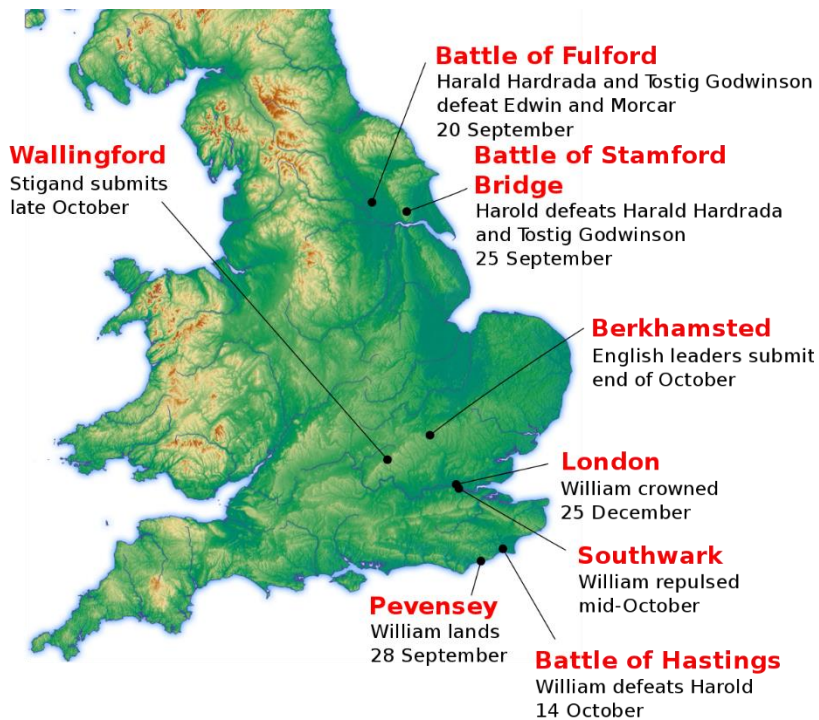


GCSE History

The Norman Conquest

J411-11



Abbey College, Ramsey

Sections	Learners should study the following content:
ENGLAND ON THE EVE OF CONQUEST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature, structure and diversity of late Anglo-Saxon society • Religion in late Anglo-Saxon England. • Anglo-Saxon culture: buildings, art and literature
INVASION AND VICTORY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norman society, culture and warfare pre-1066 • The succession crisis of 1066 • The battles of Fulford, Stamford Bridge and Hastings
RESISTANCE AND RESPONSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First uprisings against Norman rule including resistance in the west and Mercia • Northern resistance and William's 'Harrying of the North' • The rebellion of Hereward in the east and the end of English resistance
CASTLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-conquest fortifications and the first Norman castles in England • The distribution and design of Norman castles in England to 1087 • The purpose of Norman castles in England including their military and economic functions
CONQUEST AND CONTROL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domesday Book, its creation and purpose • The social structure of Norman England including changes in land ownership and the elite • Changes and continuities: language, laws and Church

Was Anglo-Saxon England a 'Golden Age' before the Norman Conquest? (YES)

- Status of Women
- King Edward was a saint.
- Warriors – Earls & Housecarls - to protect
- No Forest Law
- No Murdrum Fines
- No foreign rulers who steal 95% of the land
- No castles which English have to build
- Craftsmanship – jewellery
- Rebellions dealt with through negotiation

Was Anglo-Saxon England a 'Golden Age' before the Norman Conquest? (NO)

- Slavery
- Unsafe – no castles – England successfully invaded in 1016 and 1066
- Wooden buildings – houses & churches (Normans built in stone – most impressive building Westminster Abbey copied Norman churches)
- Corrupt Church
- Weak King – Edward challenged by Earl Harold

Who was really in charge of England in 1065?

King Edward the Confessor OR Earl Harold Godwinson of Wessex

King Edward the Confessor

- Descended from King Alfred the Great, but had lived in Normandy for over 20 years before becoming King in 1042.
- **Edward was famous for his piety** (devotion to the Christian religion). After his death, he was declared to be a **saint** – it was said that he had performed **miraculous healings**.
- **Married to Edith of Wessex, Harold's sister** – he married her in 1045 after only 3 years as king to keep the loyalty of Earl Godwin (Harold's father) who had helped him become king.
- **Sent Earl Godwin and his sons into exile** & his wife to a nunnery in **1051** when Godwin refused to punish the people of Dover for an attack on the king's French cousin and his knights when they had visited Edward.
- **Brought some Normans to England** to help him rule, e.g. **Earl Ralph of Hereford** (1052-55); **Robert of Jumieges**, Archbishop of Canterbury (1051-52).
- **Built Westminster Abbey** – a huge stone monastery church in the style of those he had known in Normandy.
- In **1065 to avoid a civil war**, he reluctantly **accepted Morcar as the new Earl of Northumbria**. He replaced Tostig Godwinson, whom Edward had chosen to be earl in 1055.



