



Vikings



Vikings were Scandinavians, who from the late 8th to late 11th centuries, raided and traded from their Northern European homelands across wide areas of Europe, and explored westwards to Iceland, Greenland, and Vinland.

Key Knowledge

They set out in boats called longships to 'go Viking' (travelling around looking for resources and land to claim as their own). The Vikings first arrived in Britain around AD 787 and in AD 793 they raided and pillaged the monastery at Lindisfarne in Northumbria. The next year, they attacked Scotland. The Vikings came to Britain looking for lucrative new items to steal and trade. In addition, they wanted land that they could take and claim as their own. They particularly liked to raid monasteries, like the one at Lindisfarne.

The monasteries were not very well protected and contained valuable goods like gold and jewels, imported foods and other useful materials. The Vikings also stole manuscripts and bibles. These were sold back to the religious leaders who could not bear to see them lost or damaged.

By AD 878 the Vikings had settled permanently in England, overran Wessex and forced King Alfred into hiding.



Danelaw and Danegeld

In 870 AD, the Vikings attacked Wessex, one of the few remaining areas outside Danish control. King Alfred the Great and his brother King Ethelred fought them and in 871 AD the Vikings were defeated. The Vikings continued to attack and in 878 AD, Alfred again defeated them in the Battle of Edington.

Danelaw - In 886 AD, Alfred made a peace treaty with the Danes. England was divided forever. The Vikings got control of: the north and the east of England. This was declared to be Danish territory - 'Danelaw'. A huge chunk of England had been given to the Danes.

Alfred got control of areas of West Mercia and Kent which had been beyond the boundaries of Wessex.

A particularly brutal Viking king, Harold Bluetooth, began raiding England again. The English king at the time was only 7 years of age! He was a weak ruler and had bad advisors. He was nicknamed Ethelred the Unready. One strategy he used was paying the Vikings to go away. This was called DANEGELD which means 'paying the Dane'.

In AD 991 the Vikings were given 4500kg of silver to go home, but they soon returned. Each time there was a fresh attack they were paid again. The Vikings learnt that if they kept raiding Britain they would keep getting paid. By 1012, 22 000kg of silver was given to the Vikings in Danegeld. Eventually, Ethelred decided to fight back. In 1002, Ethelred's soldiers killed many Viking families in the Danelaw. This made King Sweyn of Denmark angry. He invaded England and Ethelred had to flee to France. In 1016 Sweyn's son Cnut became king of England. Cnut (also known as Canute). For the next few years England was part of his Viking empire, along with Denmark and Norway. In 1042 there was a new king of England. He was Edward, son of Ethelred the Unready.



Viking Life



Vikings used whatever natural resources were available to make their houses. Typically, this might have been stone or wood for the walls, a thatched (straw) roof and wattle and daub (stick and mud/dung) on the inside walls to keep in heat. Viking metal workers made objects from a wide range of different materials, from iron to gold. Jewellery was worn to show off how rich a person was. When the Vikings first came to Britain they were pagans, which means they worshipped many gods. Over time, many Vikings converted to Christianity. The individual letters of the Viking alphabet were called runes. There were 16 runes in total. The Vikings made their own bread by grinding corn into flour and then mixing it with water to make a dough. They kept an open fire in their houses to provide heat and a place to cook. They hung meats and fish above the fire to preserve them with the smoke. They also preserved by curing (drying out with salt). Rich Vikings wore clothes made from silk (which the Vikings traded from overseas). They also had furs to wrap around themselves to keep warm. Jewellery makers engraved abstract animal shapes and patterns of interlace (criss-crossing) on brooches and other items, such as the handles of swords. The Vikings used rhyme to tell long stories, known as sagas. Sagas often told about the adventures of heroic characters fighting dangerous monsters.

