

Chapter 2

The Vikings (c. 790–c. 1066 CE) »



A dragon ship aflame, part of a Viking commemoration held every year in Lerwick, Shetland Islands, Scotland

HISTORY SKILLS

In this chapter you will learn to apply the following historical skills:

- sequence historical events, developments and periods
- use historical terms and concepts
- identify a range of questions about the past to inform a historical inquiry
- identify and locate relevant sources, using ICT and other methods
- identify the origin and purpose of primary and secondary sources
- locate, compare, select and use information from a range of sources as evidence
- draw conclusions about the usefulness of sources
- identify and describe points of view, attitudes and values in primary and secondary sources
- develop texts, particularly descriptions and explanations that use evidence from a range of sources that are acknowledged
- use a range of communication forms (oral, graphic, written) and digital technologies.

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Inquiry questions

- 1 Who were the Vikings and how did they live?
- 2 What technologies were developed by the Vikings?
- 3 What was the role of religion in Viking society?
- 2 What trade links did the Vikings develop?
- 5 What was the impact of the Vikings on their conquered peoples?
- 6 What can we learn about the Vikings by looking at the life of a significant individual?

Introduction

Sometimes red and dramatically visible, at other times grey and hard to spot, the long slow process of religious and cultural change runs like a thread through the Viking Age.

Robert Ferguson, *The Vikings: A History*, 2009

IN THIS CHAPTER we will be exploring archaeological, written and artistic evidence about the Vikings to learn about their society. Much of the written evidence we have about the Vikings was written by other peoples, including Arabic travellers, Christian monks and Byzantine historians. We must think about it critically and not take it at face value.

The Vikings' own histories, known as sagas, tell of great deeds, adventures and heroic bravery, but these were not actually written down by the Vikings. Instead, they were recorded by Christian monks in the 12th and 13th centuries, long after the end of the Viking Age. Nevertheless, these sources present a lively and interesting picture, and give us at least some indication of what it was like to live in the Viking Age. Archaeological digs at Viking sites are another valuable source, presenting us with new information every day.

KEY TERMS

amulet	a charm worn to ward off evil
caulked	made watertight
causeway	an elevated road over a body of water or a piece of land; some causeways are revealed only at low tide
dinars, dirhems	Arab coins
drying and salting	drying meat or fish in the fresh air and then covering it in salt to stop it from rotting
fjord	a long, narrow inlet of the sea between high cliffs, usually formed by glaciers
Greek fire	a weapon that shot a stream of fire at enemies
heathen	another word for pagan
ides of January	13 January
lawspeaker	a judge
longship	a long, narrow Viking warship
mild steel	steel that is made from iron and carbon; 'mild steel' refers to steel that has been made with a low amount of carbon, making it easier to shape
Northumbrians	people of the kingdom of Northumbria in northern England
Old Norse	the language of Medieval Scandinavian countries, used until the middle of the 14th century
pitch	a thick, dark, sticky tar made from charcoal or tree resin, used for waterproofing
propaganda	information that aims to influence the beliefs of the wider community
rapine	plunder
smoking	a method of preserving meat or fish by exposing it to the smoke from burning wood
tanned/tanning	treating animal skins with tannin to make leather
valkyries	female spirits

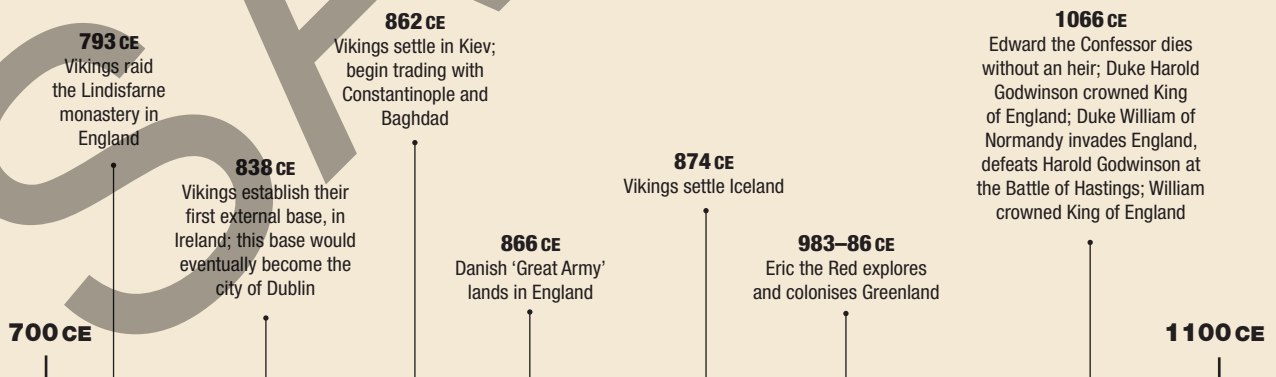
See OneStopDigital for a drag-and-drop exercise using the key terms.



Viking lands before 838 CE



Timeline of key dates



Think, puzzle, explore



- 1 Draw a three-column table in your workbook.
- 2 Title the first column 'Think'. In this column write down anything you know about the Vikings.
- 3 Title the second column 'Puzzle'. In this column write down the questions you have about the Vikings.
- 4 Title the third column 'Explore'. In this column write down how you can find answers to the questions in the 'Puzzle' column. What topics would you like to explore?
- 5 Discuss the answers as a class.



Welcome, traveller! You have chosen to take part in the in-depth Revista Tour of 'The Vikings'. I'm Ismet, and I'll be your tour guide. Enjoy your trip.

routes to Persia (modern-day Iran) and China. They had sailed over almost half the known world in their **longships**, travelling further north and west than Europeans had ever been. They founded new colonies in Ireland, Britain, France, Iceland, Greenland, Russia and even in North America, and established cities such as Dublin, Novgorod and Kiev. They also practised one of the earliest forms of democracy, through their institution known as 'The Thing'.

❖ The Vikings emerge

Towards the end of the 8th century, bands of fierce Viking warriors emerged from the icy waters of the north and began raiding the coast of Britain. A few decades later, they were also raiding the coastal towns of France, Spain and Italy, instilling terror and dread in the hearts of the local people. They continued their campaign of looting and pillaging for the next 300 years. The horror of those times and the long period of continued Viking raids created a widespread belief that remains with us today: that the Vikings were nothing more than cruel, plundering barbarians.

There is, however, another story behind the barbaric legend. Archaeologists and historians have learned that the Vikings were also great explorers, settlers and traders. They founded cities, were employed as prized warriors and had a highly developed society. By the beginning of the 11th century, the Vikings had come to dominate much of northern Europe. They had ventured deep into Russia, opening up trade



SOURCE 2.1
Carved wooden
Viking head

Daring and innovative, adventurous and skilled, the Vikings provide us with a fascinating perspective on life in the Medieval Period. They leave behind many ideas, stories, laws, words and concepts that still resonate with us today.

Spotlight

There are several interpretations of the word 'Viking'. It may come from the **Old Norse** word *vik*, meaning 'bay': a person called a 'viking' would be someone who kept their ship in a bay. It may also come from the Old Norse word *vikingr*, which means 'pirate' or 'raider'.

The Viking lands: Scandinavia

Scandinavia is a region of north-western Europe. It consists of Denmark, Norway, Finland and Sweden. In Scandinavia, winter is very long, dark and cold. The summer is mild and relatively brief. In the northern parts of Scandinavia, the land is mountainous and comprises dense forests. The southern parts of Scandinavia are flatter and more fertile, and the climate is mild—ideal for farming. Most people in medieval times lived on the southern coastal areas or near lakes, rivers and narrow inlets (known as **fjords**), where the soil was fertile.

ACTIVITY

Check your understanding

- 1 Which modern-day nations make up Scandinavia?
- 2 What is the difference between the northern parts of Scandinavia and the southern parts of Scandinavia?
- 3 Why did most of the people in Scandinavia live in the south?

Apply your knowledge

- 1 Download a blank world map from the internet. Use coloured pencils or textas (or your computer) to colour Australia green and Scandinavia red.

- 2 Go to OneStopDigital to visit the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Astronomy Education site. Navigate to the Daylight Hours Explorer.



