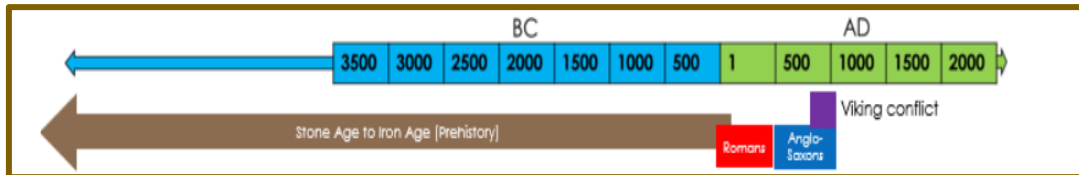


Does describing the Vikings as vicious raiders portray them accurately?

Prior Learning

- I can name significant ancient civilisations, and understand that they ran concurrently in different parts of the world.
- I can describe the way people lived in ancient Egypt and Maya.
- I can describe developments in these societies, and the impact they had on later periods in history.
- I can compare life between the different city states of Ancient Greece
- I can discuss the influence of Ancient Greece on our world today
- I know the impact the Roman Empire had on Britain
- What do we already know about the Vikings?



The Anglo-Saxons

After the Romans left Britain, Anglo Saxons invaders arrived from an area that is now North Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands. Religion was very important to the Anglo Saxons. When they first arrived, they had their own beliefs, however they converted to Christianity and new churches and monasteries were built. Anglo Saxons formed different Kingdoms across England. Kings and their armies constantly fought to control other Kingdoms and defend the land. Then the Vikings arrived. The first raid at Lindisfarne marked the start of a long struggle between the Anglo Saxons and the Vikings for the Kingdom of England.

Master Ship-builders and Sailors

The Vikings were expert ship builders and sailors. They built fast 'long ships' or 'dragon ships' for raiding and war. They were built from shaped, wooden planks held together with iron rivets and wooden frames. Any gaps were sealed with animal hair to make them waterproof. To scare off enemies and evil spirits, they decorated the front of their ships with a dragon's head. These ships could sail in shallow water, so they could travel up rivers as well as across the sea. In a raid, a ship could be pulled up on a beach and the Vikings could jump out and start fighting. A quick getaway could also be made! If there was no wind, the Viking boats could be powered by oars. The Vikings were also experts in navigating the seas.

-They invented a sun-shadow board or sundial to help them find their way.

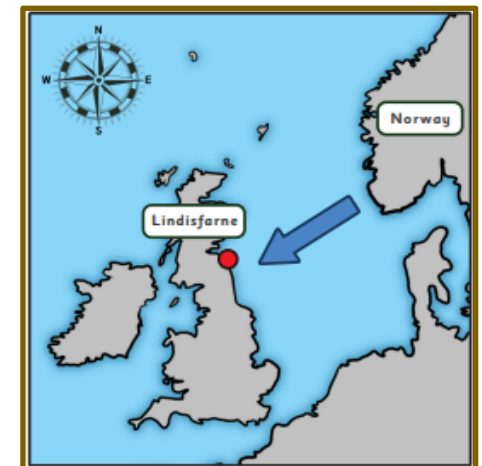
-At night, they watched the skies and used the stars to help direct them.

-Sailors also knew lots about the wind and sea current or even watching birds, the colour of water would tell them when land was close.



Who were the Vikings?

The Vikings were 'Norse' people who came from Norway, Sweden and Denmark. The word Viking means 'a pirate raid'. This is a suitable name, as they were famous for being fearsome 'raiding' warriors, who often attacked monasteries for treasure. Viking warriors believed if they died bravely in battle, they would go to Valhalla (the Viking heaven), which made them tough, fearless opponents. Viking raids were sudden and surprise attacks, and people who lived near the coast would have been worried about potential raids. 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.

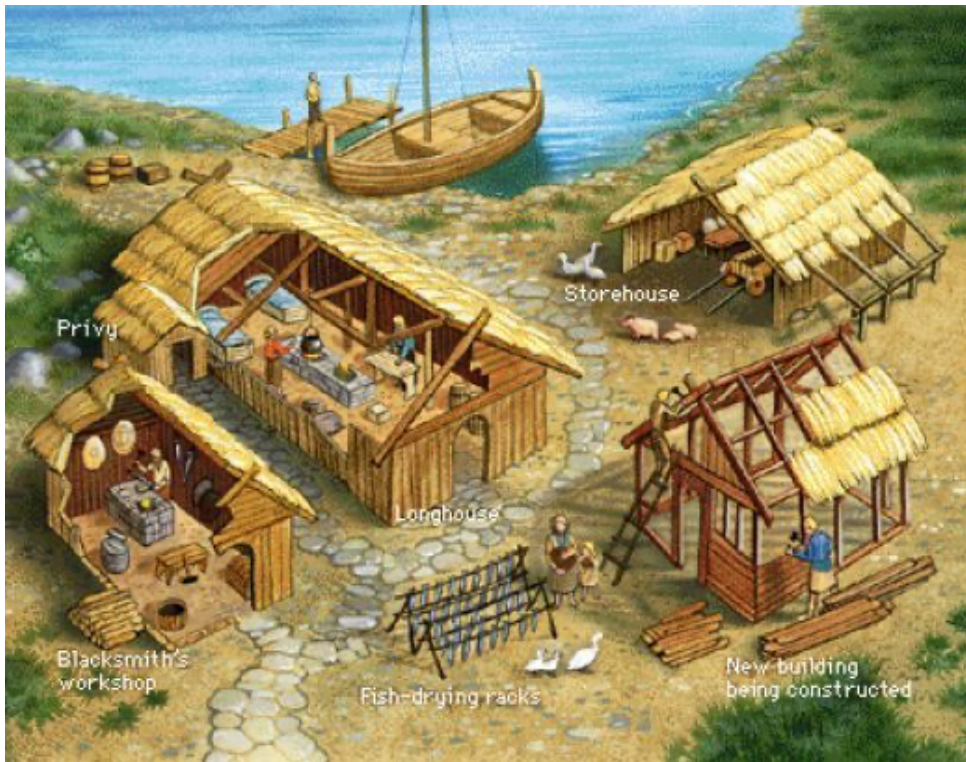


The Vikings were great explorers too, and travelled all over the world...