Earl Harold Godwinson of Wessex

- **Son of Earl Godwin of Wessex** – one of the most powerful men in England under the 3 previous kings.
- **Earl Godwin and his sons returned from exile in 1052** – Edward was forced to give them back their land & replace Robert of Jumieges with **Stigand** (loyal to Godwin) as Archbishop of Canterbury.
- **In 1053 Godwin died and Harold replaced him as Earl of Wessex**. His 3 brothers: **Gyrth, Leofwine and Tostig** were also made earls in the 1050s. (There were only 2 other earls who weren't Godwinsons.)
- **Harold defeated an attack by the Welsh in 1055 and invaded Wales in 1062-63** to make sure they caused no more trouble for England.
- **1064** – Went to Normandy and may have sworn an oath of loyalty to Duke William of Normandy.
- In **1065, Earl Edwin and his brother Morcar drove his brother, Earl Tostig, out of Northumbria**. To avoid a civil war, **Harold sided with them and Morcar became the new Earl of Northumbria**. A bitter was forced to go into Tostig.



Map of the England in 1065



Churl (Freeman)

A farmer who served a local lord (*thane*).

He was expected to serve in the *fyrd* (army) when summoned by the king, but had to provide his own weapons.

Some churls owned their own land, but many rented it from their *thane*.

Churls had a *wergild* (man price) of **200 shillings** which had to be paid to their family as a fine if they were murdered.



Thane (Lord)

Owned enough land for them to be able to well equipped for war. Some thanes were **Housecarls** (royal bodyguards created by **King Canute** in the **11th Century**).

Thanes had a *wergild* (man price) of **1200 shillings** which had to be paid to their family as a fine if they were murdered.

Anglo-Saxon Village

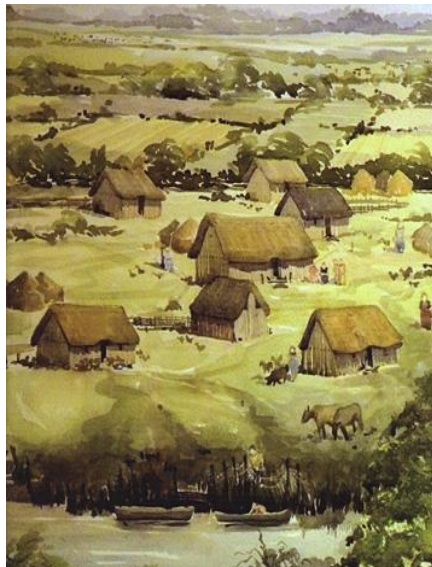
Most people in England lived in villages and worked in farming.

20 Shillings could buy enough land to support a family farm.

Only **1 - 1.5 million people** lived in the whole of England.

A lot of land was still woodland and marshes.

Everyone was a **Christian**: rich people gave money and land to abbeys (communities of monks).



King

Owned more land than anyone else in England.

Protected the country from invasion – there had been **attacks on England by Vikings** from Norway and Denmark for **over 200 years**.

Made sure the laws of the land were kept to – he chose **earls** and **shire-reeves** to be in charge of regions and counties. This included being judges at court.

Between **966 and 1066**, **2 out of 9 Kings** died violently.

Earl

These lords were in charge of **4 parts of England**: Wessex; Mercia; Northumbria and East Anglia.

They **owned a lot of land** and were very powerful. The **Earl of Wessex** in **1065** was **Harold Godwinson**. He effectively ruled England instead of the King.



Thew/Thrall (Slave)

People became slaves either because they had been **taken prisoner in wars with the Vikings, Welsh or Scots**, or because they **could not pay a debt**.

People **could buy their freedom** from slavery. Their owners were expected to give them enough food and some money each year for their own personal needs.

If a slave was murdered a *wergild* (man price) had to be paid to their owner as a fine, but this was lower than that of a *Churl*.

Women

They **had many of the rights that men had**. They were **allowed to own land**. They were considered to be **'oath-worthy'** which meant they could be **witnesses in court** and could **write wills** to decide what would happen to their belongings after they died.

However they could not fight in the army and did not usually rule the country. One woman, **Aethelflaed**, ruled over **Mercia**, central England, in the **10th Century**.

Anglo-Saxon England

GOLDEN AGE

- There were **4 rebellions** against King Edward the Confessor over 24 years – they were all dealt with by negotiation. There was nothing like the Harrying of the North.
- Anglo-Saxon society was set up as a hierarchy, but it was not as rigid as the Feudal System. More of the peasants were 'Freemen' (owned their own land) rather than 'Villeins' (worked on lord's land).
- There were **only 3 castles** in England before the Normans. Under the Normans they were a constant reminder of Norman power.
- **Women had more rights** before the Normans – owned land and were oath-worthy.
- **Harsh laws** under the Normans – Murdrum Fines and Forest Law - made life harder for the English.

IRON CAGE

- Earls, like Harold Godwinson and his family, had too much power and could challenge the king – William made sure no lords were as powerful under him.
- The **English Church** in general, including monasteries, was in need of reform. Improvements made under St Dunstan (10th Century) had not been continued because of the Viking attacks. **Wooden churches were replaced by grand stone ones.**
- England had been invaded by the Vikings over the previous 200 years and had been conquered twice in 50 years (1016 & 1066). There were **no successful invasions** after William and the Vikings eventually gave up – castles beat longships!
- **Slaves** made up about **10% of the population** under the Anglo-Saxons. The Normans disapproved of slavery and gradually it disappeared under them.

