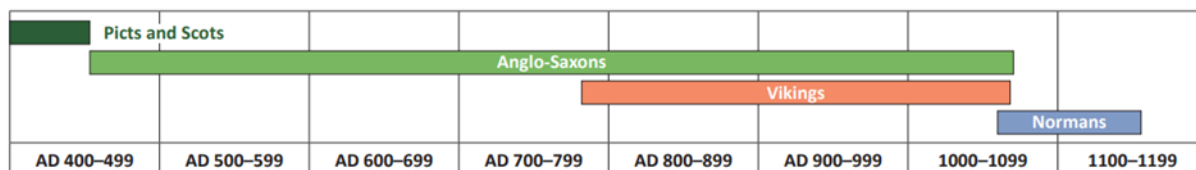


Invasion

After the Romans

After the Romans left Britannia in AD 410, many towns fell into disrepair and the country became vulnerable to attack. This marked the beginning of a period of invasions from different groups: Picts and Scots from Scotland and Ireland; Anglo-Saxons from Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark; Vikings from Scandinavia and Normans from France. This time in history is called the early Middle Ages.



Timeline showing the periods of invasion and settlement in Britain from AD 410-1199



Settlement

The Anglo-Saxons invaded the east and south coasts of England and pushed the Celtic Britons west. They split England into seven kingdoms, which became known as the heptarchy. By AD 800, there were five main kingdoms: East Anglia, Kent, Mercia, Northumbria and Wessex. Celtic Britons still lived in Wales, Cornwall, Scotland and Ireland.



Viking raids

The name 'Viking' comes from a language called 'Old Norse' and means 'a pirate raid'. People who went off raiding in ships were said to be 'going Viking'. 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.

The Anglo-Saxons vs The Vikings

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, taking control of the AngloSaxon kingdoms of Northumbria, East Anglia and most of Mercia. By AD874, almost all the kingdoms had fallen to the Vikings. All except for Wessex, which was ruled by Alfred the Great. King Alfred beat the Viking army in battle but wasn't able to drive the Vikings out of Britain. 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 northwest. The Anglo-Saxon lands were to the west and the Viking lands, known as the Danelaw, were roughly to the east.



Viking life

The Vikings lived in a similar way to the Anglo-Saxons. Most Vikings were farmers or craftspeople, but they were also warriors who carried out frequent raids. Men and boys trained in boat building, weapon making, crafts and combat. They lived in longhouses, with a central fire and thatched roof. When the Vikings first invaded, they were pagans and worshipped many gods. Over time, they converted to Christianity



Viking raid on Lindisfarne

In AD 793, the Vikings arrived on Lindisfarne and destroyed the monastery buildings, stole precious objects, killed and injured the monks and took some as slaves. The Christian world was shocked by this raid on a remote monastery and monks wrote about the attack.

Ruthless warriors or peaceful settlers?

Not all the Vikings were bloodthirsty warriors. Some came to fight, but others came peacefully, to settle. They were farmers, and kept animals and grew crops. They were skilful at crafting, and made beautiful metalwork and wooden carvings. Vikings sailed the seas trading goods to buy silver, silks, spices, wine, jewellery, glass and pottery to bring back to their homes.

Power

- After the Romans left Britannia in AD 410, Britain was vulnerable to attack.
- The Picts and Scots tried to invade England after AD 410. In AD 449, a British leader, Vortigern, asked Hengist and Horsa, two Jutes, to come to England to help the Britons. However, the Jutes realised that the land in England was good for farming, so they, along with the Angles and Saxons, invaded England.
- After invading, the Anglo-Saxon rulers of the seven kingdoms fought each other for land and power.
- Over a period of 60 years, the Vikings continued to raid England in the spring and summer, before returning to Scandinavia in the winter.
- After 60 years of summer raids, a huge army of 3000 Vikings arrived on the south coast to invade England in AD 865. They conquered every kingdom other than Wessex and took control of Jorvik (York).

Vocabulary

Angles	Tribes from an area today known as modern day Denmark that settled in Britain from around AD 450. They were one of the tribes that became known as the first Anglo-Saxons.
Danegeld	"Paying the Dane". King Etherfred paid the Vikings 4500kg of silver to go home but they kept returning and were paid 22,000kg of silver in Danegeld altogether.
invade	To enter and occupy land.
longship	long, wooden, narrow boat used by the Vikings.
pagans	A religion where many gods and goddesses are worshipped.
Picts	tribes originally from Scotland who were often feared.
Raid	A sudden attack, which aims to cause damage.
Saxons	A tribe from the north coast of Europe, especially Germany, that settled in Britain from around AD 450. They were one of the tribes that became known as the first Anglo-Saxons
Scandinavia	An area of Europe, which includes Sweden, Norway and Denmark.
Scots	People from Ireland who, like the Picts, were fierce and powerful fighters