The Vikings reached Britain, France, Spain, Italy, North Africa and even North America! They established trade routes all over the world. Traders made long journeys to Russia, Constantinople (modern-day Turkey), Central Asia and even to the Middle East to Baghdad in Iraq. They bought goods and materials such as silver, silk, spices, jewellery and glass. In return, they sold items such as honey, tins, iron, fur, leather, fish and walrus ivory. The Vikings also bought and sold slaves. Traders took folding scales to weigh coins to make sure they got a fair deal.

The Great Heathen Army

In 865CE, the Vikings sent a large invading force to Britain, known as 'The Great Heathen Army'. They wanted to conquer and settle in Britain. York, an important central town, became their capital (Jorvik) in 867CE.



Viking Traveller - Erik the Red

Eric the Red was born in Norway, but settled in Iceland. Eric was exiled by the people of Iceland for killing two men. He sailed west and discovered Greenland. It was much colder than Iceland and not much good for farming either as it was actually covered in ice. He named it Greenland to attract settlers to live there; however, not many Vikings went there to live.



Leif Erikson

Leif Eriksson, the son of Eric the Red, became the first European to set foot in North America – 500 years BEFORE Christopher Columbus. He spent the winter there and made a camp in the area he called "Vinland" (wine land), after seeing berries he mistook for grapes, before sailing back to Greenland. "Vinland" is now known as Newfoundland in Canada.



Everyday life

Once settled, most Vikings farmed the land and grew crops such as oats and wheat. They also kept animals for wool and meat. Vikings were also craftsmen; they made pottery, jewellery, tools and weapons. Most Vikings wore clothes made from wool or linen. Men wore trousers and tunics with a belt. Women wore long sleeved dresses under a woollen apron type dress. Vikings used plants to create dye for their clothes. Vikings wrote using characters from the runic alphabet.



How did the Saxons manage to regain control of England?

Alfred the Great and Danelaw

By 878AD, all but one of the eight Anglo-Saxon kingdoms had been overrun by Vikings. That kingdom was ruled by Alfred the Great. In 871CE the Great Heathen Army attempted to conquer Wessex, Alfred's Kingdom. Alfred paid them not to attack, but in 878CE, they returned to Chippenham, killed many and forced King Alfred to flee. Alfred gathered an army to retake Wessex. He defeated the Viking leader Guthrum at Edlington, and forced him not only to surrender, but to convert to Christianity.

Alfred knew he couldn't rid Britain of the Vikings, so he made a peace treaty that established a Viking territory known as **Danelaw**. Alfred became King of all Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in 886CE, and left the Danelaw to the Vikings. To strengthen his Kingdom, Alfred created a standing Army, strong navy, built more forts (Burhs), prioritised education and used coins for trade.



A Succession of Kings and Queens

The children of Alfred the Great - Edward the Elder and Aethelflaed, Lady of the Mercians - began to reclaim land from the Danelaw. Edward was King Alfred's eldest son and began ruling when King Alfred died in 899CE. He succeeded to take control of much of England, including north England, where the Vikings had strong power. He ruled until AD 924. Aethelflaed was Alfred the Great's daughter who married Aethelred, Lord of Mercia. Together they took Wessex from the Vikings. She was a great military commander who captured Derby from the Vikings; Leicester surrendered to her without a fight, and York offered her their loyalty. She died suddenly in 918CE after ruling Mercia and Wessex since 911CE. Edward's son, Aethelstan, took over Mercia and became the first King of England in 927CE.

The Vikings Attempt to Regain Control

The Vikings didn't give up. Ethelred (the unready) was a weak King and in 991 he was defeated. He paid the Vikings to leave (Danegeld) but they kept attacking to be paid off again. Ethelred fought back by killing important Vikings - including Sweyn Forkbeard's sister. Sweyn attacked more fiercely until Ethelred fled to France in 1013ce: Sweyn became King of England. His son, King Cnut married Ethelred's widow and converted to Christianity; he ruled England with many Saxon Laws, until he died in 1035CE. When his son died without children, Edward the confessor (the Saxon son of Ethelred) returned from Normandy to rule England; he died in 1066.

Key Vocabulary

Vikings, Danes, Norse, longships, raid, pillage, navigation, saga, chieftain, Danelaw, Aethelflaed (Lady of Mercia), loyalty, Ethelred the Unready, Danegeld, Sweyn Forkbeard, King Cnut, Edward the Confessor

450 AD Anglo-Saxon invaders arrive in Britain.	600 Anglo-Saxons gradually take over Britain.	633 Lindisfarne monastery built.	793 The Vikings raid Lindisfarne and capture the city of York.	867-878 A series of Viking victories.	871 Alfred the Great becomes King of Wessex.	886 King Alfred and the Vikings divide England. The Danelaw is established.	1014 King Cnut of Denmark becomes King of England.	1042 Edward the Confessor becomes King of England.	1066 AD The Battle of Hastings happens. The Norman army win, marking a new period in history.
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