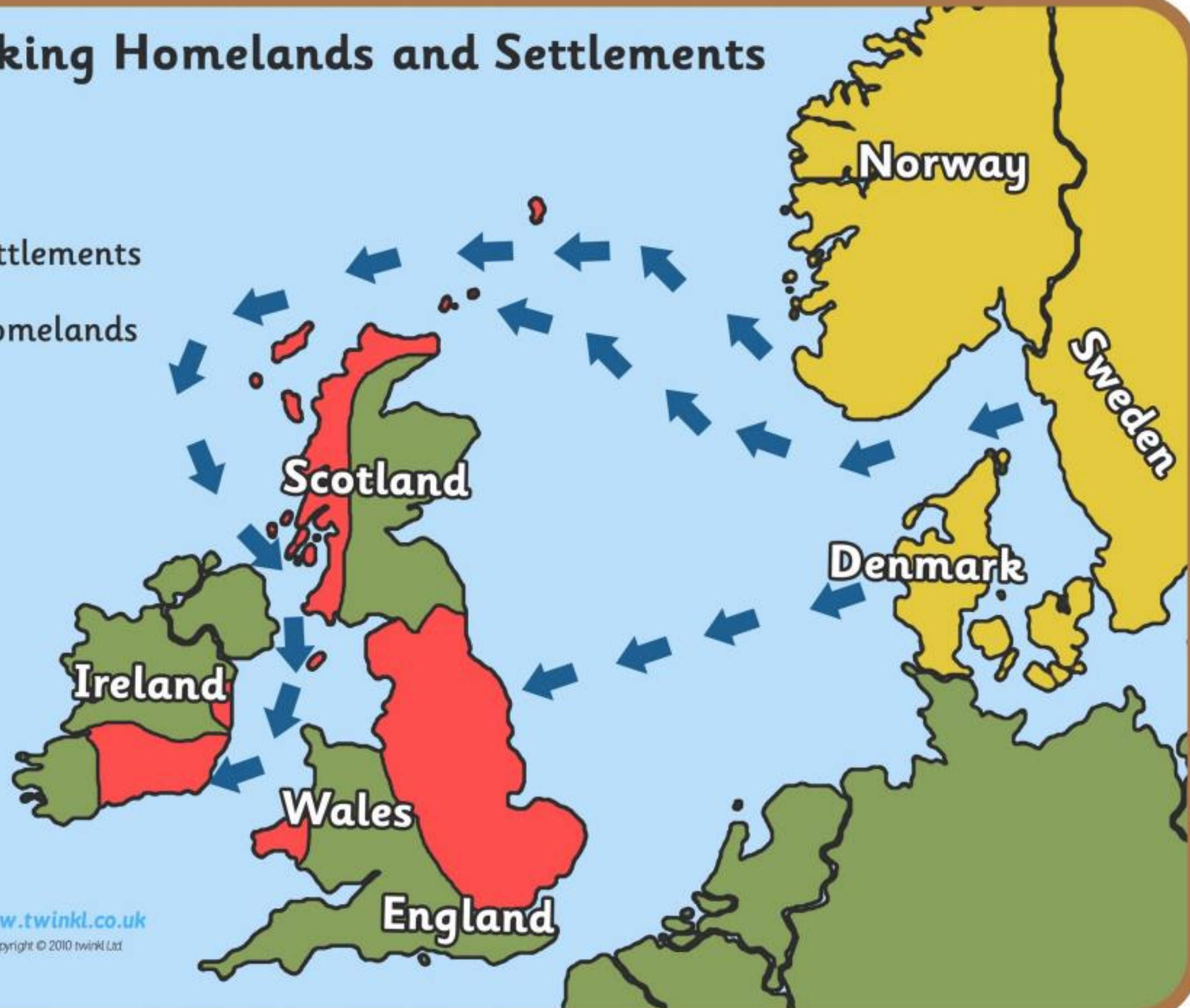
Key Vocabulary


















Battle of Edington	At the Battle of Edington, an army of the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom of Wessex under Alfred the Great defeated the Great Heathen Army led by Guthrum on a date between 6 and 12 May AD 878.	King Sven	King of Denmark from 986 to 1014.
Cold Water Ordeal	An ancient judicial practice by which the guilt or innocence of the accused was determined when the accuser, being tied under the arms, was thrown into a river. If he sank to the bottom, he was held to be guiltless, and drawn up by the cord; but if he floated, the water rejected him, because of his guilt.	longhouse	Vikings lived in a long, narrow building called a longhouse. Most had timber frames, with walls of wattle and daub and thatched roofs.
Danelaw	The set of legal terms and definitions created in the treaties between the King of Wessex, Alfred the Great, and the Danish warlord, Guthrum, written following Guthrum's defeat at the Battle of Edington in 878.	longship	A long, wooden, narrow boat used by the Vikings.
Edmund Ironside	King of England from 23 April to 30 November 1016.	Odin	A god in Viking mythology.
Ethelred the Unready	King of the English from 978 to 1013 and again from 1014 until his death.	pagans	A person holding religious beliefs other than those of the main world religions.
Frigg	A goddess in Viking mythology.	pillage	To steal goods using violent tactics.
Harald Bluetooth	King of Denmark from c. 958 - c. 986.	runes	The letters in the runic alphabet. 
Harold Harefoot	King of England from 1035 to 1040.	thatched	To cover (a roof or a building) with straw or a similar material.
hearth	The floor of a fireplace.	Thor	A hammer-wielding Viking god associated with thunder, lightning and storms.
Hot Water Ordeal	An ancient judicial practice by which the guilt or innocence of the accused was determined by dipping their hand in boiling water.	wattle and daub	A composite building method used for making walls and buildings, in which a woven lattice of wooden strips called wattle is daubed with a sticky material usually made of some combination of wet soil, clay, sand, animal dung and straw.
Iron Bar Ordeal	An ancient judicial practice by which the guilt or innocence of the accused was determined by the accused carrying a red-hot iron bar. If the wound healed cleanly within three days, they were innocent.	weaving loom	A device used to weave cloth and tapestry.
King Cnut	Cnut won the throne of England in 1016 in the wake of centuries of Viking activity in northwestern Europe. Scotland submitted to him in 1017.	William the Conqueror Battle of Hastings	The first Norman King of England, reigning from 1066 until his death in 1087. The Battle of Hastings was fought on 14 October 1066 between the Norman-French army of William, the Duke of Normandy, and an English army under the Anglo-Saxon King Harold Godwinson, beginning the Norman conquest of England.

Map of Viking Homelands and Settlements

Key

-  Viking Settlements
-  Viking Homelands



																
Ancient Egypt	Mayans	The Shang Dynasty	Celts	Romans	Anglo-Saxons	Vikings	Riotous Royals	St Nicholas Church	Queen Elizabeth I	The Great Fire of London	Florence Nightingale	The arrival of the railways	History of diversity in the local area	Queen Elizabeth II Coronation	Pyrford School opened	Moon Landing
3,100BC	2600BC	1766 BC	750BC	AD43	AD449	793	1066	1140	1559	1666	1820	1825	1852	1953	1950	1969
Year 3	Year 5	Year 4	Year 3	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 4	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2	Year 2	Year 3	Year 5	Year 1	Year 2	Year 1