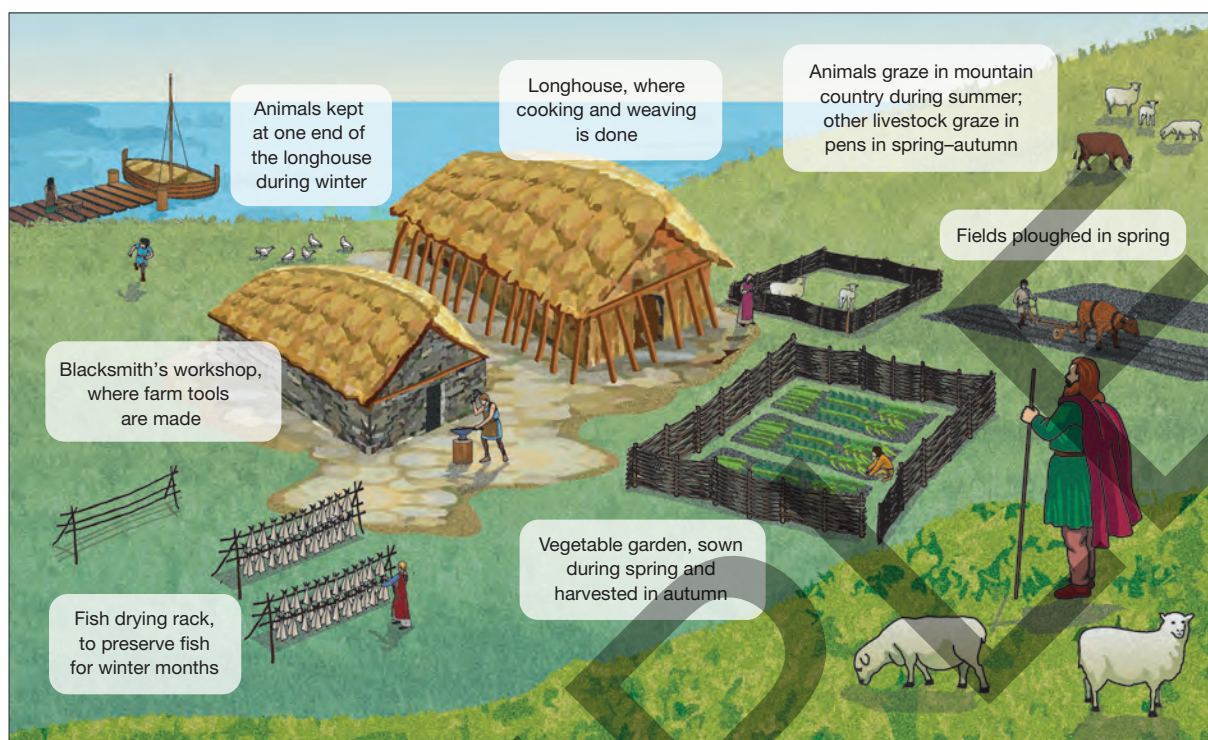
- a Drag your cursor to spin the globe and find Australia. Adjust the latitude setting using the slider at the top right of the page, until the line of latitude on the globe rests on where you live in Australia. Adjust the day of the year to 21 June, the shortest day of the year in the Southern Hemisphere. Record the daylight hours on this day of the year at the latitude where you live.
- b Now find Oslo, Norway on the globe. Many Viking settlements were located close to modern-day Oslo. Record the daylight hours on 21 December, the shortest day of the year for the Northern Hemisphere.
- c How many more daylight hours are there on the shortest day of the year where you live, compared with Scandinavia?

The Viking way of life

Farming

Most Viking families lived on farms. Everyone in the family was expected to help with the running of the farm. The seasons dictated the rhythm of farm life. Crops would be tended during the summer and then harvested in the autumn. Sheep, goats and cattle were taken to the rich mountain pastures in summer, where they grazed. At the end of autumn, the animals would be returned to the farm. The stronger, younger animals were kept inside the Vikings' houses during the long winter, while the weaker ones were slaughtered for their meat. Since the Vikings had no refrigeration, meat had to be preserved to stop it from rotting. The meat was preserved by **drying and salting** or **smoking**. The skins from slaughtered cattle and sheep were **tanned** into leather for clothing and other household goods.

When winter came, a thick layer of snow covered the ground. It was impossible to grow crops or graze animals, so many farmers went hunting for deer, wild boars, elks, bears, foxes, seals, walruses and whales. The meat of the hunted animals was brought home to feed the farmers' families, while furs and skins were used



SOURCE 2.2 A Viking farm

to make clothing and shoes. Whale bone and walrus ivory (from walrus tusks) were made into household goods and decorative items.

Viking women worked particularly hard on farms. They milked cows and sheep, tended to chickens, sowed crops in the spring and managed the vegetable gardens and fields. In the autumn, at the end of the growing season, the women would be expected to help bring in the harvest. When her husband was away hunting or raiding, the wife was in charge of the farm or the family business and would take up a sword to defend her home if necessary.

View the virtual tour of a Viking age farm at OneStopDigital. This farm consisted of three structures: a main building, a blacksmith's workshop and a storehouse.



Viking towns and trade

While most Vikings lived in small farming communities, others, such as merchants and artisans/craftspeople, lived in towns. Artisans made all sorts of goods, including shoes, pottery, jewellery, weapons and leather. Viking merchants

brought food, cloth, walrus ivory, furs, honey and pottery from outlying Viking farming communities to sell in the towns. Foreign merchants brought silk, cloth, jewels, glass, wine, pottery, spices and weapons from Arabia, China, India and Europe to sell in Viking towns. Slaves captured on Viking raids were also available for sale. The most famous Viking towns were those of Hedeby in Denmark and Birka in Sweden. York in England and Dublin in Ireland were also well-known Viking towns.

ACTIVITY

Source questions

- Using source 2.2 and the text on this page, copy and complete the table on page 41 to show which jobs were done in each season (or all year) on a Viking farm.

List of jobs:

- tend crops
- move animals to mountain pastures
- cooking
- harvest crops
- move animals inside house
- sow crops
- graze animals in pens
- weave cloth
- dry fish
- make tools

Season	Jobs
Spring	
Summer	
Autumn	
Winter	
All year	

- Which season do you think would be the hardest to live through in Viking lands? Give reasons for your answer.
- What sorts of people lived in Viking towns?
- Identify five products that Vikings sold in the towns.
- Identify five products that Vikings could buy from foreign merchants.

Apply your knowledge

- With a small group of classmates, construct your own model of a Viking farm in one of the four seasons, either using craft materials to physically construct the model, or constructing it electronically using a software tool such as Google SketchUp.
- Ismet, your Revista Tour Guide, has taken you to a Viking farm in 780 CE, where you interview a Viking woman about her work. Write up the interview in your travel blog.
- Go to OneStopDigital to see a scale model of the Viking town of Birka, Sweden. Write a 200-word report explaining how designers were able to build the model so that it resembled the original Medieval Viking town.



Viking society

The social hierarchy

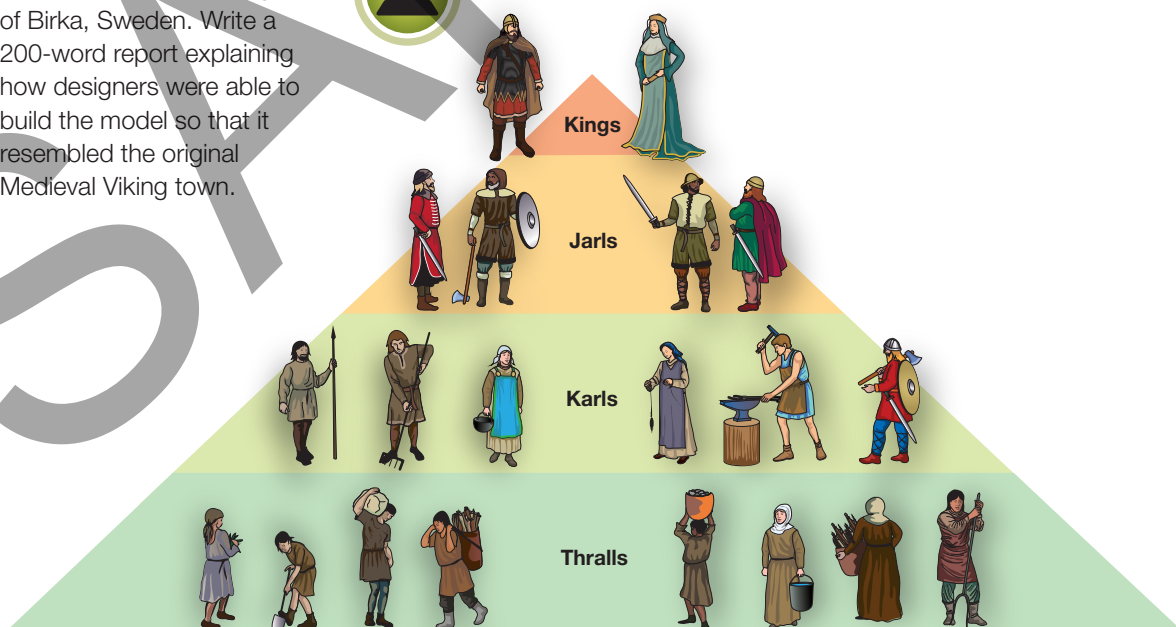
Like many medieval societies, Viking society was organised into a strict social hierarchy.

In the early Viking Period, kings ruled small kingdoms. They were expected to perform religious rituals and protect their people against invaders. During the Viking Age, kings began attacking neighbouring kingdoms in an attempt to enlarge their own kingdoms and become more powerful.

Jarls, or chieftains, held large areas of land. They were wealthy and powerful and owned many slaves. They were expected to provide warriors to fight for the king.

Most Vikings were karls, or free men and women. Karls owned their own land and ran their own farms, with the help of one or two slaves. Some karls worked as artisans or merchants. Karls were expected to join jarls in raids or battles.

Thralls were at the lowest level of Viking society—they were slaves. They had no rights and were legally owned by other people, bought and sold at slave markets like cattle or other goods. A thrall's master had control over his or her life.



