

# Year 5/6 Who were the Vikings and why did they invade?

## Key Vocabulary

Term	Definition
Bayeux Tapestry	A tapestry made to remember the battle of Hasting
Conquer	Getting something by force.
Danegeld	A strategy used to pay the Vikings to go away
Danelaw	The area of England ruled by the Vikings
Longship –	A Viking ship with a sail and oars, also called a dragon-ship
Monastery	The building where monks live
Pagan	A person who believed in many gods
Pillage	To steal goods in violent attacks
Raid	To attack suddenly
Scandinavia	The countries of Norway, Sweden and Denmark. This is the area Vikings came from.
Settlement	A place where people come to live.
Trade	To exchange good for other goods before money was introduced
Valhalla	The place Vikings believed they would go to after death if they died fighting bravely in battle.
Vikings	Name given to the Scandinavian seafaring pirates and traders who raided and settled in Britain.
Wessex	Anglo Saxon Kingdom in the south of Britain ruled by Alfred the Great.

## Who were the Vikings and where did they come from?

In 790AD Vikings (also known as Norsemen) started to carry out short trips across the North Sea from countries we now call Norway, Sweden and Denmark. (Scandinavia) to steal treasure and take slaves.

In 865AD the Vikings decided to conquer Britain instead of just raiding it.

They drove the Saxons out of part of Britain but they did not conquer Wessex, which was ruled by 'Alfred the Great'

King Alfred realised he could not stop them so he let them have part of the country in an attempt to stop the fighting.

An imaginary line dividing England from London to 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. The peace treaty was known as 'Danelaw'



Myth	Reality
The Vikings were dirty, savage people	It appears the Vikings were actually quite vain and took care of their appearance. Excavations have found combs, tweezers, razors, ear spoons and home-made soap- proving that they kept clean.
The Vikings had horns on their helmets.	No helmets with horns have been found. This was an image created to make them look more pagan and barbaric as they <u>looked like</u> devil horns.
They drank from horn cups	None have been found in excavations
The Vikings only used axes and swords	They were actually very skilled in weapon making and produced weapons that were very sharp and flexible.
They were violent warriors who stole from others.	Only a small minority were- others were farmers, craftsmen and traders and lived peacefully.

## What happened in Lindisfarne?

In AD793, The Vikings attacked a monastery at Lindisfarne but why?

- Vikings attacked monasteries as they were easy targets
- Monks had no weapons but monasteries were filled with valuable treasures, like gold, jewels and books as well as food, drink, cattle, clothes and tools



## Why did the Vikings come?

The Vikings travelled all the way from Scandinavia but why?

**Better Land-** The land where they came from was not good for farming.

Norway- hilly

Sweden Forests

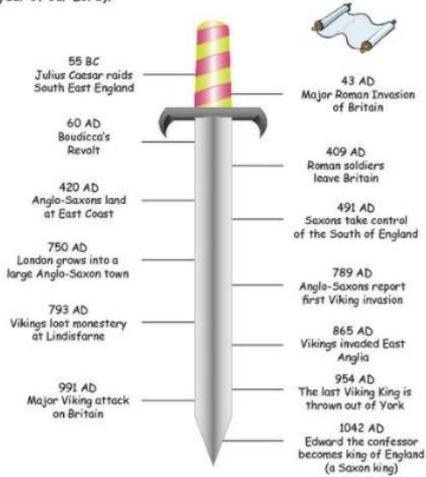
Denmark- sandy

**More land-** In Scandinavia there were too many people and not enough land for them all to farm

**Treasure-** The Vikings wanted to find things that would make them rich. They knew that Britain had monasteries which meant nothing to them as they were pagan but were full of treasure.

### History Timeline

BC stands for **Before Christ** and AD stands for **Anno Domini** (the year of our Lord).



### Who was Alfred the Great?

When the Anglo-Saxons first settled in Britain there were seven kingdoms. However, by AD 878 there was only one kingdom left; Wessex, ruled by King Alfred the Great. The other kingdoms had been overrun by the Vikings.

Anglo-Saxon Kings fought hard to keep control of their land and tried to push the Vikings out.

One of the best known Anglo-Saxon kings is King Alfred the Great. He was the first King to defeat the Vikings in battle.

In AD 878, King Alfred and his small band of followers defeated the Vikings at the Battle of Edington. King Alfred and his men drove back the attacking Vikings who surrendered.

In AD 886, he made a deal with King Guthrum and established the Treaty of Wedmore which gave the Vikings control over northern and eastern England, an area which later became known as Danelaw. This arrangement helped to establish more peaceful relationships between the English and the Vikings.

### Who was King during the Saxon Viking Struggle

- Alfred The Great- 871- 899 AD
- Athelston (Alfred's Grandson) 924-939AD
- Ethelred (the unready age 7) 978 AD
- King Sweyn 1002AD Viking King
- King Canute 1014AD - Viking King
- Edward the Confessor- 1043- 1066

### What happened in 1066?

The Battle of Hastings was extremely important for the history of England as it completely changed who was in charge. The Anglo-Saxons had ruled for over 600 years since the Roman times. Now, the Normans had taken over. Not long after the battle took place, the story of what happened was recorded in what is a bit like an amazing stitched comic strip, called the Bayeux Tapestry which is around 70 metres long and over 950 years old



### Who was Athelstan and what did he do?

Athelstan was the grandson of Alfred the great and was king from AD 924-939.

During his reign he drove the Vikings back more and more and was able to claim control over a greater area of land. In AD 927 Athelstan won back the kingdom of York from the Vikings.

Seven years later he invade Scotland and won at the battle of Brunanburn. He has created a fully united Kingdom of England. After the early Viking raids, Britain enjoyed a period of relative peace, and Viking attacks stopped for some time.

### How did Vikings travel?

Viking Longboats were used in battle and for raids and were long, light and slender so they could move around quickly. They had square sails and could also be rowed if there was no wind. The prow was often adorned with a dragon or snake head. Ships were so important to Vikings that the richest nobles were buried with them.



### Who was Ethelred and What was Danegald?

This was a strategy used by King Ethelred to make the Vikings go away. King Alfred had also done it.

Ethelred (the unready) was only 7 when he became king. Britain was struggling with Viking invasion and he was not a good soldier.

In AD 991 the Vikings were given 4500kg of silver to go home, but they soon returned. Each time there was a fresh attack they were paid again. The Vikings learnt that if they kept raiding Britain they would keep getting paid.

In 1002, King Ethelred's soldiers killed many of the Viking families living in Britain. King Sweyn, the King of Denmark, was furious and invaded Britain. King Ethelred escaped to France and King Sweyn became accepted as the new King of England.