

Knowledge Organiser: The Vikings

Year 5 Term 2.1 History

Important Topic Vocabulary

archaeology	The study of the past by examining the remains of buildings, tools and other objects.
artefacts	An object that is made by a human being, especially one that is of cultural interest.
conquer	If one country conquers another, they take complete control of their land.
invade	To enter a country by force with an army.
kingdom	A country or region that is ruled by a king or queen.
longboat	They were a type of Scandinavian warship.
monastery	A building where people lived and worshiped, devoting their time and life to God.
Pagans	People who didn't believe there was just one god, but a number of gods and goddesses.
raiders	People who enter a place illegally, and often violently, to steal.
Scandinavia	Name given to countries in Northern Europe including Denmark, Sweden and Norway.
settlement	A place or region where people come to live.
sources	Something that provides information about the past.

Wonderful Websites

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zt9r9j6/articles/zjcxwtu>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zt9r9j6/articles/zy9j2hv>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zt9r9j6/articles/z8q487h>

Brilliant Books



What you should already know:

The Anglo-Saxons invaded and settled in Britain from AD 450. They came from Scandinavian countries such as **Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands**. The three biggest were **the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes**. By around AD600, after much fighting, Britain had been divided up into **five kingdoms**.

Around AD 787, there were other Scandinavian tribes known as the **Vikings** raiding European countries.

Who were the Vikings?

The Vikings were **Norse** people who came from an area called **Scandinavia** (countries such as **Norway, Sweden and Denmark**).

The Viking age in European history was from about AD700 to 1100.

During this period, many Vikings left their homelands in Scandinavia and travelled by longboat to other countries, like Britain and Ireland.



Viking raids:

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'.

The first Viking **raid** recorded in the **Anglo-Saxon Chronicle** was around AD787.

The Vikings did not send many ships on their first raids. They made **surprise attacks** on places like Lindisfarne. There was no English navy to guard the coasts, so it was easy for small groups of Vikings to land on a beach or sail up a river.

The Vikings were **pagans**, not **Christians** like most people living in Britain at the time. They did not think twice about raiding a **monastery**. Christian monasteries in Britain were easy targets for the Vikings. The **monks** had no weapons and the buildings were filled with valuable treasures, like gold, jewels and books.

The Anglo-Saxons vs The Vikings:

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, taking control of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of **Northumbria**, **East Anglia** and most of **Mercia**.

By AD874, almost all the kingdoms had fallen to the Vikings. All except for **Wessex**, which was ruled by **Alfred the Great**. King Alfred beat the Viking army in battle but wasn't able to drive the Vikings out of Britain.

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 northwest**.

The Anglo-Saxon lands were to the **west** and the Viking lands, known as the **Danelaw**, were roughly to the **east**.

Jorvik:

The most important city in the Danelaw was the city of **York**, or '**Jorvik**' (pronounced 'your-vick'), as the Vikings knew it. Over 10,000 people lived there and it was an important place to **trade** goods.

Ruthless warriors or peaceful settlers?

Not all the Vikings were **bloodthirsty warriors**. Some came to fight, but others came peacefully, to settle. They were farmers, and kept animals and grew crops. They were skilful at crafting, and made beautiful **metalwork** and **wooden carvings**. Vikings sailed the seas **trading goods** to buy **silver, silks, spices, wine, jewellery, glass and pottery** to bring back to their homes.