SOURCE 2.3 The Viking social hierarchy



SOURCE 2.4 The Swords in the Rock monument, erected in 1983 to commemorate the Battle of Hafrsfjord (872 CE), when King Harald Fairhair became the first king of all Norway

Viking government: The Thing

‘The Thing’ was a Viking assembly of free men who met regularly in the local province or kingdom. At The Thing, disputes over property, crime and family honour were resolved. All free men were allowed to vote at The Thing, but free men would usually vote the same way as their jarl. A **lawspeaker** was elected from one of the jarl families. The lawspeaker was responsible for making sure the decisions made at The Thing were carried out. Even the king had to obey decisions made at The Thing.

If a person had been accused of a crime, he or she had to stand trial. If the accused was found guilty, The Thing decided their punishment. They could be fined, made a slave or be declared an outlaw. Once outlawed, they were no longer under the protection of the law and had to flee, as it was legal for anyone to kill an outlawed person.

The Thing was also used to end violence between families. Family honour was very important in Viking society, and members of a



SOURCE 2.5 A painting of Iceland’s Althing: *The Althing in Session* by William Gershom Collingwood, 1899 CE



SOURCE 2.6 Thorgnyr the Lawspeaker, as shown in the 1899 edition of *The Chronicle of the Kings of Norway*

family were duty-bound to avenge the injury or death of their relatives. Simply insulting another person might result in an act of revenge from their family. Family feuds could go on for several years; some continued for generations.

Meetings of The Thing were held in special locations across the Viking world. Each region had its own name for The Thing and the location in which it was held: 'Althing' (Iceland), 'Thynghowe' (England), 'Tingwall' (Scotland), 'Thingmote' (Ireland) and 'Tingvalla' (Sweden).

ACTIVITY

Check your understanding

- 1 What were the four social classes in Viking society?
- 2 Draw a mind map for each of 'Kings', 'Jarls', 'Karls' and 'Thralls'. Detail the roles and responsibilities of each social class on the mind maps.
- 3 Name three punishments that could be given to a person found guilty of a crime.
- 4 What happened to a person who was outlawed?

Source questions

- 1 What does source 2.3 show us about kingship during the Viking Age?
- 2 Source 2.7 is an extract of a lawspeaker in The Thing. Complete the five Ws from page 10 for source 2.7.

Then Thorgnyr the lawspeaker said, 'The character of Swedish kings is different now from what it has been formerly ... King Olaf of Sweden wants to have Norway for himself, which no Swedish king before him ever desired, and as a result brings war and distress on many a man. Now it is our will that you, King Olaf, make peace with the Norway king, Olaf the Thick, and marry your daughter Ingegerd to him ... if you will not do as we desire, we will now attack you, and put you to death; for we will no longer suffer law and peace to be disturbed ... Now tell us, in all haste, what you will do.'

Then the whole public approved, with clash of arms and shouts, the lawman's speech.

SOURCE 2.7 Extract from *The Chronicle of the Kings of Norway*, by Snorri Sturlison, c. 1230 CE

- 3 What does source 2.7 reveal about the place of women in Viking society?
- 4 Source 2.7 was written around 1230 CE by the Icelandic poet and historian Snorri Sturlison. Sturlison claimed that he found out about this story from older sagas and Norwegian poems that had been passed down through the generations. Do you think this story is a reliable account of the events? Why or why not?

Apply your knowledge

- 1 Find out what the word 'enthrall' means. How is it similar to the Viking word 'thrall'?
- 2 To which Viking class would you most and least prefer to belong? Explain your answer in a paragraph.
- 3 Go to OneStopDigital to find out about the Viking Thing in Sherwood Forest. Write a 200-word report detailing how historians found the site and the significance of the site's name, Thynghowe.
- 4 Ismet has taken you to a meeting of Iceland's Althing in 1000 CE. Write an entry in your travel blog about what you saw and heard at the meeting. Make sure you include information about where it was, what was discussed, and the outcome of discussions.



Norse religion

The Norse gods and goddesses

The Vikings worshipped a number of different gods and goddesses, whom they believed affected every aspect of life.

The king of the gods was Odin (or Woden). Odin had one eye—he had sacrificed the other eye in order to gain knowledge and understanding. He rode a grey, eight-legged horse named Sleipnir, which could fly. Perched on Odin's shoulders were two ravens, called 'Huginn' ('thought') and 'Munnin' ('memory').



SOURCE 2.8 Painting depicting Odin, King of the Gods

Odin sent out the ravens every day to fly around the world and come back to tell him what they had seen. Odin was associated with wisdom, war, death, poetry, magic and hunting. Wednesday (or 'Woden's day') was named after Odin.

Odin's wife was the goddess Frigg. She had the power of prophecy, but rarely told what she had foreseen. Frigg was a goddess associated with love and married women. Women called on her to assist them in giving birth. Frigg is often depicted spinning cloth, which was a common task for Viking women. Her name lives on in our word 'Friday' (Frigg's day).



SOURCE 2.9 Painting depicting Frigg (or Frigga), Queen of the Gods, spinning yarn

Another popular Viking god was Thor. Thor was the god of thunder, lightning, oak trees, destruction, fertility and protection. He rode on a chariot drawn by two enormous goats and he carried a huge magic hammer, named Mjollnir. According to legend, Thor will slay the serpent Jormungand during the battle at the end of the world (known as Ragnarok), but will die from the serpent's poison. Followers of Thor carried small hammer **amulets** on a string or chain around their neck, to invoke Thor's protection. Thor's name lives on in our word 'Thursday' (Thor's day).



SOURCE 2.10 Pen and ink drawing of Thor, attempting to slay the serpent Jormungand, from an 18th century manuscript

Little is known about how the Vikings themselves felt about their gods. Most of what we do know about Viking religious practice is based on the observations of others, such as Christian missionaries and Arab merchants (see sources 2.13 and 2.28).

Viking burials

The Vikings were strong believers in life after death. They buried their dead with grave goods, trusting that the dead would need these items in the afterlife. The wealth of a Viking determined the types of grave goods that might be buried with him or her after death.

A thrall's body was placed in a simple wooden box along with some personal items, such as a comb or sewing tools. Karls' bodies were placed in large graves that were lined with wood. Their tools (such as axes, ploughs, weighing scales, hammers, nails, needles, thread and cooking pots) were buried with them, along with silver coins. Dogs and horses were sometimes sacrificed and buried with their karl master.



SOURCE 2.11 People who could not afford to be buried in a ship sometimes outlined their graves with stones to form the shape of a boat. This burial site at Lindholm Høje, Denmark, is the largest Viking burial site in Scandinavia.



SOURCE 2.12 A large burial ship was excavated in 1904 at the Oseberg farm, Norway. It is now on display at the Viking Ship Museum in Oslo, Norway.

Jarl chieftains and royalty had the most spectacular burials. Their bodies and grave goods were placed in a longship, as if to transport them to the next world. The longship was then buried or burned. Grave goods for kings or wealthy jarls might include jewellery, chests of silver coins, furniture, sleighs, carts, tools, sacrificed horses, fine clothing, ornaments and other precious objects. Slaves were often required to die with their masters so that they could accompany them to the next world.

The arrival of Christianity

During the 900s CE, Christian missionaries from Rome, Constantinople and other Christian cities in Europe began to travel into Northern and Eastern Europe with the aim of converting people to Christianity. Some Vikings had already converted to Christianity before this time. Viking traders had come into contact with Christians on their travels, as had Vikings who settled in Christian lands such as England, France and Ireland. The conversions to Christianity in Scandinavia, however, were largely promoted by the Scandinavian kings.

In 965 CE, Harald Blue-Tooth, King of Denmark, converted to Christianity and declared that his entire kingdom was to be Christian. In Norway, King Olaf Trygvason used threats and violence to make the Norwegians convert to Christianity, forcing them to accept baptism at spear-point. He also threatened to kill any Iclander visiting Norway who was not a Christian.

King Olof Skotkonung of Sweden converted to Christianity in 1008 CE. He ordered his men to cut down the sacred groves and take down the statues of Norse gods, in an effort to stamp out the old religion.

ACTIVITY

Check your understanding

- 1 How did Huginn and Munnin serve Odin?
- 2 Why did women worship Frigg?
- 3 Why did the Vikings bury their dead with grave goods?
- 4 Why were Vikings buried in ships (or in the stone outlines of ships)?

- 5 How did the kings encourage their subjects to convert to Christianity?

Source questions

- 1 Complete the five Ws from page 10 for source 2.13.

It is customary in Uppsala [in Sweden], to hold a general feast... every nine years. All must attend this festival. Kings and people all send their offerings to Uppsala... What is more distressing is that those who have already adopted Christianity reconvert back to [their non-Christian] religion through these ceremonies. The sacrifice is of this nature: of every living thing that is male, they offer nine heads to the gods... The bodies they hang in the sacred grove that adjoins the temple. Now this grove is so sacred in the eyes of the heathen that each and every tree in it is believed divine because of the death of the victims...

SOURCE 2.13 This passage was written by Adam of Bremen, a Christian monk. Adam of Bremen was a strong supporter of converting the Vikings to Christianity and wanted to inspire Christian missionaries to go to Scandinavia. He had been to Scandinavia in the late 1060s as a guest of King Sweyn II of Denmark, and wrote this text soon after:

- 2 How does the author of source 2.13 feel about the Viking religion? Quote evidence from the text to support your answer.
- 3 **a** When did Adam of Bremen write about Norse religion in Denmark?
b What year did Denmark officially convert to Christianity?
c What does this suggest about the king of Denmark's efforts to convert the Danes to Christianity?

