

Topic:	Year group	Term Autumn
The Viking and Anglo-Saxon struggle for the Kingdom of England to the time of Edward the Confessor.	Year 6	12 sessions

Background knowledge

The Vikings came from Scandinavia as well as being excellent sailors, they were ferocious fighters. They sailed over to Britain in their longboats and plundered the rich and defenceless monasteries that were built in coastal areas before heading inland to raid. Eventually, the Vikings started to settle, finding the land more suited to farming than the forests and mountainous regions of their home. The Vikings spread terror wherever they went, destroying or driving away any that stood before them until only the kingdom of Wessex stood against them. But are the Vikings really as bad as historians have made out?

What should I already know?

The Saxons have settled in Britain - there are seven Saxon kingdoms established.

National Curriculum Objectives / Key Skills	The Journey
Change and continuity: I know that not all change is welcomed by everyone. I understand what is meant by a turning point e.g. defeat of the Vikings by Alfred the Great led to creation of England and Danelaw. I grasp that change can happen quite quickly and can be reversed e.g. struggle for control of Britain between the Saxons and Vikings. Characteristic features of society: I can explain beliefs and attitudes in terms of why people might have had those ideas.	1. Study the Viking raid on Lindisfarne - write a song/poem about the events. 2. Do the Vikings deserve their bad reputation? 3. Why did the Vikings decide to leave Scandinavia? 4. Who was Alfred the Great and how important was he to the Saxons? 5. How did the Vikings take over the country and how close did they get? (Keystagehistory) 6. How have recent excavations changed our view of the Vikings? (Keystagehistory) 7. What can we learn about Viking settlement from a study of place-name endings? (Keystagehistory)

Cause and consequence:

I am starting to express explanations in term of relative importance backed up by reasoned argument e.g. *The main reason was... Also important... Some people think...*

I can see that causes might be **connected** in some way; one cause might be linked to another making the event much more likely to happen.

I can explain an event with reference to abstract ideas such as long and short-term or events building up.

More able: I am able to explain some quite complex events using a good range of causes, some of them linked in a simple way.

Enquiry:

I can think of reasons why a source might be unreliable e.g. view of the Vikings may be biased because the evidence we have was written by people who suffered most at the hands of these raiders.

I can offer substantiated reasons why some sources might **be treated cautiously**.

I can consider the worthiness of a source by **reference to what is known** about the topic. e.g. *This source changes our view of the Vikings as it shows they were capable of crafting beautiful and complex artefacts.*

Interpretation:

I understand that all history is to some extent interpretations and see why some people might write different versions of the same event; Even when using the same evidence historians can put a different gloss on events.

I understand that some interpretations might be more accurate and reliable than others, by use of

8. Study Viking beliefs using primary and secondary sources.
9. What were Vikings knots and how were they used? (Planbee)
10. Ask and answer our own questions about the Vikings.
11. Why did the Normans invade in 1066 and what happened afterwards?
12. Raiders or settlers - how should we remember the Vikings?
(Keystagehistory)

Assessment:

- 1) What changed/stayed the same when the Vikings settled in Saxon Britain?
- 2) How should we remember the Vikings?

Black History month activity - Martin Luther King

Remembrance Activity: WW1 propaganda posters.

their own background knowledge e.g. *This version is not accurate because it shows the Vikings just to be raiders. We know from the evidence that has been discovered that they were traders too.*

I can grasp that interpretations might differ depending on the aspect that people are looking at e.g. the reputation of the Vikings.

KPIs

Change and continuity:

I understand what is meant by a turning point e.g. defeat of the Vikings by Alfred the Great led to creation of England and Danelaw.

I grasp that change can happen quite quickly and can be reversed e.g. struggle for control of Britain between the Saxons and Vikings.

(see assessment grid)

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(see assessment grid)

Comparisons/links with other topics:

How similar were Mayan and Viking beliefs?

Given that there is little evidence that the two ever met, it is incredible to see to how many religious similarities there are between the Maya and the Vikings. Both had a creation story about the very beginnings of the world, but they varied wildly. However, both featured trees as having a central role in their worlds. Both had different realms (although different numbers of them) with different types of lands within them and both were pagan/polytheistic. Children should note the differences in some of the gods and why didn't any Viking gods resemble jaguars? Why didn't the Maya have gods linked to ice and snow? Contrasts can also be made with the nature of the various deities, as Viking gods often took the form of humans with special powers and abilities, whereas the gods of the Maya were more supernatural and sometimes possessed animal qualities or characteristics, or could even morph into them. Both have supernatural elements to them and include animals in one way or another, but Viking gods had pets or spirit animals rather than turning into them per se. A major contrast between them though is in their attitude towards Christianity. Whilst many missions were sent to Scandinavia to convert them to Christianity and failed, they did eventually convert through their own will. On the other hand, extracts from the sacred text of the Maya the Chilam Balam shows their incredible disdain for Christianity when the Spaniards arrived, stating, 'When misery came, when Christianity came...' Comparisons could be drawn about how Christianity had spread widely across Europe and so the Vikings were sure to have had contact with it in various forms before embracing it, whereas the Maya would have had very limited knowledge of it before seeing it as a driving force behind an invading menace and forcing them to convert. How does this make the children feel about the spread of Christianity?

