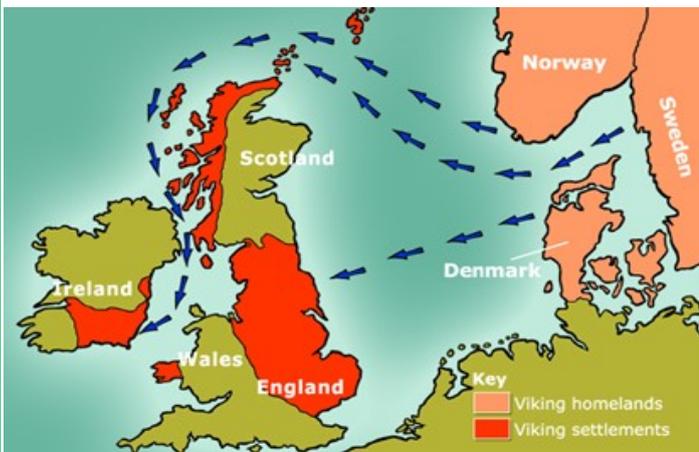


The Vikings

Who were the Vikings?

- Around the year 793AD, warriors began arriving in Britain.
- These warriors came from Scandinavia, the lands of **Norway**, **Denmark** and **Sweden**.
- They arrived on longboats, which were very fast for their swift attacks.
- The period of Vikings leaving their homeland was called the **Viking Age**. The word Viking comes from the Old Norse (their language) meaning 'pirate' or 'piracy'.



What did they do?

- The Vikings were **pagans**. They worshipped many gods and goddesses and believed in supernatural creatures such as dwarves, trolls and dragons.
- The Vikings worshipped in clearings in the woods (**groves**) and sacrificed humans and animals because they believed in **a world after death**.
- Viking society was divided into three main classes: **Jarls** (warrior lords who owned large areas of land), **Karls** (farmers, craftspeople or traders who were ready to fight when needed) and **Thralls** (they had very few rights and were bought and sold by their masters).
- The Vikings held large open-air meetings, called **Things**. People would discuss their laws, sort out any problems and punish criminals.
- As well as farming, men went hunting and fishing for extra food. They also trained as warriors. Women wove clothes and blankets, cooked and looked after sick family members and the children.
- The Vikings were great **craftsmen** too. Carpenters built sturdy homes and ships, as well as simple furniture and chests. Blacksmiths made a range of useful objects, from cooking pots and tools to keys, locks and fine weapons. Leatherworkers made shoes and belts, sheaths for knives and quivers for arrows.



Why did the Vikings invade Britain?

To farm: They wanted better land for their farms; theirs was not good for growing crops and rearing animals.

To get more land: Vikings left their homes because they were overcrowded. There was not enough good land for everyone to use.

To leave their kings: The overpowering control of the kings made people want to leave.

To raid: The wealth of foreign towns and monasteries attracted warriors. Britain was particularly good because there was much to steal!

How do we know?

- Archaeologists have excavated (dug) homes, ships and forts and have found weapons, jewellery and coins.
- Historians have been able to study poems and stories, which were written at the end of the Viking Age.

Vocabulary

AD	Anno Domini—used with a date to show how many years since the birth of Jesus Christ.
BC	Before Christ—used with a date to show the number of years before Jesus Christ.
chieftain	A leader or ruler.
colonise	To take control of an area and send people to live there
monastery	A place where monks live and worship.
plunder	To steal goods by force.
raider	Someone who makes a surprise attack and takes treasure.
ransom	Money that is demanded in return for something.
sacrifice	To kill an animal or person as an offering to a god.
chainmail	Protective clothing for a soldier made from lots of metal rings linked together.
rune	A letter used by the Vikings.

What can I do at home?

- Many of today's words in the English language are based on Viking words, for example, 'egg', 'happy' and 'law'. Can you find any more?
- Design and make your own Viking longhouse.
- The Vikings had their own simple alphabet. Create an information poster with symbols for your own alphabet.
- Design a poster advertising a Viking artefact, encouraging people to buy one.
- Browse the following websites:
<http://primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk/vikings.html>
<http://www.bbc.com/bitesize/topics/ztyr9j6>

Timeline

AD 793



The Vikings attack the island of Lindisfarne.

AD 866



The Vikings capture the city of York.

AD 871



Alfred the Great becomes the King of Wessex.

AD 878



They settle permanently in England.

AD 886



King Alfred agrees to a treaty with the Vikings.

AD 900



The Vikings rule the North of Scotland.

AD 954



The last Viking king of Jorvik is forced out of York.

AD 1013



King Sven of Denmark and his son Cnut sail up the rivers Humber and Trent to claim the throne.

AD 1042



Edward the Confessor is invited to return from Normandy to become the King of England.

AD 1066



King Harold is defeated in the Battle of Hastings.