Apply your knowledge

- 1 This Viking riddle appears in the *Hervarar Saga*. Can you solve the riddle?
'Who are the two that on ten feet run?
Three eyes they have, but only one tail.'
(Answer at the bottom of page 63.)
- 2 Ismet takes you to a Viking funeral for a karl farmer in Lindholme Hoje, Denmark, in 970 CE. Draw the burial site in your travel blog, showing the grave goods you saw and the burial layout.



❖ Significant developments and cultural achievements of the Vikings

Viking warriors

Viking men believed that to be a warrior was a noble duty and that to die in battle was the greatest glory. It was thought that those who died in battle would be claimed by the **valkyries**, who would take the warriors' souls to Valholl (also known as Valhalla). Once in Valholl, the warriors' souls would spend their nights feasting and drinking and their days practising fighting in preparation for Ragnarok, the Final Battle at the End of the World.



SOURCE 2.14 A picture stone from the 9th century, showing Viking warriors in the top panel and a Viking ship at the bottom

Raids and wars were violent, bloody affairs. Approximately 50 per cent of Viking men died before they reached the age of 30, mainly due to injuries received during raids and wars. For most Vikings, the benefit of going to war was the chance to loot villages and become wealthier.

Shield-maidens



SOURCE 2.15 Illustration of Lathgertha, a Danish Viking shield-maiden, 1913 CE

Shield-maidens were Viking women who had chosen to fight as warriors. It would seem that not many women made this choice, but shield-maidens do feature in some of the sagas, including the *Hervarar Saga* and the *Gesta Danorum* (Deeds of the Danes). There is also at least one historical account of women fighting as warriors: that of the Byzantine historian John Skylitzes, who recorded that Viking women fought in a battle in 971 CE.

Viking weapons and armour

All free Viking men were expected to carry weapons, but weapons were expensive items. Iron weapons were difficult and time-consuming to make—especially swords, which had to be made by highly skilled swordsmiths. Most Vikings were armed with a large, round, wooden shield and an axe or spear.

Spears were made of a long wooden shaft of two or three metres capped with an iron blade. Skilled Viking warriors were known to be able to throw spears many metres and also to catch spears aimed at them by the enemy. Axes, another favourite weapon, had thick, rounded blades. Axes were usually lighter than swords and could break through chain mail armour and metal helmets.

Swords were the most prized weapon. Only jarls and wealthy karls had swords. The swords had double-edged blades of almost a metre in length. Early Viking swords were made of pieces of iron and **mild steel**, welded together to form a long bar. The bar was then stretched out to the required length by much hammering, and then it was twisted. Finally, the bar was shaped into the finished blade. These swords were not very strong, but were nonetheless effective in Viking battles.

Go to OneStopDigital to see how Viking swords and other weapons were made.



SOURCE 2.16 The weapons of wealthy Vikings were ornately decorated, with twisted wire and copper or silver decorations on the sword hilts. These weapons were found in Sweden.

The Vikings valued their weapons so much that they gave names to them. Swords were called names such as Fótbitr ('foot-biter'), Leggbitr (leg-biter) and Sætarspillir ('peace-breaker').

Body armour was also worn by the Vikings. Wealthy jarls wore chain-mail shirts, or byrnies, while most other men relied on padded leather jackets. Jarls also wore metal helmets with a long nose band to help protect their faces. These helmets did not have horns—which would have been very impractical to wear in a battle! The idea that all Viking warriors wore helmets and that the helmets featured horns is an invention of the 19th century, when Swedish patriots were trying to romanticise Scandinavia's past.

SOURCE 2.17 A photograph of a man dressed as a Viking warrior at a modern-day Viking festival in Reykjavik, Iceland, c. 2007 CE



Spotlight

Berserkers were the Vikings' 'shock troops'. They wore bearskins and covered their shields and swords with blood. Then, after working themselves into a frenzy and biting hard on their shields, they charged into battle, terrifying the enemy. The English word 'berserk' comes from the Old Norse *berserkr*, meaning 'bear-skin wearer'.



SOURCE 2.18 Berserker chess piece made of walrus ivory, found at Lewis, Scotland

- Visit the OneStopDigital site to research the story of the shield-maiden Hervor, in the *Hervarar Saga*. Create a cartoon strip, graphic novel or story board to tell her story. Start at chapter 5, 'Hervor Got the Sword Tyrning'.



Viking ships

The Vikings were widely recognised as the most skilled shipbuilders of their day. Ships were vital to the Viking way of life. Fishing boats and canoes sailed in the waters around farmsteads and towns. Merchants used wide, deep ships called knarrs, while Viking warriors travelled in the famed Viking longships to raid foreign lands.

Ship technology

From about 700 CE, the Vikings began to develop a new, innovative long ship design. Instead of building a ship's hull on a framework, the Vikings built their ships' hulls onto a keel. The keel is the 'backbone' of a ship, running lengthwise along the bottom of the ship. The Vikings chose a long straight tree trunk from which to form a T-shaped keel. All other parts of the ship were built onto the keel.

The Vikings split oak tree trunks into long planks (or strakes), about 1.5 centimetres thick. Instead of saws, they used their axes to chip the planks into exactly the shape they wanted. They painted the strakes with **pitch** to make them waterproof, and nailed two strakes to either side of the keel using iron rivets. Next, they fastened more strakes to the first two, one overlapping the next. When this stage was complete, the strake joints were **caulked** with wool or old clothes. Then the Viking boat builders attached floor timbers to the keel using wooden rivets called 'treenails'. Last, they secured a large mast to the keel. The longship's extended prow and stern (front and back) were often carved with a dragon's head and tail.

The construction of the ship on a keel, rather than on a framework, meant that the Vikings could build their longships shallow and wide. Shallow, wide longships were better able than deeper, shorter ships to take the force of waves in the open sea and were also capable of sailing in shallow waters, right up to the shoreline.

ACTIVITY

Check your understanding

- How did Vikings feel about being warriors?
- What did Vikings believe would happen to warriors when they died in battle?
- What was an advantage of using an axe in battle?

Source questions

- From your reading of the text and your observation, is the figure in source 2.17 likely to be dressed as a wealthy Viking or a poor Viking? Use evidence in the text to support your answer.
 - What would you change about the Viking's outfit or accessories (shown in source 2.17) to make his costume more historically accurate? Explain your choice.

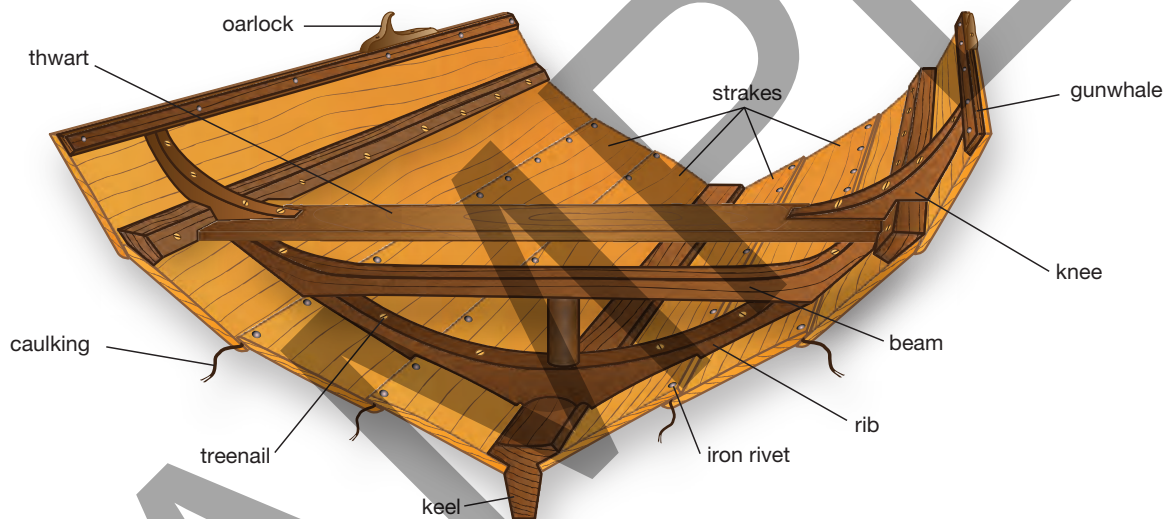
Apply your knowledge

- Create a flow chart to explain how Viking swords were constructed.
- Most Viking women spent their days weaving cloth, cooking food, managing their farm or caring for children. Explain why a Viking woman might want to become a shield-maiden (200 words).

The keel construction also made the Viking ships very light and easy to carry overland if the need arose. As such, the longship was to prove extremely useful for raiding coastal and riverside towns and villages.

Another important addition to Viking ships at this time was the sail. Sails had been used on the boats of the Ancient Celts since 300 CE, but did not start to appear on Viking ships until c. 700 CE. The sail was made from wool and woven by women using a loom. Sails were square, and measured to approximately 90 square metres in size. When completed, the sail was coated with animal fat to protect it from the salty air and water.

A pole on the deck of the ship connected to one of the lower corners of the sail. The Vikings could steer their ship according to the direction of the wind by moving the pole, which would, in turn, shift the sail. The sail and the pole allowed the Vikings to sail close to the wind. If the winds were not blowing in their desired direction, the Vikings could lower the sail and row their ship. The combination of sailing and rowing allowed the Vikings to quickly come into shore, loot and plunder a town, and then make a fast getaway.



