Viking'.

But not all the Vikings were bloodthirsty warriors. There were farmers, who kept animals and grew crops, and skilful craft workers, who made beautiful metalwork and wooden carvings.

Everyone lived together in a large home called a longhouse. The Vikings also brought with them their way of life and beliefs. The Norse people worshipped many gods and loved to tell stories of magic and monsters.

Key Vocabulary:

Longboat – were a specialised type of Scandinavian warship originally invented by the Vikings

Longhouse – were usually made out of wood, stone, earth and turf. They were single story and had no windows or chimneys so smoke from the fires drifted out through the roof.

Chieftain – a Viking warlord that ruled a small group of people

berserker – an ancient Norse warrior who fought with wild and uncontrolled ferocity

danegeld – an Anglo-Saxon tax levied to raise funds to protect against Dane invasion.

feast – a large community banquet held on pagan feast days, to celebrate wins in battle and wedding; they would roast meat and game to feed the whole settlement.

Yggdrasil – is the immense cosmological tree that was at the centre of the Norse 9 realms

farmer-warrior – the everyday Viking was peaceful tending his land, growing crops and rearing animals, some Viking farmers took to the seas with their community and were part of the invasion in 793 AD

Danelaw – was the part of England where the Danes ruled the Saxons after the Viking invasions

Asgard – believed to be the mythical location of the Norse Gods and Goddesses

Raider – a Viking warrior who raided communities killing the dwellers and stealing their possessions.

Trader – a person who travelled the seas to different locations to trade food and goods with other communities.

Conqueror - To gain control of or subdue by military force.

Jorvik – Viking name for York

Scandinavian – Scandinavia is a subregion in Northern Europe which often refers to Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

Transferable vocabulary and concepts:

culture - a pattern of behaviour shared by a society, or group of people. Many different things make up a society's culture. These things include food, language, clothing, tools, music, arts, customs, beliefs, and religion.

artefact - an object made by a human being, especially an object of archaeological interest.

legacy - something that is handed down from one period of time to another period of time.