

Topic Knowledge Organiser Autumn 2

Section 1 – Anglo-Saxons

The last Roman soldiers left Britain in AD410. New people came in ships across the North Sea – the Anglo-Saxons. The Anglo-Saxon age in Britain was from around AD410 to 1066.

They were a mix of tribes from Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands. The three biggest were the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes. The land they settled in was named 'Angle-land', or England.

Traditionally the Anglo Saxon period has been thought of as a series of invasions but historians now think that some settlements may have been actually quite peaceful. The English language has its roots in Old English which was spoken during the time of the Saxons. Many words we use today are based on Saxon original words, including the days of the week. Our modern counties are based on – sometimes identical to – old Saxon shires. Anglo-Saxons did not live in existing Roman settlements but rather developed their own more rural settlements.

Section 2 – Historical artefacts

Artefacts are objects from the past that can tell us a lot about the culture at the time.

Archaeologists and historians have an important role in helping us to understand what life was like in Anglo-Saxon Britain. This, in turn helps us to understand how the Anglo-Saxons shaped the world in which we live today.

At Sutton Hoo, an Anglo-Saxon burial ship was found full of exciting artefacts such as a sword and helmet, a sceptre, spoons and coins.

History is constantly being re-written as the Staffordshire Hoard was found in 2009 giving more examples of Saxon craftsmanship.

Section 3 – Alfred the Great

A lot of what we know about Alfred the Great comes from stories that have been written about him, especially by Asser who wrote a biography of him. Alfred became king in AD871 when his elder brother died. During his reign he was advised by a council of nobles and church leaders.

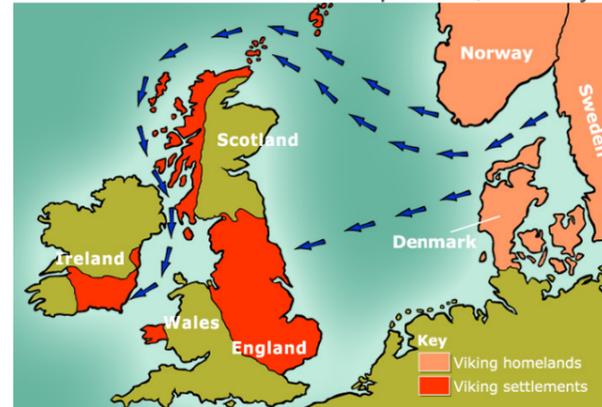
Alfred made good laws and believed education was important. He had books translated from Latin into English, so people could read them. He also told monks to begin writing the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. He is believed to have invented the candle clock so people could tell what time it was.

To help protect his kingdom from Viking attacks, Alfred built forts and walled towns known as 'burhs'. He also built warships to guard the coast from raiders and organised his army into two parts. While half the men were at home on their farms, the rest were ready to fight Vikings.

Alfred died in AD899 and was buried at his capital city of Winchester.

Section 4 – Vikings

The Vikings were famous for sailing huge distances from their home in Scandinavia between AD793 and 1066 to raid and plunder, but they also traded with people from other countries.



The Vikings were expert boat builders and sailors. Keels – central spines along boats' bottoms – made their 16 to 37m 'longboats' easy to steer, and because these were designed to float high in the water, landing on beaches was easy

The first place the Vikings raided in Britain was the Christian monastery at Lindisfarne, a small holy island located off the northeast coast of England. Some of the monks were drowned in the sea, others killed or taken away as slaves along with many treasures of the church.

The raid on Lindisfarne marks the start of the Viking migration from Scandinavia in AD793.

Section 5 – Sources

We can learn about the past by interpreting evidence. Sources of information can give us evidence.

Primary Sources are immediate, first-hand accounts of a topic, from people who had a direct connection with it. Primary sources can include: Texts of laws and other original documents, newspaper reports, by reporters who witnessed an event or who quote people who did and original pictures at the time of the event.

Secondary sources are generally scholarly books and articles. A secondary source interprets and analyses primary sources. These sources are one or more steps removed from the event. Secondary sources may contain pictures, quotes or graphics of primary sources.

A reliable source is one that provides a thorough, well-reasoned theory, argument, discussion, etc. based on strong evidence. Reliable sources are often written by experts who have carried out fair research.

Bias is the action of supporting or opposing a particular person or thing in an unfair way, by allowing personal opinions to influence your judgment. People have different views and beliefs. This plays a big part in how we interpret situations and affect how we judge an event. Some historical sources may be biased against the Vikings if they were written by people with strong views that differed greatly to the Vikings' views. For example the Christian monks may have been biased against the Vikings because the Vikings had pagan beliefs and worshipped many gods.

Section 6 - Beliefs

Viking gods

For most of the Viking period the Vikings were **pagan**, worshipping many gods and goddesses. They believed their gods lived in a place called **Asgard**. They also believed in three Norns which were beings that ruled the destiny of the gods and men. They represented the past, present and future.

Among the many gods Vikings believed in were Thor, the god of thunder, and Loki, a cheeky mischief-maker who could shape-shift to become all different kinds of animals. Some of the Viking gods had also been worshipped by Anglo-Saxons. Some of the gods names gave us names of days of the week. For example Thor's day is Thursday.

Religious ceremonies took place in the outdoors, often with feasting and sacrifices of animals or even humans.

Vikings believed in an afterlife where they might need all of their possessions. When important Vikings died, they would be placed with all their clothes, jewellery, even their animals, in a burial ship. This would either be covered with a huge mound of earth or set alight and pushed out to sea.

Section 7- Design Technology

A product is something that can be designed and made for use or sale. Products are designed for a purpose. The final product you make must be able to function (do its job) and may need to meet other criteria as well such as look attractive, be made from inexpensive or sustainable materials. When you design a product you will have a design criteria to list all the qualities your final product needs to have and to ensure it is fit for purpose.

It is important to research carefully before designing to see which products are already available and which materials could be useful.

Products have a primary source. The primary source is the main material a product is made of. It must be chosen carefully to ensure the product will meet the design criteria.

A prototype is the first version of the product you try to make. It can then be tested out and adapted. Designing should be an iterative process. This means you reflect and review and alter your prototype until you get the product right. Evaluating is an important part of designing. Evaluating is all about seeing what worked well and what could be improved.