The Four Claimants for the Throne in 1066

Edgar the Atheling

- Surviving member of the English royal family who were descended from King Alfred the Great - great grandson of King Ethelred, grandson of King Edmund Ironside and King Edward the Confessor's great nephew.
- He was English.
- **But, he is only 14 years old and many English noblemen (earls and thanes) did not think him suitable.**



Harold Godwinson, Earl of Wessex

- King Edward named Harold his successor on his deathbed.
- He was English.
- Brother-in-law of King Edward.
- Chosen as successor by the Witan (assembly of noblemen) in 1066 – he had the support of the brothers, Edwin and Morcar, who were the Earls of Mercia and Northumbria.
- Earl of Wessex – most powerful man in the kingdom.
- His brothers, Gyth and Leofwine, were also earls.
- Warrior able to defend the country against invasion (already defeated the Welsh in 1062-63).
- **But, had sworn on saint's bones in 1064 to help William become king.**



Harald Hardrada, King of Norway

- An earlier Viking King of England & Denmark, Harthacnut (1040-42), had made the previous King of Norway, Magnus, his heir. When he died this promise had been ignored: Edward became King of England and Swein became King of Denmark, but Harald still remembered the promise.
- Believed to be the best warrior of the day – had fought throughout Scandinavia, Russia and the Mediterranean (had commanded the Varangian Guard before he became King of Norway)
- Harald had the support of Tostig, Harold's younger brother, who had been Earl of Northumbria (1055-65). He had been forced into exile in 1065 when Edwin and Morcar rebelled against him and King Edward and his brother Harold sided with them to avoid a civil war.
- Already an experienced ruler - King of Norway.
- **But, he was not English and not a close relation.**



Duke William of Normandy

- William said Edward had named him as his heir in 1051.
- In 1064, Harold Godwinson had sworn to help him to become king when Edward died.
- Known all over France as a great warrior: he had been Duke of Normandy since 1035; defeated a rebellion in Normandy in 1047 and an invasion of Normandy by the King of France in 1057; in 1064 and had conquered the County of Maine (south of Normandy) by 1064 and attacked Duchy of Brittany (west of Normandy) in 1064.
- **But, he was not English and not a close relation (a cousin) of Edward.**



Why did King Harald Hardrada of Norway win the Battle of Fulford (20th Sept), but lose the Battle of Stamford Bridge (25th Sept)?

Battle of Fulford (20th September 1066)

Harald Hardrada had allied with Tostig Godwinson. Tostig had left Flanders, where he had been living in exile since 1065, with a small force of ships to attack England earlier in the year. He had been driven off by Earl Edwin of Mercia and had then sailed first to Scotland and then joined forces with Hardrada's much larger fleet (with possibly **300 ships**). The 2 of them raided the north east coast and then sailed up the River Ouse to attack York, the capital of the North.

Earl Edwin of Mercia & Earl Morcar of Northumbria – Harold Godwinson, who had married their sister, had left them in charge of defending the Midlands & North - gathered an army to face them at Fulford outside York, with the river on **one side and a marsh hemming in the rear of the English position** and other side of the Battlefield.

Although both sides were fought in a similar way – on foot, in a 'shield wall' formation, mainly armed with spears and axes - **Hardrada's Norwegians probably outnumbered Edwin & Morcar's English.** There may have been as many as **10,000 Vikings** and as few as **5,000 English.**

The English charged first and drove back part of the Viking line, but **Hardrada, a commander famous for his cunning,** steadied his men and was **able to outflank the English shield wall and break it.**

Many of the English were unable to escape and many of Edwin & Morcar's warriors were killed on the battlefield, although they themselves managed to get back to York.

Battle of Stamford Bridge (25th September 1066)

When Harold Godwinson heard of the defeat at Fulford he rapidly marched north from London to York, a distance of 190 miles, hoping to launch a **surprise attack** on Hardrada & Tostig, whose army had made camp 7 miles east of York, at Stamford Bridge on the River Derwent.

Harold's rapid march caught the Viking army unprepared – they may not have had **all their weapons and armour** and perhaps as many as **a third of their warriors were several miles away** at Riccall, protecting their ships on the River Ouse. The English army was made up of the *Fyrd* (churls called up to fight their their thane) and *Housecarls* (the king's elite bodyguard).

Hardrada's warriors quickly formed a shield wall on the far side of the river from Harold. A lone berserk warrior is said to given them more time to do this by defending the bridge and killing many English warriors before he himself was slain (he was stabbed by a spear by an English warrior in a barrel floated under the bridge!).

Harold's army probably outnumbered **Hardrada's.** He may have had as many as **15,000 soldiers,** whilst the Vikings most likely had no more than **9,000.**

Many hours of fierce hand-to-hand combat followed, but the **English eventually broke the Viking shield wall.**

Late in the battle reinforcements, led by Jarl Orre, arrived from Riccall, and launched a ferocious charge, which became known as '**Orre's Storm**', but it was **too late to turn the tide of the battle** against the English. **Tostig and Hardrada were both killed.** Hardrada may have been killed by an arrow through his throat.

The death toll of the battle was very high. The surviving Vikings sailed back to Norway in only **24 ships** after it! Harold may have lost almost as many men as the Vikings in the bitter close action of the battle.

The Battle of Hastings, 14th October 1066

- The armies arrive on the battlefield

The English formed a slightly bowed shield wall on the ridge of Senlac Hill. King Harold was in the middle of the line with his *housecarls* on either side of him and the *Fyrd* on the end. There were about 7,000 of them.

The Normans and their allies were at the bottom of the hill, arranged in three groups called 'battles': Bretons on the left; Normans in the middle; Flemings on the right. Each of the 'battles' are in three lines: archers; infantry; cavalry (knights). Duke William was in the middle of the Norman cavalry. Their army was also probably about 7,000 strong.