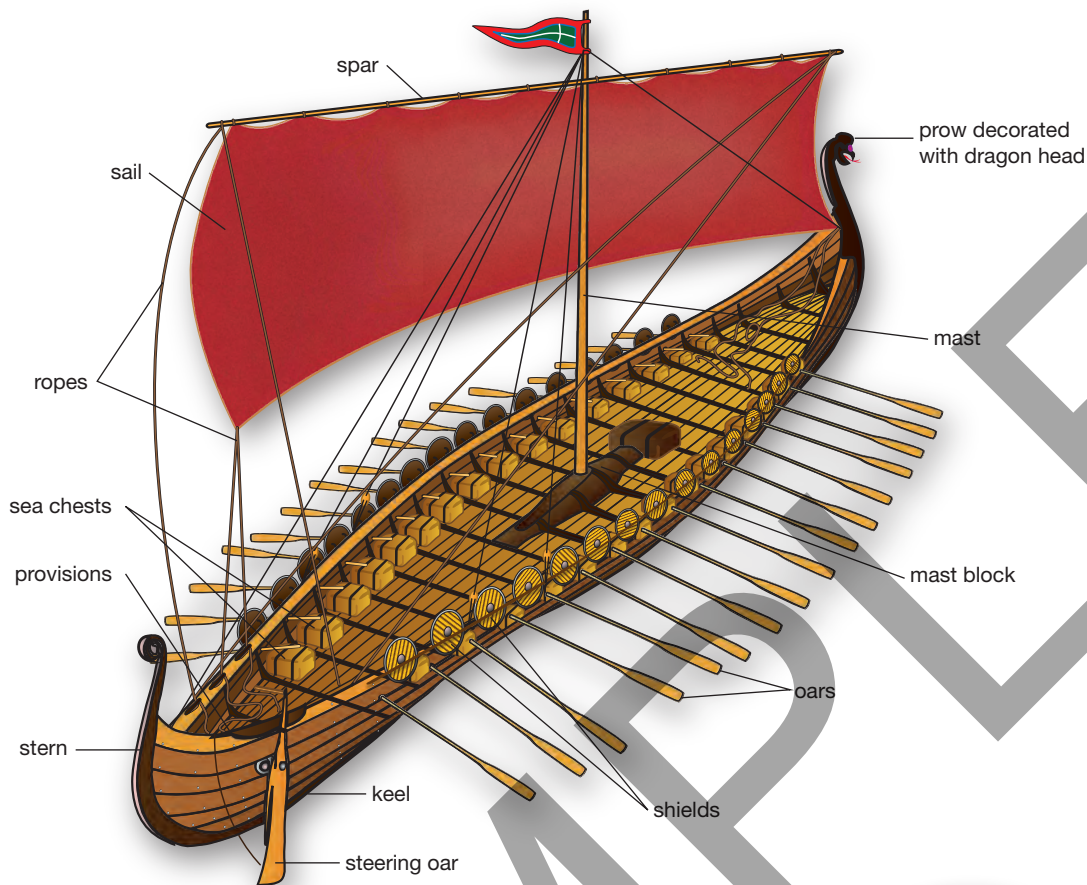
SOURCE 2.19 Cross-section of a Viking ship



SOURCE 2.20 Close-up of overlapping strakes, known as clinker construction

Go to OneStopDigital to visit Denmark's Viking Ship Museum. Choose one of the Skuldelev ships and find out what it was made from, what sort of ship it was, how long and how wide it was, who may have owned it and the size of the crew.





SOURCE 2.21 A diagram of a Viking ship

ACTIVITY

Check your understanding

- Match each word with its meaning.

Strakes	Body of the ship
Treenails	Side planks
Keel	Front of the ship
Prow	Backbone of the ship
Stern	Wooden rivets
Hull	Back of the ship
- Name two important elements that were incorporated into Viking ships after 700 CE.
- Why was it important to caulk the strake joints?

Ship decoration

The Vikings were very superstitious, and believed that the sea was inhabited by dreadful monsters. They carved a dragon head onto the prow of their ship in order to frighten off sea monsters. This also made the ship look very fearsome to others.



SOURCE 2.22 Oseberg ship dragon head, made c. 800 CE, excavated in 1904–05 CE



SOURCE 2.23 Replica dragon head made in Iceland, 2004 CE

ACTIVITY

Source questions

- 1 Copy and complete the following Artefact Analysis Table for sources 2.22–2.24.

	Source 2.22	Source 2.23	Source 2.24
Observation			
Analysis			



SOURCE 2.24 Dragon head as pictured in an Anglo-Saxon manuscript, c.900 CE

'Observation' means to describe what you see. 'Analysis' asks you to make a suggestion of the purpose of each source.

- 2 Reliability is a measure of how much a historian can trust a source. For example, an actual Viking axe excavated from an archaeological site is a more reliable source for a historian studying the construction of Viking axes than a drawing of an axe or a modern copy of a Viking axe, because the historian can see the actual materials and construction methods Vikings used.

Copy and complete the following table to explain the reliability of the three sources (very reliable, mainly reliable, least reliable) for a historian studying Viking ship dragon heads.

	Source 2.22	Source 2.23	Source 2.24
Reliability			
Reason			

- 3 Do you think that the source you regarded to be least reliable is still useful? Explain.

Apply your knowledge

- 1 Identify two advantages that the Viking ships had over other ships.
- 2 Draw your own dragon head for a Viking ship.
- 3 Your Revista Tour includes a voyage across the ocean from Denmark to Scotland on a Viking ship in 870 CE. Write about your voyage in your travel blog. Remember to include the correct names for the parts of the ship in your account. What will you do when you reach your destination? Trade or raid?
- 4 Go to your OneStopDigital resources and access the Hands On Activity from BBC. Make a Viking longship, design a longship figurehead and make a Viking helmet.



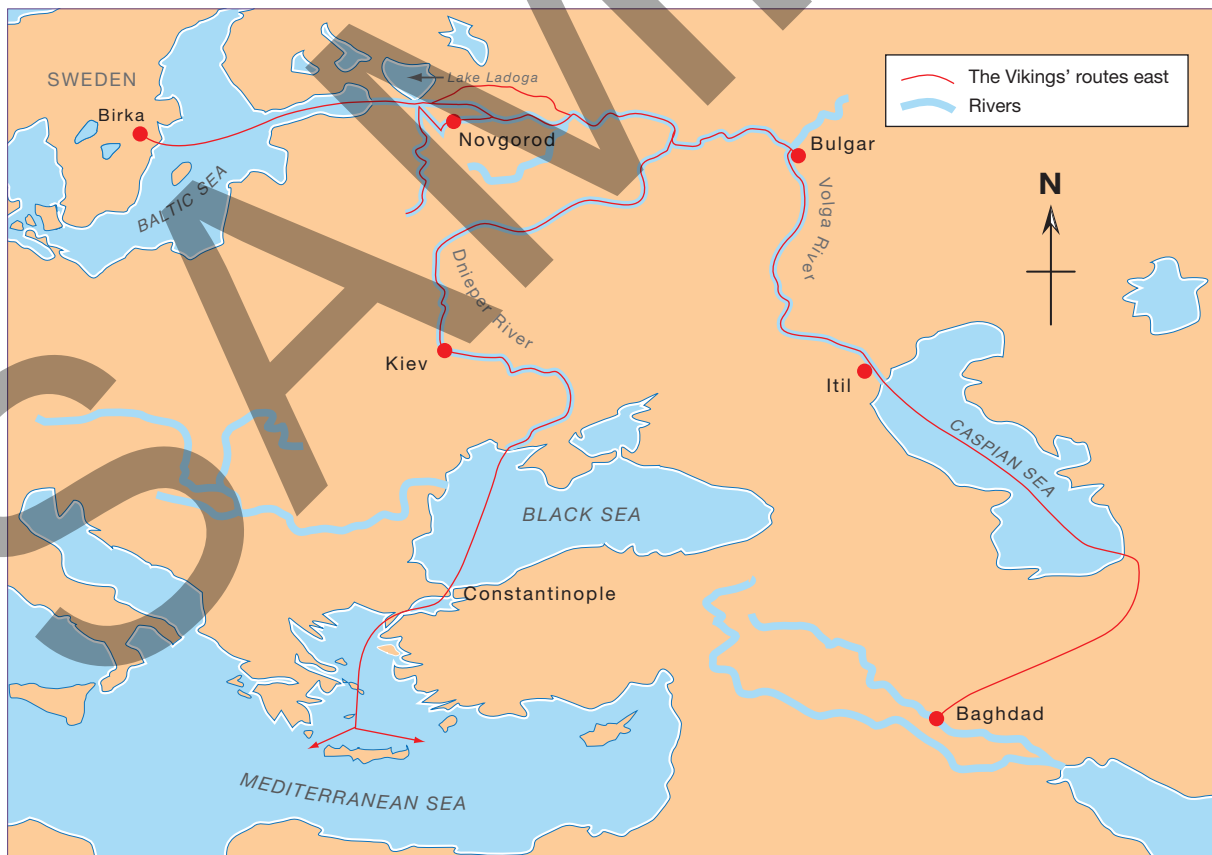
of Novgorod. From Novgorod, Viking merchants could sail down to the trade ports of Bulgar and Itil, where they sold furs, falcons and beeswax. Beyond Itil lay the Caspian Sea, and across the Caspian Sea was the trade route to Baghdad. At Baghdad, the Vikings could obtain Chinese silk and Indian spices, among other exotic goods.

