

# KS2 History Knowledge Organiser

# Who Were the Vikings?



## Sticky Knowledge about the Vikings

- The Vikings first invaded Britain in **866AD** but not all Vikings were warriors. Many came in peace and became farmers.
- The lands that the Vikings occupied were known as **Danelaw**.
- No Vikings wore horns in their helmets.
- Vikings spoke **Norse**, which had an alphabet made up of **runes**.
- Vikings lived in **longhouses** which were long hall like buildings where several families would live.
- Longships or longboats** were designed to sail in both deep and shallow water so that they could get close to the shore and sail in rivers to get inland.
- Vikings were **pagans** and often raided monasteries, looting gold.
- The most important Viking British city was York, or **Jorvik** as it was known by the Vikings.



Subject Specific Vocabulary	
<b>archaeologist</b>	People who discover our history by looking at artefacts that have been found.
<b>Viking raids</b>	A sudden armed attack by Vikings with the aim of causing damage rather than occupying any of the enemy's land.
<b>vicious</b>	To be intentionally harmful or nasty. Vikings warriors were known to often be vicious.
<b>longhouse</b>	A large hall-like building where many Viking families would live together.
<b>berserkers</b>	Warriors that went to war wearing wolf or bear skins. They were out of control and charged fearlessly. The word 'berserk' came from it.

<b>longship</b>	A narrow boat used by Vikings to raid along coasts.
<b>Odin</b>	One of the most famous Viking Gods known for wisdom.
<b>rival kings</b>	Men who want or claim to be king at the same time and so have to fight for the title.
<b>Scandinavia</b>	The name given to a collection of countries: Denmark, Norway and Sweden.
<b>Danelaw</b>	The name given to lands in Britain occupied by the Vikings.
<b>territory</b>	An area of land that belongs to a particular country or person.
<b>invaders</b>	People who enter a place in large numbers without permission.
<b>Jorvik</b>	The Viking name for the city of York. York now has a famous Viking museum called Jorvik.



Key Dates	
401-410AD	The Romans withdraw from Britain: Anglo Saxons migrants begin to settle
450AD	Anglo-Saxon invaders arrive in Britain
600AD	Anglo-Saxons gradually take over Britain
633AD	Lindisfarne monastery built
793AD	The Vikings attack and capture the city of York (Jorvik)
867-878AD	Series of Viking victories
871AD	Alfred the Great becomes King of Wessex
886AD	The Vikings and King Alfred divide England
954AD	Eric Bloodaxe, the last King of Jorvik, is thrown out of York
1014AD	King Canute (Cnut) of Denmark becomes King of England
1042AD	Edward the Confessor becomes king
1066AD	King Harold is killed in the Battle of Hastings William I (the Conqueror) crowned King of England
1100AD	End of the Viking age

## The 'Great' Viking Invasion

In AD865 an army of **Vikings** sailed across the North Sea. This time they wanted to conquer land rather than just raid it.

Over several years the army battled through northern England and in 10 years almost all the **kingdoms** had fallen to the Vikings. All except for Wessex, which was ruled by Alfred the Great.

After years of fighting the Vikings and Alfred made a **peace agreement**. But even after this agreement, fighting went on for many more years. An imaginary dividing line was agreed to run across England, from London in the south towards Chester in the north west. The Anglo-Saxon lands were to the west and the Viking lands, known as the **Danelaw**, were roughly to the east.

## Life in the Danelaw

The **Danelaw** covered an area east of their line joining London and Chester. Everything to the east belonged to the Vikings.

Viking families came **to settle** on these lands. Good farmland was scarce in the Vikings' own countries, and they were looking for a better life.

The most important city in the **Danelaw** was the city of York, or '**Jorvik**' (pronounced 'your-vick'), as the Vikings knew it. Over 10,000 people lived there and it was an important place to trade goods.

Many towns and cities in Britain that were founded by the Vikings can still be spotted today. Places that end in -by, -thorpe or -ay were almost certainly **Viking towns**.

## Attack on Lindisfarne

In AD793 the Vikings famously attacked a monastery at Lindisfarne in Northumbria, north-east England

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.

There was food, drink, cattle, clothes and tools too – all very tempting to a Viking raider.