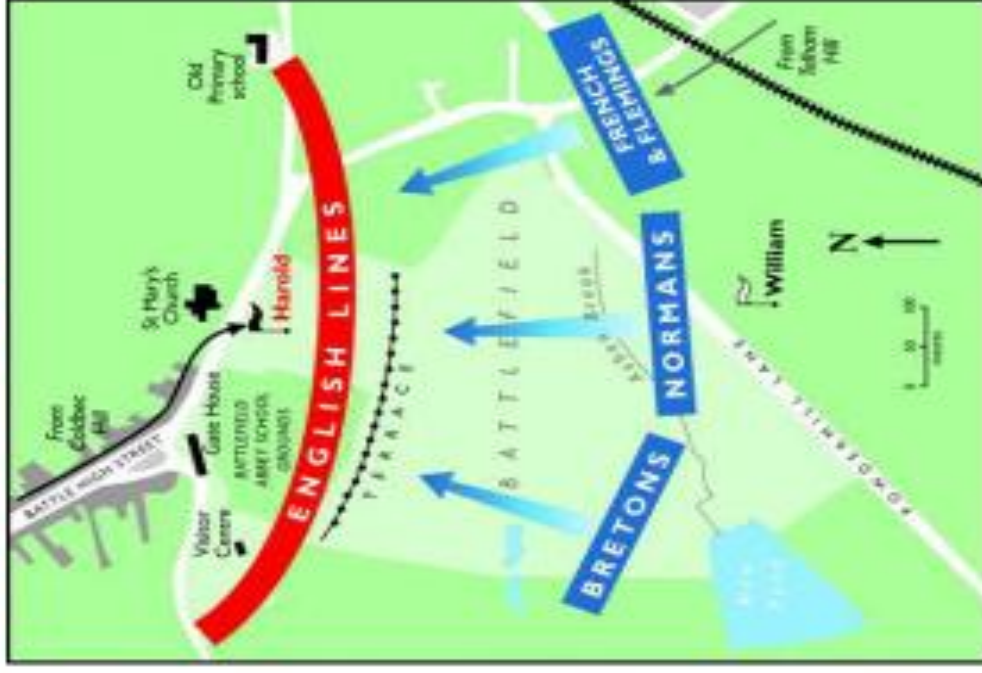
- Taillefer challenges the English

One of the Norman knights, Taillefer (said *tie-fair*), may have ridden up to the English shield wall and then ridden up and down it, juggling his sword and singing songs about the bravery of French kings and knights. An English warrior charged out to fight him. Taillefer killed him, cut his head off and, after holding it up for the Normans to see, singlehandedly charged the English line and was killed.

- The Normans first attacks

The English beat their shields and chanted their war cry, "Out! Out! Out!" The Norman archers advanced and fired volleys of arrows to create an 'arrow storm'. The English hurled anything they could at them: sticks, spears, stones and arrows. Then the Norman infantry advanced to try to break the shield wall. Finally the knights charged up the hill to support them, but all they could do was ride up and down the line, jabbing with their lances or swinging their swords.

These attacks clearly happened several times as the Normans tried to break the English shield wall.



- Towards the middle of the day

During one attack a rumour ran through the Norman army that the Duke had been killed. Panic followed and the Bretons fled down the hill first, followed by many of the other knights.

Some of the *Fyrd* pursued the Bretons, but William lifted his helmet to show he was still alive and said, *"Look at me. I am alive, and, by God's help, I shall win. What madness puts you to flight? Where do you think you can go? You are deserting victory and everlasting honour; you are running away to destruction and everlasting shame. And by flight not one of you will avoid death!"* and stopped the panic.

The English who had charged down the hill were now surrounded on a hillock and wiped out by the Norman knights.

- Duke William launches more 'feigned retreats'

The Norman attacks continued through the afternoon, following the same pattern as the morning, but this time the Normans pretended break and flee in panic to draw more of the English down the hill where they were surrounded and killed by the knights. The English shield wall shortened and became more rounded to try to prevent the Normans from outflanking them.

Duke William had at least 2 horses killed under him in the course of the battle, but was uninjured.

- Harold is wounded

Towards the evening, the Norman archers fired more volleys of arrows and may have hit Harold in the eye. This injury may not have killed him, but made it impossible for him to lead the army and he would have been taken to the rear of the army.

A Death Squad of knights kills Harold and the Shield Wall collapses

Duke William may now have sent forward, and possibly led, a handful of knights as a Death Squad to find and kill Harold, mercilessly mutilating his body. With the Shield Wall broken, the Normans launched a massed attack on the leaderless English, who now fled from the battlefield.

- The final fight at the *Malfosse*, the 'Evil Ditch'

As the knights pursued the English in the twilight, some of the Flemings stumbled into a ditch, which became known as the *Malfosse* (Evil Ditch) where a few of the English briefly were able to make last stand before more Norman knights arrived and drove them off.

