

Summer 2: Vikings

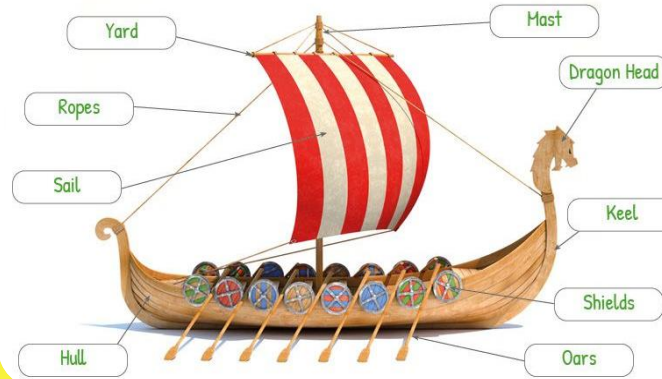
Key Questions

- What image do we have of the Vikings?
- Why have the Vikings gained such a bad reputation?
- How did the Vikings try to take over the country and how close did they get?
- How have recent excavations changed our view of the Vikings?
- What can we learn about Viking settlement from a study of place-name endings?
- Raiders or settlers: how should we remember the Vikings?



Transport

Viking Longship



The Vikings were expert ship builders and sailors. Long, sleek and fast, longships were designed to travel up narrow rivers and held up to 120 men. On the prow was the head of a fierce creature to frighten the spirits of the land that the Vikings were raiding.

793	First invasion by the Vikings. They raided coastal monasteries including Lindisfarne, off the coast of Northumbria.
865	Great Viking Army from Denmark Invades England
866	Danes capture York (which the Vikings called Jorvik) and make it their kingdom (land ruled by a king)
886	King Alfred the Great defeats the Vikings but allows them to settle in Eastern England (the Kingdoms of York and East Anglia) known as Danelaw.
954	Eric Bloodaxe, the last Viking King of Jorvik, is thrown out of York.
980	New Viking Raids on England
1014	King Canute (Chut) of Denmark captures the English Crown
1042	Edward the Confessor becomes King (A Saxon King)

The Vikings (also known as Norsemen) came from Scandinavia and countries we now call Norway, Sweden and Denmark. The Viking age in Britain began around 1200 years ago and lasted for just over 200 years. Around the year AD 793, the Vikings first began to raid Britain, plundering treasure and slaves. In time, they made their home in Britain, driving the Anglo-Saxons out of part of Britain and took it for themselves

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Key Vocab and Glossary

- Chieftain – The leader of a village or small group of people
- Danelaw – The area of England ruled by the Vikings
- Freeman – A person who is not a slave and free to choose who he or she worked for
- Jorvik – known as York today, this city was the Viking capital in England
- Lindisfarne – a monastery off the coast of Northumbria that was the site of the first Viking raids in AD793
- 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 violently steal something
- Plunder – to take loot during a raid, often causing damage at the same time
- Raid – a surprise attack
- Runes – The name given to the Viking alphabet
- Saga – a long story of heroic deeds

Viking Gods

Viking gods and goddesses all had their own personality and were very similar to the Anglo-Saxon gods. **Oden** was the god of wisdom and war; **Thor** was the god of thunder and protector of mankind, and **Frey** was the god of fertility and generosity. There were also minor gods like **Loki**, a trickster who was also part devil. When a warrior died bravely on the battlefield, they were believed to be taken to **Valhalla** (Viking heaven) by warrior women called the **Valkyries**.

Key People

- **King Alfred** – King of Wessex from 871 to 899, defended Wessex from the Viking conquest
- **Athelstan** – First King to unite English kingdoms in 927
- **Guthrum** – King of the Vikings in Danelaw at the time of the treaty with the Saxons
- **King Cnut** – King of England, Denmark and Norway between 1028 and 1035
- **Edward the Confessor** – penultimate Saxon King of England (before Harold II)



The English language was greatly affected by the invasions of the Vikings, in particular through town and village names in the north and east of England.

The Vikings were surprisingly well-groomed, and were even the first known western culture to invent the hair comb.



Useful Links

<https://www.jorvikvikingcentre.co.uk/education/classroom-resources/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/ztyr9j6>

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/learn/schools/ages-7-11/ancient-britain/visit-resource-vikings>