Achievements - Given that there is only a very small smattering of evidence to suggest that the two groups ever met, it is surprising to see how much each group managed to achieve. The Maya were very impressive considering that they were essentially a 'Stone Age' society and didn't have access to metals, unlike the Vikings. However, this didn't stop them achieving just as much, or even more, than a lot of other civilisations. A major difference though was the travelling and trade networks that the Vikings built. Whilst the Maya did trade throughout Central America and possibly further, the Vikings truly had an international presence and were successful in forging relationships with distant civilisations. The Vikings never really set up great cities, not at least in comparison to the Maya, who managed to build flourishing metropolises with populations in the tens of thousands. These then pose interesting questions about who the children think was more advanced and what they consider an 'essential' to be considered and 'advanced' society.

Housing - Both Viking and houses of the Maya were very similar in terms of the look and the materials used. They were both very simplistic and mainly served for sleeping. Children should think about the geographical settings of each and why they used similar materials - the Vikings in Scandinavia had good access to forests and trees, as did the Maya who lived in lush rainforests. Geography should also be considered when thinking about why the Maya may not have used the indoors as much as others, given the climate. The settlements of both the Vikings and the Maya can be similar at times, both setting up farming communities, but the difference being in the Maya cities. **Society** - This is an interesting one to compare between the two because of the difference in the rigidity of each system. The Viking society was free-flowing and allowed people to move between each of the classes,

essentially allowing the lowliest peasant to acquire the means to become a noble. However, the system of the Maya was known as a 'caste' system which meant that you were born into a particular class and stayed there for your entire life. Asking the children which they would prefer makes things interesting as many will choose the Viking one, allowing them climb up to the top, but suggesting that you might be born into Maya royalty would lead to a much better life? You could also climb to the highest class of Viking society and be toppled by someone much lower than yourself. Both systems had a number of classes ranging from slaves to kings, but the Maya had a few more rungs including priests, which highlights the importance of religion in society.

Food - An interesting comparison between the two comes from the farming techniques and methods of collection. The Vikings raided and traded across the world to experience new luxuries and foods, and whilst the Maya certainly traded too, the Maya used very different techniques to make the most efficient use of the land, employing terraced farming and slash and burn too. Asking the children why the Vikings may not have used these, certainly to the same extent as the Maya, makes them think more about the geography of each group of people. Seeing that the main occupation of both societies was farming tells us how important it was to both of them. Comparing the types of typical foods that they would collect though shows another striking difference, notably due to geography. Whilst thinking about luxurious foods that the Vikings may have acquired on their travels, the Maya had the luxury of chocolate. So revered it was, that it was sometimes used as a currency. Would the children think about using anything other than money to pay for something today? What does that tell us about how we value certain items and their worth and what that meant about chocolate to the Maya?

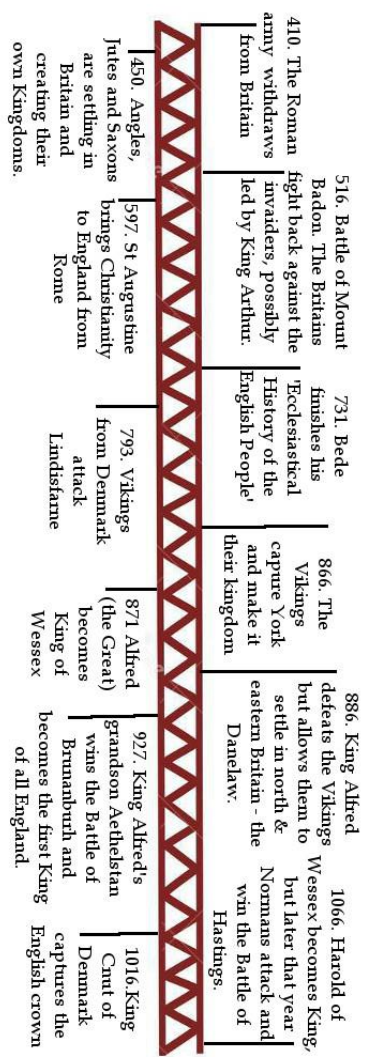
Outcomes

An overview of what children will know / can do

Working towards: Children are still developing their responses to meet the KPIs. They have some substantive knowledge about the topic they are studying.