William the Conqueror (1066 – 1087): Summary of his Reign

- **1066** – won Battle of Hastings; devastated the south on the march to London – crowned in Westminster Abbey. Several castles built as part of the invasion.
- **1067** – Harold's sons attack the West Country from Ireland; Edric the Wild rebels in Herefordshire.
- **1068** – Gytha leads rebellion in Exeter; Rebellion in the North supported by Danish invasion (Swein II).
- **1069** - Rebellion in the North supported by Danish invasion & Edric the Wild rebels in Herefordshire again led to the 'Harrying of the North' - up to 100,000 died; building of Colchester Castle begins – William's largest stone castle.
- **1070-71** – Hereward the Wake rebels in Fens supported by Danish invasion (attacked Peterborough Abbey & seized Ely Abbey); Malcolm, King of Scotland invaded the North – beaten by William; Lanfranc made Archbishop of Canterbury (set out to reform the Church) and Battle Abbey set up – across England churches & abbeys are rebuilt in stone throughout William's reign.
- **1072** – William invaded Scotland – the Treaty of Abernethy ensures there is peace with Scotland from now on.
- **1075** – Revolt of the Earls – Norman Earls of Hereford & Norfolk rebel supported by Danish invasion (Swein II's last attempt); Earl Waltheof beheaded.
- **1078** – Building of the Tower of London (William's fortress-palace) begins.
- **1079** – Rebuilding of Winchester Cathedral begins – largest church in northern Europe.
- **1083** – Ely Abbey church rebuilt - massive Norman design. Other old monasteries, abandoned after Viking attacks, were set up again.
- **1085** – Planned (& abandoned) Danish and Flemish invasion of Cnut IV. William gathered a massive army to defend England – it is spread over the 500 castles built by the Normans in the last 20 years.
- **1086** – The invasion threat led to William's great survey, local inquests settling land disputes, the writing of 'The Domesday Book' and the Oath of Salisbury – all landowners had to swear loyalty to William. The Norman FEUDAL SYSTEM as a way of organising society had replaced the old Anglo-Saxon hierarchy – almost all landowners were now Norman; most peasants were unfree villeins, but slavery was discouraged by the Normans.
- **1087** – William died after crushing a rebellion in France.

How did William deal with opposition and rivals for his throne?

- **1066** – William won the Battle of Hastings and **marched to London** to be crowned king on Christmas Day. **On the way, Edgar the Atheling met him and promised to be loyal** to him.
- **1067** – **Two of Harold's sons raided the West Country from Ireland**, trying to get help to fight William – they came back over the next 2 years, but William's support in the area was too strong. **After 1069 they never came back!**
- In the same year, **Edric the Wild** led an uprising in Herefordshire. He **failed to capture Hereford Castle**. In **1069** he attacked and burned Shrewsbury, but was **unable to take Shrewsbury Castle**.
- **1068** – **William led his army into the west**. The city of **Exeter** had risen in rebellion, led by **Gytha**, Harold's mother. He **ended the Siege of Exeter in just 18 days** to make sure the lords there obeyed him.
- An uprising in the north by **Earl Gospatric, Earl Edwin, Earl Morcar** and **Edgar the Atheling** was **quickly put down by William's army**.

- **1069** – The north of England rebelled against him again. Earl Robert of Northumbria was killed by the rebels at Durham. **King Swein II of Denmark sent them help** – as Harold's cousin, he also claimed the throne of England. **William showed no mercy to the rebels** and the Danes sailed home when he paid them off.

What William's army did in **1069** became known as 'The Harrying of the North':

"He cut down many in his vengeance. **He destroyed the homes of others, and burnt them to ashes**. Nowhere else had William shown such cruelty. He punished the innocent with the guilty. In his anger he commanded that **all crops and herds, property, and food of every kind should be collected together and burnt...More than 100,000 Christian folk, young and old, died in hunger**. I have often praised William in this book, but I can say nothing good about this **brutal slaughter**."

Orderic Vitalis, (A Norman monk), 1123

- **1070** - **Malcolm, the King of Scotland, invaded** – **William quickly beat him**. In **1072, following an invasion of Scotland by William I, Malcolm was forced to accept the Treaty of Abernethy**. He withdrew his support from **Edgar the Atheling** (Malcolm's brother-in-law) and did not threaten William's northern border again.

- **1070-71** - The **LAST ENGLISH REBELLION** against William in the east of England led by a lord called **Hereward** and supported at first by raiding Danes sent by **King Swein II of Denmark**. Hereward was able to launch raids from the marshes of the Fens. **Peterborough Abbey was attacked** by the rebels, but eventually Hereward was forced to retreat to his **fortress on the Isle of Ely** by **William's much larger army**. **William first had a wooden causeway built** across the marshes to attack Ely, but it **collapsed under the weight of his knights' armour**. Next, he **had a witch shout curses at the rebels** from a wooden platform to break their morale, but the **platform fell down when Hereward set fire to the surrounding Fen**. Eventually, **William was told of a path through the Fens** to Ely. He **attacked again** and **Hereward was forced to submit to William**.
- **1075 – The Revolt of the Earls**. 2 Norman lords, **Roger, Earl of Hereford** and **Ralph, Earl of East Anglia**, dissatisfied that William had refused to permit a marriage between their 2 families, persuaded **Waltheof, Earl of Northampton**, an English earl to join them in rebellion against the king. **William's army was divided in 2 and prevented the Earls from combining their forces**. The rebels' base, **Norwich Castle was besieged and surrendered before the ships sent by King Swein II of Denmark could help them**. The Danes realised the English would not join them against William and went home. **Waltheof was beheaded** for his part in the rebellion – the only English earl punished this way by William.
- **1085 - Cnut IV, King of Denmark** since 1080, **planned to attack England – William raised a great army** to deal with this threat, but in the end the Danish fleet never set sail.

William and the Church

- **Everyone** in England was a Christian at this time. **Every village had a Church** which people went to on Sunday. **Priests were important people** in every community, who were **respected and trusted by the local people**.
- **Priests and monks were the best educated people** at the time. They could be **useful to a king** trying to run a country. Every king knew that **it made sense to be on good terms with the Church**.

