

Task 1:

Victorious Vikings

The Vikings came from the area of the modern Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Norway and Sweden). They set out in boats called longships to 'go Viking' (which meant to go travelling around looking for resources and land). The Vikings first arrived in Britain around AD 787 and in AD 793 they raided the monastery at Lindisfarne in Northumbria and stole many items from it.

The Vikings came to Britain looking for new items to steal and trade. In addition to this they wanted land that they could take and use for themselves. The Vikings particularly liked to raid monasteries, like the one at Lindisfarne. The monasteries were not very well protected and contained important goods like gold, jewels and food. The Vikings also stole manuscripts (handwritten books) and bibles, which they later sold back to the monasteries!

When the Vikings first came to Britain they raided, took what they could and then went home again. However, in AD 850 some Vikings stayed in Britain over winter for the first time on the island of Thanet. They enjoyed the milder climate and made use of the rich natural resources.

Later the Vikings started to look for places they could take for their own and settle in for good. By AD 866 they had captured the city of York that eventually became a successful and important Viking city.

The Anglo-Saxon king of Wessex, Alfred the Great, fought against the Vikings in AD 878 and forced them out of the South of England, but this did not last long. Later that year the Vikings took over Wessex and forced King Alfred into hiding. They then went on to capture more places and many Vikings decided to live in Britain forever.

Viking Warriors

The Vikings are probably best known for their fierce warriors. They were expert fighters, very organised and brave in battle.

Viking warriors are often shown in pictures wearing helmets with horns but they did not really wear horned helmets in battle. Instead, the Vikings' helmets, which were made of leather or metal, would have been smooth and close fitting to the head. It is thought that horned helmets were worn only in religious ceremonies.

The Viking warriors carried large shields (about 80-90cm in diameter), which were made of wood and covered in leather. Sometimes the shields would be made with metal as well. They were held using a single hand grip on the back as this made them easier to move around.

The axe was a Viking warrior's main weapon but they also used spears and swords. Swords were very special weapons as they were often given to brave warriors who had done well in many battles. Swords were often double edged with a ridge running down the full length of the centre of the blade.

The Vikings believed that brave warriors who died in battle would go to Valhalla. This was like a heaven for warriors and the place where their chief god, Odin, lived.



1. When did the Vikings first arrive in Britain?
2. Why did the Vikings choose to come to Britain?
3. Why monastery did the Vikings first raid? What happened?
4. Why did the Vikings begin to settle permanently in Britain? Find two reasons.
5. Which city did the Vikings take over in AD 866?
6. Who was King Alfred the Great and what did he do?
7. Give a reason why the Vikings made good warriors.
8. Draw and label a Viking helmet, shield or sword.
9. If you were a Viking warrior, which weapon would you choose? Why?
10. Where did Viking warriors believe they went if they died in battle?

Challenge:

Can you draw and label what you think a Viking warrior might have looked like?

Task 2:

The Magic Hammer

When the Vikings first came to Britain they were Pagans, worshipping Norse gods. The king of the gods was Odin, who had a son, Thor, the God of Thunder.

Thor's magic hammer, which could kill an army or bring peace to the world, was missing; the unintelligent frost giant, Thrym, had stolen it! Loki, the giant and god of Mischief, was sent to find Thrym to retrieve the hammer. However, Thrym laughed and gave Loki an ultimatum: "I will return the hammer if I am given Freya, the Goddess of Love, to be my wife." Loki had a mischievous plan - rather than send poor Freya, Thor put on a dress and went to reclaim his hammer.



1. Who did the Vikings worship originally?

2. Which two words mean the same as 'get back'?

3. Why do you think that Thrym stole the magic hammer?

4. Do you think that Thor managed to recover his hammer? Why do you think this?

The Viking Times

After an arduous journey across the North Sea, we have finally reached our destination – England. The feeble, afraid Englishmen tried to cease us but we were too powerful and fought our way, as brutally as was necessary, onto the green and lush land.

We are here to find treasures (and probably steal them) before we return to our homes in Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

Our first raid was of the monastery at Lindisfarne, which was not very well

protected and contained valuable goods like gold and jewels, imported foods and other useful materials for trade.

England is more pleasant and lucrative than we thought!



1. Which word means 'stop'?

2. Where did the Vikings come from?

3. Find two adjectives which are antonyms of each other.

4. How does the Viking's view of England change?

Task 3: Danegeld by Rudyard Kipling

Fierce and brutal Vikings sailed to Britain in longboats,
'Let's go Viking!' they yelled so they did,
With axes high and a glint in their eyes,
Many Britons just ran and hid!

When a new wave of Viking raids started,
Poor King Ethelred struggled to cope,
So Danegeld he paid to try and stop raids,
But Vikings came back in their boats.

The Danegeld tax couldn't contain them,
And Ethelred got called 'the un-ready',
"It's not funny, they're after more money!
I'm fleeing abroad instead!"

In the end some Vikings liked Britain,
They enjoyed the British way,
They sent for their wives and started new lives,
Vikings were here to stay!



1. How did Vikings travel to Britain?

2. Which word means the same as 'leaving a place of danger'?

3. Why do you think 'many Britons just ran and hid'?

4. How did some of the Vikings change?

Can you write your own using this as your inspiration?

Task 4:

Making a Longhouse

Vikings built houses like ships - up to 100 feet long with oval sides and sloping roofs. The main, boat-like room could house up to fifty people (plus livestock during a freezing winter).

Building a Longhouse

1. Dig holes 1 metre deep, every 2 metres around the perimeter.
2. Set the posts in the holes.
3. Lash pre-cut, rough lumber onto the wooden frame with green twigs.
4. Daub thick mud into the joints between the boards to seal out the weather.
5. Hoist the roof joists above the two widest points of the building.
6. Raise the centre beam between the end joists and attach all three sections together securely.
7. Attach all other roof joists to the centre beam.
8. Weave branches between the joists to support the outer roof layer.



1. Who would live in the longhouse during the winter?

2. Which words means the same as 'lift'?

3. Why is it important to 'seal out weather'?

4. How does the layout help you to follow the instructions?

Design your own Viking Longhouse.

Task 5



Crockery used by the Vikings to eat and cook with.



Viking stew over a fire.

Viking Food and Cooking

The Vikings were good at shaping things from wood. Their crockery and tools were made using a machine called a 'lathe'.

Vikings ate meat from farm animals, and from wild animals that they hunted. They also collected foods such as berries and nuts from nearby woodlands.

They cooked meat in a big stew-pot over the fire, or roasted it on an iron spit. Fish and meat were smoked or dried to preserve it (to make it last longer).



A Viking using a 'lathe'.



Vikings roasting meat on an iron spit

Viking bread was made from rye or barley flour. They used milk mostly to make cheese and butter, then drank the buttermilk left over.

At a feast, guests drank ale and mead (a strong drink made from honey). People drank out of wooden cups or drinking horns (made from cow-horns). Feasts were held to mark funerals and seasonal festivals, such as midwinter. Some feasts lasted over a week!

- 1) What material are Vikings bowls and spoons made from?
- 2) What machine was under to make their tools and crockery?
- 3) Where did Vikings get their food from?
- 4) How did the Vikings cook their food?
- 5) What did the Vikings do with the left over buttermilk?
- 6) When did the Vikings drink ale and mead?
- 7) What was mead made from?
- 8) What kind of Vikings do you think drank from a horn?
- 9) How long could a feast last?
- 10) Would you like to eat like a Viking? Why?