Expected: Children will have demonstrated the KPIs in their work and in assessments. They have good substantive knowledge about the period they are studying.

Exceeding: Children will have demonstrated the KPIs and other historical skills in their work and assessments. They have a secure and deep substantive knowledge about the topic they are studying.

Key Vocabulary	Timeline / Diagrams																								
Pagan: A person holding religious beliefs other than those of the main world religions. Someone who believes in many Gods. Scandinavia: A place where the Vikings were from. Lindisfarne: The place where the Vikings first landed in 793 AD. Monastery: A religious building where monks lived and worshipped. Monks: Members of the church and one the few people who could read and write. Settle: To live and take up residence. Runes The letters used in the Runic alphabet. This is how the Anglo Saxons wrote. Invade: An armed force enters a country or region in order to occupy it. Shield wall: A military tactic where soldiers would stand next to each other, shield to shield, thus protecting the person next to them. Buhrs: Fortified towns. Kingdom: An area of land controlled by either a Viking or Saxon king e.g. the Kingdom of Wessex.	 <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Event</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>450</td> <td>Angles, Jutes and Saxons are settling in Britain and creating their own Kingdoms.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>516</td> <td>Battle of Mount Badon. The Britons fight back against the invaders, possibly led by King Arthur.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>597</td> <td>St Augustine brings Christianity to England from Rome.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>731</td> <td>Bede finishes his 'Ecclesiastical History of the English People'.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>793</td> <td>Vikings attack Lindisfarne.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>866</td> <td>The Vikings capture York and make it their kingdom.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>871</td> <td>Alfred (the Great) becomes King of Wessex.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>886</td> <td>King Alfred defeats the Vikings but allows them to settle in north & eastern Britain - the Danelaw.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>927</td> <td>King Alfred's grandson Aethelstan wins the Battle of Brunanburh and becomes the first King of all England.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1016</td> <td>King Cnut of Denmark captures the English crown.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1066</td> <td>Harold of Wessex becomes King, but later that year Normans attack and win the Battle of Hastings.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Event	450	Angles, Jutes and Saxons are settling in Britain and creating their own Kingdoms.	516	Battle of Mount Badon. The Britons fight back against the invaders, possibly led by King Arthur.	597	St Augustine brings Christianity to England from Rome.	731	Bede finishes his 'Ecclesiastical History of the English People'.	793	Vikings attack Lindisfarne.	866	The Vikings capture York and make it their kingdom.	871	Alfred (the Great) becomes King of Wessex.	886	King Alfred defeats the Vikings but allows them to settle in north & eastern Britain - the Danelaw.	927	King Alfred's grandson Aethelstan wins the Battle of Brunanburh and becomes the first King of all England.	1016	King Cnut of Denmark captures the English crown.	1066	Harold of Wessex becomes King, but later that year Normans attack and win the Battle of Hastings.
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Key people / places

Wessex: Anglo-Saxon kingdom in what is now Hampshire, Dorset, Wiltshire and Somerset. Alfred the Great fought hard to protect this kingdom from Viking invasion.

Mercia: Powerful Anglo-Saxon kingdom in what is now the Midlands.

Aethelred: King of Wessex from 865 - 871 before being succeeded by his brother Alfred.

King Alfred: Legendary King of Wessex who fought back against the Vikings and prevented England falling.

Guthrum: Leader of a Danish invasion who later made himself King of East Anglia. He fought against Alfred but was later baptised by him after being beaten at the Battle of Edington.

Edward: Son of Alfred the Great who became king in 899 when Alfred died.

Athelstan: Alfred's grandson who became king in 925 and became a great ruler.

Ethelred the Unready: Father of Edward.

Edward the Confessor: King of England.

William of Normandy: Son of Robert the Magnificent, one of the claimants to the throne of England when Edward the Confessor died.

Questions of the week:

1. Why did the Vikings choose to raid Lindisfarne? What disadvantage did the monks have?
2. How credible is the Anglo-Saxon chronicle extract on the Lindisfarne raid? What might be exaggerated? Why do you think there is no Viking version of what happened?
3. What were the reasons why the Vikings started to explore other countries?
4. What weapons did the Vikings carry? What tactics did they use in battle?
5. Name some features of a Viking long ship.
6. What were Alfred's biggest achievements? Do you think he dealt with the Vikings effectively?

7. What beliefs did the Vikings have? Are they similar/different to the beliefs of another civilisation you have studied?
8. What questions do you have about the Vikings? What sources of information did you find useful in finding out answers?
9. Why do you think Harold may have lost to William? Who do you think was more worthy of the crown? How might history have been different if Edward had had a son?