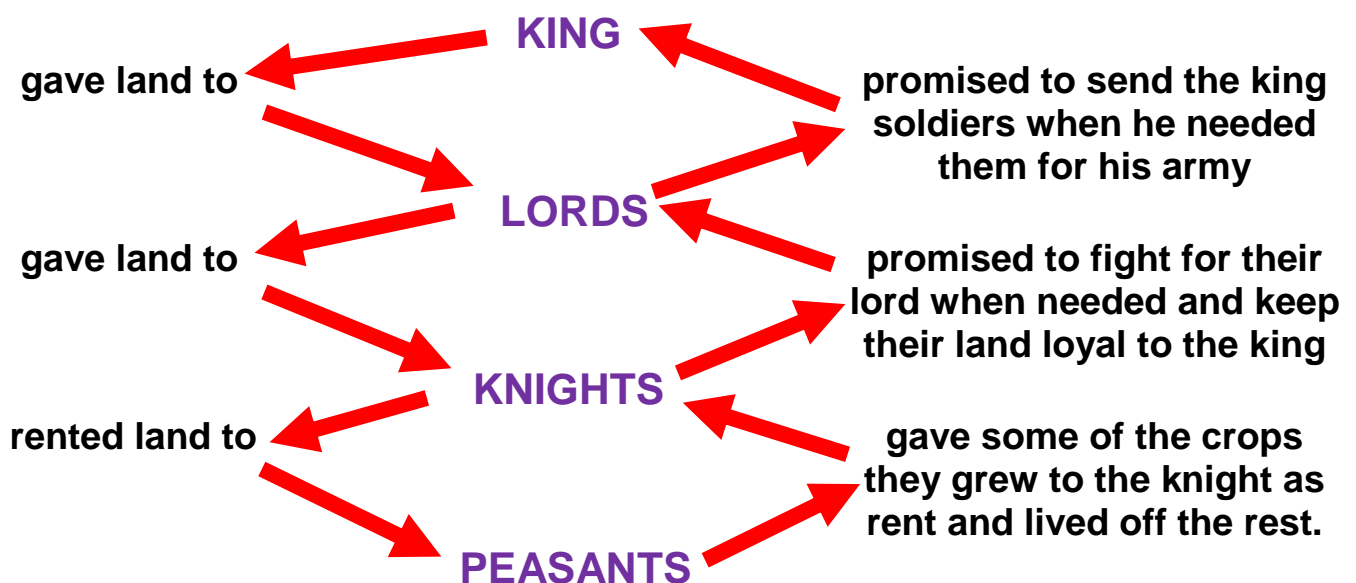
What William did to win the support of the Church:

1. William persuaded the Pope (the Head of the Church in Rome) that **Harold had broken a solemn oath** (promise) when he became king, instead of helping William. **The Pope allowed William to fly his banner (flag) over his ships** as they sailed to England (**1066**) to show **the Pope agreed that he should be King of England**.
2. About **a quarter of all the land in England was owned by the Church** – this made it rich and powerful.
3. **All the important jobs in the Church in England were given to Norman priests**, including the two archbishops (**1070**) – **LANFRANC (Archbishop of Canterbury)** and **Thomas of Bayeux (Archbishop of York)**. **Lanfranc was keen to reform the English Church** - many practices that the Pope disapproved of had been allowed to continue in England: **pluralism; simony & married priests**. Lanfranc and William held **Church Councils** to reform the church. Lanfranc led the church well, but the **problems were never completely solved**.
4. **Most church buildings in England were rebuilt**, including all the big cathedrals. Before William most churches were built of wood. William now had them **rebuilt in stone**, e.g. the rebuilding of **York Cathedral** began in **1075** and **WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL** in **1079** – when it was finished it was the **largest church in northern Europe**.
5. The Normans were eager **patrons** (supporters) of **monasteries**. Across England **new monasteries were set up**, e.g. **BATTLE ABBEY (1070)** and **old ones were improved** often with **massive new stone churches** (e.g. **Ely Abbey (1083)**). Monasteries, which had been **abandoned after Viking attacks**, especially in the north, and had never been restored by the English, were started up again, e.g. **Whitby Abbey**.

How did William divide up the land – The Feudal System

- **William needed an army** to keep control of his new kingdom. He also **had to reward those who had fought for him** at the Battle of Hastings. In **1086** William called all lords to meet him and swear again to be loyal. This was the **Oath of Salisbury**. He was worried the Danes might invade and needed to know all his knights would fight for him.
- **William divided up the land in England to help him rule over England** – this new way of organising the country was called the **Feudal System**.
- **Everyone got something out of it**, but some certainly got more than others! (Only **5%** of all land was owned by the English by the end of William's reign.)

The Feudal System



(Most were **VILLEINS** (unfree). A quarter were **Freemen**, who owned their land. There were still **Slaves** in England (about 10% of population), but the Normans disapproved of the slave trade and their numbers declined.)

Building Castles

William needed an army to keep control of his new kingdom. He also **had to reward those who had fought for him** at the Battle of Hastings – one way of dealing with both these problems was by building **castles** all over England.