The Vikings founded the town of Kiev on the Dnieper River. The Dnieper River flowed into the Black Sea, and across the Black Sea was Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire and the most magnificent city in Europe. The Vikings called Constantinople 'Miklagard', which means 'the great city'. The Vikings made a number of sea-raids on Constantinople, but were ultimately defeated by the Byzantine navy, which blasted their ships with **Greek fire**. Finally, the Vikings decided to stop raiding Constantinople and set up trade contacts with the city. Many luxury goods from Europe, Arabia, China and India were traded at Constantinople.

In those days, the area we now call Russia was populated by people known as the 'Slavs'.

Trade links

From the middle of the 8th century, the Vikings were sailing their ships across the Baltic Sea and into the Volga River. The Vikings began to set up trading towns along the Volga, including the town



SOURCE 2.25 The Vikings' routes east



SOURCE 2.26 Byzantine ship using Greek fire

The Vikings captured many of the Slavs and sold them as slaves to Arab traders at Novgorod and Kiev. The word 'slave' is derived from 'Slav', because so many Slavs were sold into slavery by conquering peoples, such as the Vikings. The Slavs called the Vikings 'the Rus', and it is from this that we get the modern name of the country Russia.

Spotlight

The Vikings were such formidable warriors that they were employed by the Byzantine emperors as their personal bodyguard force, known as the Varangian Guard.



SOURCE 2.27 Medieval artist's depiction of the Danish Vikings invading England, from a mid-10th-century manuscript

ACTIVITY

Check your understanding

- 1 Why do you think the Vikings founded their trade towns on rivers?
- 2 How did the Vikings reach Baghdad from Sweden?
- 3 Why did the Vikings stop their raids on Constantinople?

Source questions

Use source 2.28 to answer these questions.

When their ships come to this mooring place, [the Rus] go ashore with bread, meat, onions, milk and intoxicating drink and take themselves to a long upright piece of wood that has a face like a man's and is surrounded by little figures ... The Rus bows low before the big carving and says, 'I have come from a faraway land and have brought many goods to trade ... I have brought you these gifts ... I wish that you would send me a merchant with many **dinars** and **dirhems**, who will buy from me whatever I wish and will not dispute anything I say.'

SOURCE 2.28 Extract from Ibn Fadlan's *Risala*, c. 921 CE. Ibn Fadlan was a chronicler from Persia. He visited the King of the Bulgars in central Russia in 921 CE and encountered many Viking (Rus) merchants on his travels.

- 1 Complete the five Ws.
- 2 What does Ibn Fadlan's account reveal about the Viking (Rus) religion in the 10th century?

- 3 What does the source indicate about the merchants with whom the Rus were trading? Give a reason for your answer.

Apply your knowledge

- 1 Why was it worthwhile for the Vikings to trade goods at Constantinople and Baghdad?
- 2 The remains of a peacock were found among the grave goods of the royal burial ship found at Gokstad farm in Norway. Peacocks are native to India. As a class, discuss how and why a peacock might have been buried in a royal burial ship in Norway during the 9th century.

Viking conquests

There is much disagreement among historians as to why the Vikings began raiding. It is currently believed that the Vikings were looking for silver and that jarl chieftains may have wanted to find wealth and new lands to challenge the growing power of Scandinavian kings.

Viking raids increased throughout the late 8th and early 9th centuries. These raids were carried out by small fleets of no more than three ships during the summer months when the seas were calm and the winds favourable. Archaeological evidence suggests that Viking ships of this early period carried between 25 and 70 people, so the raids would have been conducted by anywhere between 25 warriors (in the case of one small ship) and 200 warriors (in the case of three large ships).

The fact that Vikings conducted their raids independently and in small groups made them impossible to stop—no-one could predict when or where they would strike next. They could reach the coast unnoticed, conduct their looting quickly and return to their ships before cities could rally their troops or before people from other towns arrived to help to fight off the invaders.

The main targets for Viking raids during the late 8th and early 9th centuries were monasteries that were situated on the coasts and river-ways of England, Scotland, Ireland and France. There were two main reasons for this:

- 1 Monasteries contained much wealth in the form of silver coins, jewellery and precious objects made of metal—exactly the types of treasures favoured by the Vikings.

- 2 Monasteries were poorly defended and were located in isolated areas. The Vikings preferred easy raiding campaigns, where they could land, raid and depart quickly, with minimal loss of their own lives.

The raid on Lindisfarne

The raid on the Lindisfarne monastery in 793 CE is seen as the beginning of the Viking Age. The Lindisfarne monastery lies off the north-east coast of England, on a flat peninsula that can only be reached by a **causeway** at low tide. At high tide, the peninsula becomes an island (called the Holy Island) and is cut off from the mainland by the sea. The coastline is dominated by low sandbanks, which provided an easy landing place for Viking longships in the 8th century.



SOURCE 2.29 The first page from the gospel of St Matthew in the *Lindisfarne Gospels*. The book is regarded as the finest example of the Anglo-Saxon religious art style of its day.

Go to OneStopDigital to play a Viking Quest game to build a ship, loot a monastery and claim your prize.



SOURCE 2.30

The Lindisfarne Stone, depicting the Viking raiders of 793 CE

In the raid on Lindisfarne the Vikings plundered the monastery of its silver. They carried off the young boys who were studying to become monks and sold them into slavery at the Viking slave markets. The Vikings also removed the bejewelled leather binding of the monastery's most precious book, a Bible known as the *Lindisfarne Gospels*; fortunately, they left the rest of the book behind.

ACTIVITY

Check your understanding

- 1 Give two reasons why the Vikings targeted monasteries.
- 2 Why was Lindisfarne monastery an easy place for the Vikings to reach?
- 3 Why was it so hard to stop the Viking raiders?

Source questions

- 1 Analyse source 2.30 using the How to analyse an image criteria on page 23.
- 2 Use source 2.31 to answer these questions.

- a Complete the five Ws.
- b What events described in the source probably did not happen? Why has the author included them in his report?
- c Give two reasons why the author calls the Vikings 'heathen' men.

Apply your knowledge

- 1 What did the Vikings do to the *Lindisfarne Gospel*? Why do you think they left the inside pages behind?
- 2 Our main sources on the Vikings are accounts of raids on monasteries, left by Christian monks. There are very few written accounts of other aspects of Viking life. How has this affected historians' views of the Vikings?
- 3 Ismet takes you to Lindisfarne in 793 CE. Describe in your travel blog what you see and hear during the raid on the Lindisfarne monastery. Describe how you manage to survive the attack and save a precious artefact.
- 4 Write a newspaper article for the *Viking Herald* describing the Lindisfarne raid from the Vikings' perspective.



793 CE: This year came dreadful fore-warnings over the land of the **Northumbrians**, terrifying the people most woefully: these were immense sheets of light rushing through the air, and whirlwinds, and fiery dragons flying across the firmament. These tremendous tokens were soon followed by a great famine: and not long after, on the sixth day before the **ides of January** in the same year, the harrowing inroads of heathen men made lamentable havoc in the church of God in Holy-island, by **rapine** and slaughter.

SOURCE 2.31 One of the main sources for the history of Medieval England is the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, written by monks to record the events of each year

By 954 CE, however, the English had managed to drive out the Danelaw's King Erik Bloodaxe, marking the end of the Danelaw.

The Viking kings

The end of the Danelaw, however, did not mean the last of the Vikings in England. In 1013 CE, King Sweyn Forkbeard of Denmark launched another invasion of England and conquered the entire country, becoming King of England. The reign of King Sweyn was followed by that of his son King Canute in 1016 CE, and then by Canute's sons Harald (1035–1040 CE) and Harthacanute (1040–1042 CE). Harthacanute died without an heir, so an English prince, Edward the Confessor, was crowned king.

In 1066 CE, Edward the Confessor died without an heir and three men claimed the throne of England: King Harald Hardrada of Norway; Harold Godwinson, Earl of Essex; and William, Duke of Normandy (in France). The Witan decided to give the crown to Harold Godwinson.

In response, Harald Hardrada invaded England with a fleet of 300 ships. King Harold Godwinson took the English army north to meet Hardrada, and Godwinson killed Hardrada in battle.

Meanwhile, William, Duke of Normandy also prepared to invade and claim the English crown. William had three main arguments as to why he should be King of England. First, he was related to Edward the Confessor's mother, Queen Emma.

Second, he claimed that Edward had once promised to give him the crown. Third, William stated that Harold Godwinson had pledged to support William's claim, after William had rescued him when he was shipwrecked in 1064 CE. In return, Harold had sworn an oath of loyalty to William. William set sail from France to England. He set up his camp at Hastings.

After defeating Hardrada, Harold Godwinson marched his army south to Hastings to meet William. A terrible battle was fought, lasting the entire day. By sunset, Harold Godwinson was dead and William had won. William was crowned King of England on Christmas Day 1066 CE.

