



History Knowledge Organiser

Summer Term - Anglo Saxons and Vikings

Changes in Britain

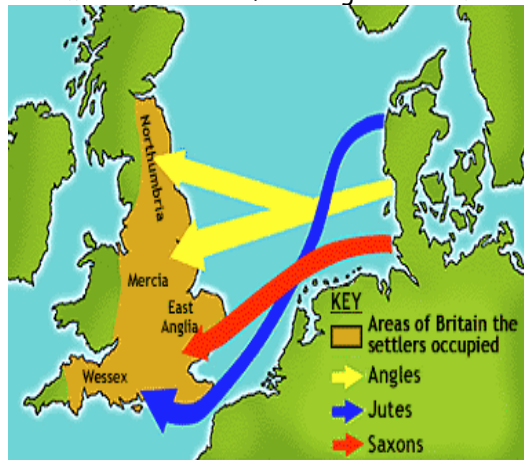
Year 4

Key Knowledge

Learn this information

Who were the Anglo Saxons and why did they invade Britain?

By around 410AD the last of the Romans had left Britain to go and defend their home territory. This made Britain vulnerable to invasion. The **Picts** and the **Scots** were a constant threat to the Britons. In a bid to retain control King, Vortigern asked two brothers called Hengest and Horsa from Jutland (modern day Denmark) to come and fight for him and keep the Picts and Scots out. However, the men liked what they found in Britain and decided that they wanted to stay and take land for themselves as it was rich and plentiful and the Britons could be easily defeated. They brought more warriors and over time the invaders began to settle around Britain pushing the Brits further and further out! The warriors that **invaded** became known as the first Anglo-Saxons.



How was Anglo Saxon Britain ruled?

The kings of Anglo-Saxon Britain each ruled their own **kingdom** and the people in it. They fought to defend their **kingdom** or take control of other kingdoms. When the Anglo-Saxons first settled in Britain, there were seven kingdoms, but by AD 878 there was just one kingdom left (Wessex) as the others had been overrun by the Vikings. Many Anglo-Saxon kings tried to resist the Vikings and fought hard to keep control of their land. King Alfred the Great was the best known Anglo-Saxon king and the first to defeat the Vikings in battle.



What was life like in Anglo Saxon Britain?

The Romans preferred living in towns but the Anglo-Saxons preferred to live in small villages. Anglo-Saxon influence can be seen in place names in Britain today. Wessex was a place named after the West Saxons who settled there. Sussex was named after the South Saxons. The kingdom of Mercia (which means border people) was named Mercia because it had so many borders with other kingdoms.

What did the Anglo Saxons believe?

The religion of the early Anglo-Saxons was **Paganism**. They worshipped many gods. Festivals and sacrifices were made to the gods and goddesses. Pagans also believed in good and bad omens, lucky charms, spells and magic. They would perform many rituals that they believed would protect them in this life and the next.

At the end of this period, **Christianity** became the main religion in Britain. In AD 597, a Roman monk called Augustine was sent to tell the Anglo-Saxons about **Christianity**. King Ethelbert of Kent was the first to be converted and was baptised along with 10,000 of his people. Over the next 100 years, the rest of the kingdoms converted to **Christianity** too.

Key Vocabulary

Understand these key words

Key Vocabulary

Angles	Tribes from modern day Denmark that settled in Britain from around AD 450.
Saxons	A tribe from the north coast of Europe, especially Germany, that settled in Britain from around AD 450.
Jutes	Tribes from modern day Denmark that settled in Britain from around AD 450.
Picts	Tribes originally from Scotland who were often feared.
Scots	People from Ireland who, like the Picts , were fierce and powerful fighters.
The Heptarchy	The seven kingdoms of Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Essex, Sussex, Wessex and Kent
Pagan	Someone who follows the Paganism religion and worships many gods and goddesses.
Christianity	A religion based on the teachings of Jesus Christ.
Danelaw	The Eastern area of England ruled by the Vikings.
pillaged	To violently steal something.
raid	A surprise attacks.
longship	A long, wooden, narrow boat used by the Vikings.

Key Knowledge

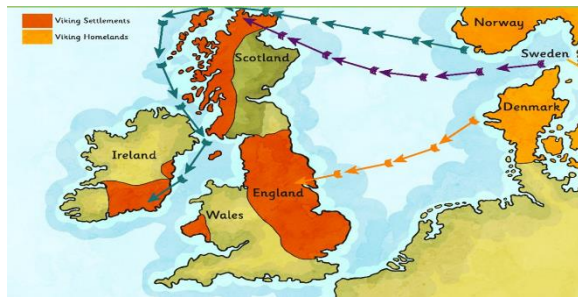
Key Concepts

Learn this information

Who were the Vikings and why did they invade Britain?

The Vikings came from the modern Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Norway and Sweden. They travelled in boats called **longships** and first arrived in Britain around AD 787. The Vikings **raided** places such as **monasteries** and **pillaged** expensive items to **trade**. They were looking for valuable goods like gold and jewels, imported foods and other useful materials.

The Vikings also wanted to claim land and tried to take over much of Britain. They invaded and **settled** in Scotland before heading south to places such as York. By AD 878 the Vikings had settled permanently in Britain



Timeline of Key Events

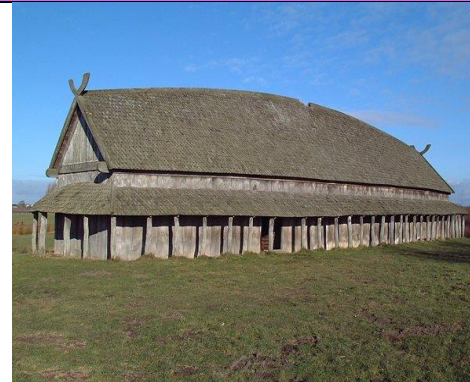
410AD	Last romans leave Britain
450AD	German Saxons settle in Kent
570AD	Heptarchy emerges in England
731AD	Bede completes history of the English Church and its people.
757AD	Offa becomes King of Mercia and the first King of England.
789AD	First recorded Viking attack
793AD	Viking attacks on Lindisfarne
871-899 AD	Alfred, King of Wessex defended Wessex from the Viking conquest.
927AD	Athelstan unites English Kingdoms.
1000AD	Vikings reach Newfoundland (Americas)
1042AD	Saxon Edward the Confessor returns to become King of England
1066AD	Edward the Confessor dies. Harold Godwinson becomes King but is killed by William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings.

What is the significance of Lindisfarne?

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.

Ruthless warriors or peaceful settlers?

The Vikings were not all bloodthirsty raiders. Some came to fight but others came to Britain to live peacefully. Their **longships** brought families who settled in villages. There were farmers, who kept animals and grew crops, and skilful craft workers, who made beautiful metalwork and wooden carvings. Everyone lived together in a large home called a longhouse.



Tribe	A group of people, often related by family, who live together but do not live in towns or cities.
Migration	The movement of people or animals from one place to another.
invaders	People who enter an area and take control of it by force.
invasion	To use military force to take occupy someone else's land or country.
Settler	Someone who starts life in a new place, typically a new country and establishes a colony at first.
King (monarch)	The male ruler of an area, usually a country or a large part of a country. Generally given the role by being born or married into the appropriate family.
kingdom	An area ruled by a king or queen.
trade	Buying, selling or exchanging goods or services between two or more groups of people or countries.
monastery	A building or set of buildings where people lived and worshipped. People called 'monks' often lived in these.