- They could be **put up quickly** – they were not large forts and could be **built of wood**. He built **Hastings Castle, Wallingford Castle and Berkhamsted Castle** this way in **1066** as he marched to London
- They provided **an impressive home for a local lord or knight** who had been given land by William as a reward for his loyalty.
- They provided **a base for Norman soldiers who could keep the local English under control**. Most castles were **only a day's ride** by horse from the next one, so more soldiers could easily be gathered if there was more serious trouble, like a **rebellion**, to deal with. William built **2 castles in York in 1068 and 1069** because the English in the north caused him so much trouble.
- They **towered over the villages or towns** where they were built – everyone who lived in **that area could see that the Normans were now in charge**. Sometimes **markets were held in their courtyards** – they were **a safe place to trade**. This also helped to make them part of the everyday life of the country.
- The Normans tended to build **MOTTE AND BAILEY CASTLES** at first, with a wooden tower on a tall mound above a courtyard, but some were built in stone as **NORMAN SQUARE KEEPS**. William's own home in London was one of these – **The Tower of London**, begun in **1078**, and so was the largest Castle he built, **Colchester Castle**, begun in **1069**. Built on the foundations of a huge Roman temple, William was showing the Normans were great rulers and builders like the Romans had been.
- They had **semi-circular arched windows**, which we still call **NORMAN ARCHES** because the Normans built so many castles and churches with this design.

How did William find out about his new kingdom - The Domesday Book

William knew very little about England when he became its king in 1066 – he had never visited the country before! He also gave a lot of land to those lords and knights who had fought for him at the Battle of Hastings as a reward for their loyalty.

After a few years it was clear that William needed more information about his new kingdom if he was to rule fairly and keep control of the country. The King of Denmark, Cnut IV, had planned to attack England in 1085 – William had raised a great army to deal with this threat. He needed to know he could afford to do this again if Cnut planned another invasion.

How did William do this?

➤ In 1086 William held a great meeting at Gloucester of all the leading lords in England. At this meeting he announced what he intended to do. This is what he did, according to an English monk:

“Then he sent his officers into every shire all over England, and ordered them to find out how many hundred hides [a measure of land] were in the shire, what land the king had and what taxes he ought to have each year from the shire. He also ordered it to be written how much land his archbishops had, and his bishops and his abbots [a head monk in a monastery] and his earls [lords], and how much each landowner in England had, and how much it might be worth. So thorough was this enquiry that there was not one hide nor yard of land nor even (it is shameful to write, but he thought it not shameful to do) an ox, nor a cow, nor a swine [pig], that was not written down.”

➤ Once the survey was complete, William had all the information which the ‘officers’ (they included lords to ask the questions and monks to write down the answers) had collected written down in one huge book. Local inquests had been held all over England as part of the survey to settle disputes over land – they usually decided the land belonged to the Normans instead of the English.

➤ Now William knew exactly what everyone in England owned. He knew how much tax he could collect fairly from all his people to pay for his army and the castles and churches he was building all over England. Lords and knights who had sworn loyalty to William could be certain that the land they held would be passed on to their families. The Domesday Book confirmed this. It gave them ‘security of title’.

➤ Many people in England did not like the king knowing so much about their lives and business. Everyone believed that God would judge everyone at the end of time. It seemed to some people that the king could now judge everyone in the same way – it was as if the ‘Day of Judgement’ (‘Doomsday’ or ‘Domesday’ as it was spelt at that time) had come already, so the book soon became known as ‘The Domesday Book’.

USE TANK to answer interpretation questions.

William the Conqueror

(1) Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Version E, entry for 1087.

King William and the chief men loved gold and silver and did not care how sinfully it was obtained provided it came to them. He (William) did not care at all how wrongfully his men got possession of land nor how many illegal acts they did.

(2) In his book *Ecclesiastical History*, Ordericus Vitalis described what happened after an English rebellion in the winter of 1069. (c. 1142)

In his anger William ordered that all crops and herds...and food of every kind should be brought together and burned to ashes, so that the whole region north of Humber might be stripped of all means of survival.

(3) William of Jumieges, *Deeds of the Dukes of the Normans* (c. 1070)

William, Duke of Normandy, never allowed himself to be deterred from any enterprise because of the labour it entailed. He was strong in body and tall in stature. He was moderate in drinking, for he deplored drunkenness in all men. In speech he was fluent and persuasive, being skilled at all times in making clear his will...and whenever his health permitted he regularly attended Christian worship each morning and at the celebration of mass.

(4) William of Poitiers, *The Deeds of William, Duke of the Normans* (c. 1071)

Duke William excelled both in bravery and soldier-craft. He dominated battles, checking his own men in flight, strengthening their spirit, and sharing their dangers...William was a noble general, inspiring courage, sharing danger, more often commanding men to follow than urging them on from the rear.

(5) Pope Gregory VII made the following comments about William the Conqueror in a letter to a friend. (1081)

The king of England, though in certain respects he is not as religious as we would wish, still shows himself to be more acceptable than other kings... he neither destroys nor sells the churches of God.

(6) Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Version E, entry for 1083.

He (William) made large forests for the deer, and passed laws, so that whoever killed a hart or a hind should be blinded. The rich complained and the poor murmured, but the king was so strong that he took no notice of them.