The Bayeux Tapestry

The Bayeux Tapestry is a long piece of embroidered cloth, about 70 metres long and 0.5 metres wide. It was made by English embroiderers on the orders of the Normans. It shows the events leading up to the Norman invasion of England in 1066 CE and the subsequent Battle of Hastings from the Norman point of view. As such, the Bayeux Tapestry is a wonderful piece of Norman **propaganda**, designed to settle William of Normandy's claim to the crown. It is also a useful source for learning about life in the 11th century, showing details such as clothing, weapons, ships, tools and tableware.

Go to OneStopDigital to watch a video about the Bayeux Tapestry.



SOURCE 2.34 A statue of William, Duke of Normandy, located in Falaise, Normandy, France





SOURCE 2.35 In a scene from the Bayeux Tapestry, Harold Godwinson swears an oath of loyalty to William of Normandy by placing his hands on boxes containing holy relics

ACTIVITY

Check your understanding

- 1 Name two ways that Viking raids against England changed after the 840s.
- 2 Why, according to *Ragnar's Saga*, did the Great Army invade England?
- 3 What was the effect of the treaty between Alfred and the Danes?
- 4 Draw a line graph showing the succession of English kings from 1013 CE to 1066 CE.
- 5 Why did Edward the Confessor inherit the crown from the Viking kings in 1042 CE?
- 6 Who was Harald Hardrada and what was his role in the dispute over the English crown in 1066 CE?

Source questions

Use source 2.35 to answer these questions.

- 1 Analyse the source using the How to analyse an image criteria on page 23.
- 2 What do you think the word 'sacramentum' might mean?

Apply your knowledge

- 1 Draw a scene from the Bayeux Tapestry, from King Harold Godwinson's perspective.
- 2 Ismet takes you to Hastings in 1066 CE. Describe the battle scene between Harold Godwinson and William of Normandy in your travel blog. Remember to include details about the weapons the soldiers used, the armour worn by some of the soldiers and the sounds you heard.



Archaeological discoveries of Vikings in England

Archaeological excavations of Viking settlements have unearthed a wealth of information about Viking society. A number of fascinating items have been found, including tools, musical instruments, seeds, building materials, games, clothing and even fossilised faeces. These discoveries have enabled historians to understand how the Vikings built their houses, what resources the Vikings had, how their tools and household items were made, what the climate was like at the time—and, of course, what they ate!

Jorvik (York)

The modern-day English city of York, originally founded by the Romans in 71 CE, was captured by the Vikings in 866 CE and became the capital of the Danelaw. The Vikings knew it as Jorvik. Under Viking rule, Jorvik functioned as a major river port, and was part of the extensive Viking trade network throughout Northern Europe.

York's Viking past remained lost to the ages for many centuries. Occasionally people would find Viking artefacts by mistake, but it was not until 1972 that archaeologists began digging small trenches in the town near Coppergate to conduct a proper archaeological excavation. They made many exciting discoveries. Before long, the dig was extended to cover 1000 square metres, enabling the archaeologists to dig their way through 2000 years of York's history. Over the next six years, the site produced more than 40 000 historical objects.

While York's history as a city stretches back to Roman times, the most interesting finds have been those related to the Viking Age. Many of these finds helped historians develop the Jorvik Viking Centre in York. The museum contains dioramas showing Viking people at home and at work, using the tools and objects found at the archaeological site.

Go to OneStopDigital to explore the Jorvik Viking Centre.





SOURCE 2.36 A scene from the Jorvik Viking Centre

Go to OneStopDigital to research the Viking artefacts found at York.

Note that the first two artefacts are from the Roman Period and the last four are from times after the Viking Age, but the remaining 10 (in the middle) are from the Viking Age.



ACTIVITY

Check your understanding

- 1 Why did archaeologists start excavations at York?
- 2 What sorts of Viking artefacts have been found at York?
- 3 From your reading of the text and your observation of sources 2.36 and 2.37, what information is the museum trying to give visitors about the Vikings?

Source questions

- 1 Look at source 2.36. What aspect of the Viking Age is on display at the museum? How would this change people's perceptions of the Vikings as 'cruel, plundering barbarians'?

- 2 Consider sources 2.37 and 2.38. How is the Jorvik Viking Centre different from other museums?



SOURCE 2.38 Students participating in the annual Jorvik Viking Centre Festival

The new-look centre includes:

- A brand new glass-floored gallery incorporating an underfoot recreation of the original Coppergate excavation, enabling visitors to see exactly how the Viking Age remains were discovered
- Displays of never-before-seen objects discovered during the Coppergate excavation that give new and fascinating insights into Viking Age life
- Seven new state of the art animatronics that will interact with visitors in Old Norse
- A new Viking Age house and yard, based on evidence of an amber worker's house discovered during the Coppergate excavation.

SOURCE 2.37 Extract from the Jorvik Viking Centre website. The centre reopened in 2010 CE after a period of refurbishment

- 3 What age groups would most enjoy a museum such as the Jorvik Viking Centre? Give reasons for your answer.

Apply your knowledge

- 1 What are the advantages and disadvantages of building the Jorvik Viking Centre display so that it includes the actual archaeological site?
- 2 What types of displays would you like to see in a Viking museum?
- 3 Ismet takes you to the York excavation site in 1974, and you participate in the dig. You uncover two artefacts. Write in your travel blog about the artefacts you uncover, and explain what they can tell you about Viking society. You might like to include images of your artefacts.



❖ Viking exploration and expansion

By 1066 CE, the Vikings had spread far beyond their Scandinavian homeland. Their lands included Iceland and parts of Britain, Ireland, Scotland, France, Russia, Italy, Sicily, Greenland and North America.

Erik the Red

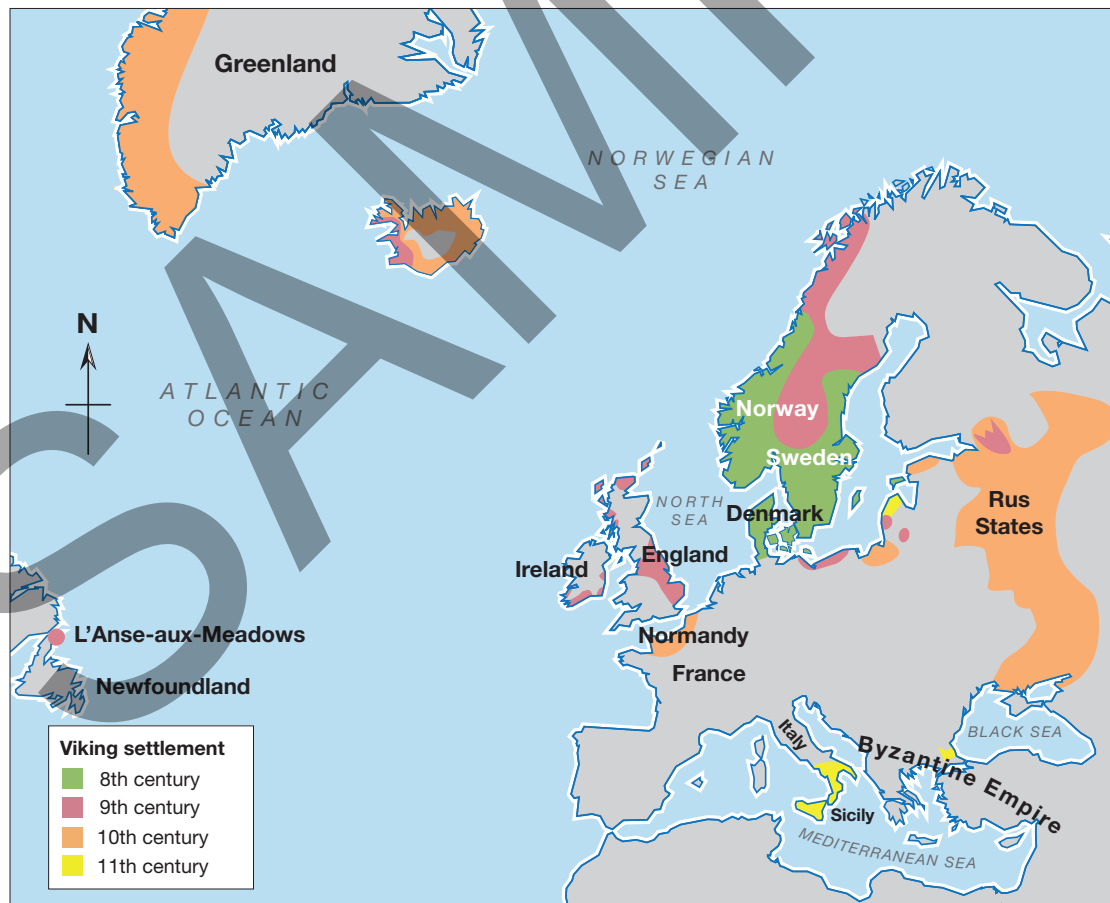
One of the most famous Viking explorers was Erik Thorvaldsson (or 'Erik the Red'), an Icelandic. The sagas claim that Erik the Red's family had been outlawed in Norway and had fled to the Viking colony in Iceland to escape punishment.

The Greenland colony

In 982 CE, Erik set sail from Iceland in an attempt to find the land that a Norwegian, Gunnbjorn Ulfsson, had claimed to have seen almost



SOURCE 2.39 Image of Erik the Red from a 17th-century manuscript



SOURCE 2.40 Viking settlements, 8th–11th centuries CE



SOURCE 2.41 The remains of Erik the Red's farm, *Brattahlid*, located in the Eastern Settlement

100 years earlier when fierce winds had driven his ship westward across the ocean. Sure enough, Erik found the land.

After three years of exploring the new land, Erik returned to Iceland. He had decided to set up a colony on the new land, which he called 'Greenland' in the hope that people from Iceland would be inspired to go there. Many Icelanders were soon convinced that Greenland was a place of opportunity.

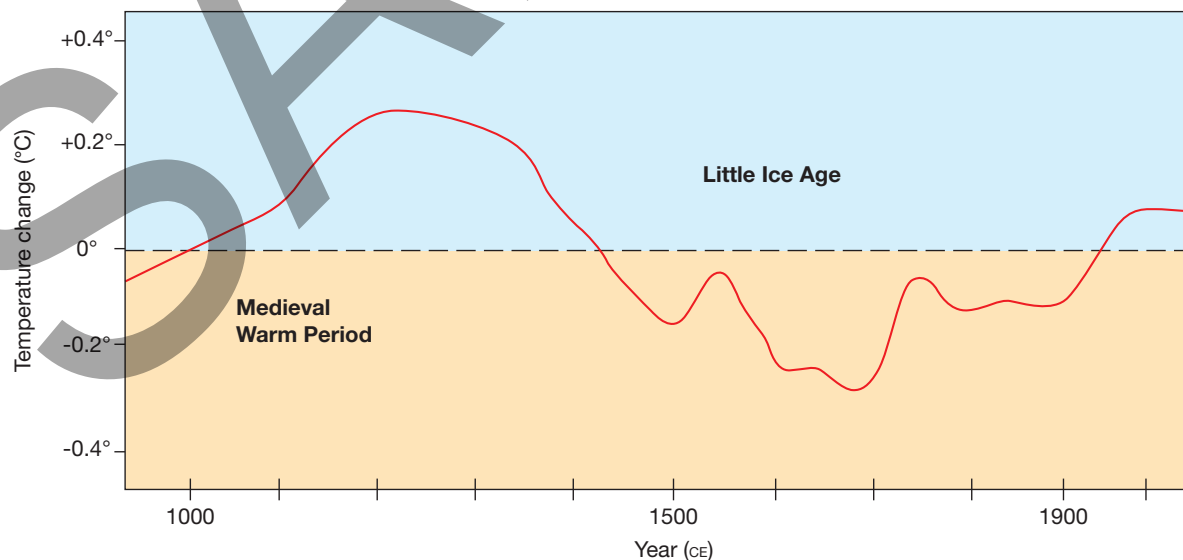
Twenty-five ships set off for Greenland. Only 14 ships would arrive, however; the rest turned back or were lost at sea. Erik and the surviving colonists founded a colony known as the Eastern Settlement on the south-west coast. Later, another colony called the Western Settlement was founded 320 kilometres north-west of Erik's colony.

In spite of the difficult beginnings, the settlement managed to survive. Erik had settled Greenland during the Medieval Warm Period (950–1250 CE), so the climate was milder than it is today. The colonists were able to grow crops such as barley, and farm sheep and cattle. They also hunted seals, walrus and whales at sea, and polar bears and arctic foxes on land.

Erik enjoyed a position of high status in Greenland. He held the title of 'paramount jarl' of Greenland and became very wealthy.

The end of the Greenland colony

At its peak in the early 12th century, there were 300 small farms, a cathedral and 16 churches on Greenland. However, Greenland lacked many important resources, such as metals, timber and some grains. These had to be imported from Scandinavia or Europe. By the 1350s CE, the climate in the Northern Hemisphere had cooled again, leading to an increase in sea-ice. This made sea travel between Greenland and Europe difficult and ships from Norway and Europe eventually stopped visiting Greenland for trade.



SOURCE 2.42 Temperatures during the Medieval Warm Period, 950–1250 CE

Another problem caused by the climate change was the shorter growing season and longer winter, leading to a smaller amount of crops that could be grown and a shorter time that animals could be grazed in the open.

The increasing cold also forced the Inuit people of Northern Canada and Northern Greenland to migrate south in search of a warmer climate. The Inuit and the Norse began to regularly encounter one another, leading to violence and an increased struggle for food.

Decreasing food supplies and competition from the Inuits had a devastating effect on the Greenland colony. By the 1400s CE it had become impossible to continue the colony in Greenland, and it was abandoned. The remaining people returned to Iceland.

What explains past climate change 1000 years ago? Go to OneStopDigital to listen to a podcast to find out.



ACTIVITY

Check your understanding

- 1 Download a blank world map from the internet. Use coloured pencils or textas (or your computer) to colour Scandinavia red and all the Vikings' other lands yellow. Label each country.
- 2 How did Eric the Red inspire people to go to Greenland?
- 3 How did the Medieval Warm Period enable settlement on Greenland?

Source question

- 1 Using source 2.42 and the text, draw a mind map to explain why the Greenland colony failed.

Apply your knowledge

- 1 Make a poster to encourage people from Iceland to move to Greenland in the 10th century.
- 2 With a classmate, write a dialogue between a TV interviewer and Erik the Red. Perform the interview for the class. You might like to film it, too.
- 3 Class discussion: How were the climate issues facing the Greenlanders similar to those we face today as a result of global warming?
- 4 Insert a timeline from the Dipity website for all Viking tour stops in your travel blog.



Legacies of the Viking Age

The Viking Age has left behind many interesting legacies that continue to influence our society and culture today.

Democracy was an important ideal of the Viking Age, as exercised through The Thing, at which all free men could vote. Today, the word 'Thing' (or 'Ting') is present in the names of the national parliaments in Iceland (the Althing), Denmark (the Folketing) and Norway (the Storting).

Old Norse sagas and stories have had a strong influence on writers, artists and musicians over the last 700 years. In recent times, JRR Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy and JK Rowling's *Harry Potter* series have drawn heavily on stories, images and ideas contained in the Viking sagas.

The image of Vikings as brutal, violent raiders, as popularised by manuscripts such as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, have also left a mark on our culture. The American cartoon strip *Hagar the Horrible* is based on the idea that Vikings are supposed to be 'horrible' and 'violent' (though Hagar is generally lazy and greedy—and is erroneously wearing a horned helmet!). The Canberra Raiders rugby league team adopted the Viking raider as their mascot, and portray him as a tough, marauding warrior (also wearing a horned helmet).

Another important and enduring remnant of the Viking Age concerns the English language. It was the Vikings' Old Norse language that gave us English words such as 'sister', 'cake', 'smile', 'happy', 'law', 'sky', 'freckle' and 'skill'. Many of the place names in England (and in countries where Britons came to live, such as Australia) also come from Old Norse. The ending '-by' means town or farm in Old Norse—giving us 'Somersby' in New South Wales. The ending '-thorpe' means village—giving us the 'Althorpe Islands' in South Australia and 'Linthorpe' in Queensland. Another ending is '-dale', meaning valley, seen in the names of towns such as 'Eskdale' in Victoria and 'Westdale' in New South Wales and Western Australia.

Answer to the riddle in Apply your knowledge question 1, page 42: Odin and his horse Sleipnir

History challenges

Create a museum

- 1 Create a class museum for the Viking Age. You can do one of the following:

- create 3-D models of artefacts
- create a virtual museum using photos of objects from the internet.

All of your artefacts must be correctly labelled with information stating:

- a what the object is
- b where it was found
- c its approximate age
- d what it was used for.

Write a report

Go to OneStopDigital and find out about the Oseberg ship burial. Write a 500-word report detailing how archaeologists found the site, how artefacts found at the site were restored, how the ship was moved to the museum and why there is concern about moving the ship to a new museum.

Make a Viking longship

Make your own model of a Viking longship out of wood or modelling clay. You could get some ideas from OneStopDigital.

Make a film

With the help of your classmates, make a short film that tells the story of one of the Norse gods. Before you begin this activity, decide on a role for each person in your group. You will need a researcher, a script-writer, a director, a photographer, a props manager, a set designer and actors. When you write the script for your film, think about the stage directions for each actor, and consider what you will use as a backdrop, what props you will need and what costumes you might wear.

Make a game

Hnefatafl is a Viking game. Research the game: find out the rules and explain them to your classmates. Then make your own game of Hnefatafl and play it!

Make Viking clothes

Make an item of Viking clothing. Go to the websites listed on OneStopDigital for basic patterns.

Write an essay

'The Vikings were little more than nasty, brutish and violent mauraunders.' Discuss. (350 words)

Think carefully about the key word 'discuss'. You will need to argue whether you agree or disagree with the statement and present evidence for your argument.

Propose a new stop for Revista Tours

Propose a new tour stop for the Revista Tours Vikings In-Depth Study Tour.

- 1 Choose from:
 - the monastery of Iona (802 CE and 806 CE)
 - the Dublin Slave Market (11th century)
 - Gokstad, Norway (1880 CE).
- 2 You will need to explain:
 - where your tour stop is located (draw a map)
 - what is significant about this tour stop
 - what a visit to this place can tell us about Viking life in the Medieval Period.
- 3 Present your proposal as a written report (300 words) or a PowerPoint presentation with appropriate images (10 slides). Remember to be persuasive and to support your arguments with evidence. Add to your blog.



See OneStopDigital for multiple-choice questions and an interactive crossword for this chapter.