(7) Confession made by William the Conqueror on his deathbed in 1087. Quoted by Ordericus Vitalis in *The Ecclesiastical History* (c. 1142)

I tremble my friends/ when I reflect on the grievous sins which burden my conscience, and now, about to be summoned before the awful tribunal of God, I know not what I ought to do. I was bred to arms from my childhood, and am stained from the rivers of blood I have shed...It is out of my power to count all the injuries which I have caused during the sixty-four years of my troubled life...I have persecuted the natives of England beyond all reason. Whether gentle or simple I have cruelly oppressed them; many I have unjustly disinherited; innumerable multitudes perished through me by famine or sword...I fell on the English of the northern shires like a ravening lion. I commanded their houses and corn, with all their implements and chattels, to be burnt without distinction, and great herds of cattle and beasts of burden to be butchered wherever they are found. In this way I took revenge on multitudes of both sexes by subjecting them to the calamity of a cruel famine, and so became the barbarous murderer of many thousands, both young and old, of that fine race of people. Having gained the throne of that kingdom by so many crimes I dare not leave it to anyone but God..."

Source A

“Duke William of Normandy gathered a large army, sailed across the English Channel, and landed with his soldiers on the southern coast. Earl Harold hurried his own men down from the North to meet the enemy, and the two armies, Saxon and Norman met at Hastings where a terrible battle was fought. The Normans had more and better men and were better armed than Harold’s soldiers. Before the day was done Earl Harold was killed and Duke William and his men were the victors.”

Dorothy King. Blackies Junior History.

Source B

“William was a soldier and a pretty good one. He was a master of tactics and used all the tricks of his trade. His military reputation helped him raise an army in 1066. His coolness in battle and his determination snatched victory out of defeat at Hastings. If he had luck as well, it was probably not much more than the product of his military genius.”

Frank Barlow. The Norman Conquest and Beyond.

Source C

Duke William sailed from Normandy into Pevensey and came upon King Harold unexpectedly before his army was ready. The Normans won the battle, as God granted them because of the sins of the nation. God gave William the conquest of England.”

An English Monk. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.

What were the reasons for the Norman Victory at Hastings? The Battle of Hastings - Source Materials

The courageous leaders mutually prepared for battle, each according to his national custom. The English, as we have heard, passed the night without sleep, in drinking and singing, and in the morning proceeded without delay against the enemy. All on foot, armed with battle-axes, and covering themselves in front by the juncture of their shields, they formed an impenetrable body which would assuredly have secured their safety that day had not the Normans, by a feigned flight, induced them to open their ranks, which till that time, according to their custom, had been closely compacted. King Harold himself, on foot, stood with his brothers near the standard in order that, so long as all shared equal danger, none could think of retreating.This alternating victory, first of one side and then of the other, continued so long as Harold lived to check the retreat; but when he fell, his brain pierced by an arrow, the flight of the English ceased not until night.....William, too, was equally ready to encourage his soldiers by his voice and by his presence, and to be the first to rush forward to attack the thickest of the foe. He was everywhere fierce and furious; he lost three choice horses, which were that day killed under him.

William of Malmesbury

William was a noble general, turning back the retreat, inspiring courage, sharing danger, more often commanding men to follow than urging them on from the rear....Now as the day declined the English army realised beyond doubt that they could no longer stand against the Normans. They knew that they were reduced by heavy losses; that the King himself, with his brothers and many nobles of England had fallen and that they could expect no help.....They therefore turned to flight and made off as soon as they got the chance.

William of Poitiers

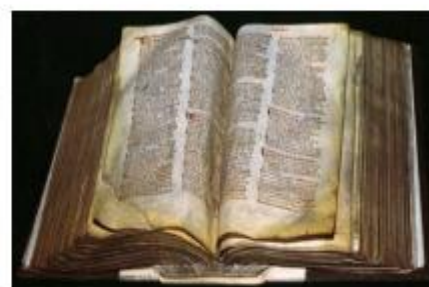
King Harold was informed of this and he assembled a large army and came against William at the old apple tree. And William came against him by surprise before his army was drawn up in battle array. But the King, nevertheless fought hard against him, with men who were willing to support him, and there were heavy casualties on both sides. There King Harold was killed.....and many good men and the French remained masters of the field.

Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.

The King at once marched his army towards London with all speed and although he knew very well that many of the better warriors in all England had fallen in the two battles, and that half his army had not yet come in, nevertheless he did not hesitate to meet his enemy in Sussex as quickly as he could.....many deserted from the line and a very few stood firm with him....But alas after so many had fallen on both sides he was slain as the evening shadows lengthened.

Florence of Worcester.

The Reign of William the Conqueror



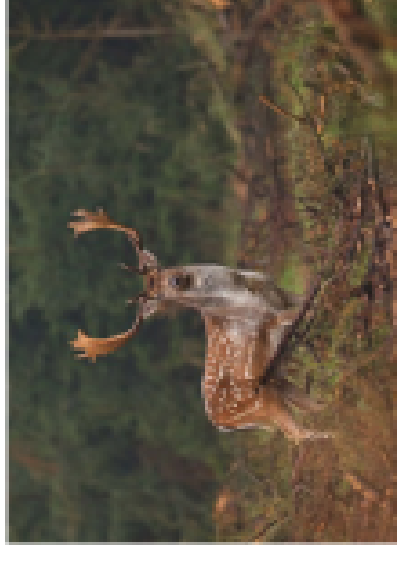
Was England under 'The Norman Yoke' after 1066?

**'The Norman Yoke' according to Orderic Vitalis,
11th-12th Century Anglo-Norman monk & historian**

*"The English were oppressed by the insolence of the Normans, and subjected to...outrages...[Those] who had the...castles, treated the natives...with the utmost scorn...
...the English groaned aloud for their lost freedom and plotted endlessly to find some way of shaking off a **yoke** that was so intolerable and to which they were unaccustomed."*

Legacies of Norman Rule: Evidence for 'The Norman Yoke'?

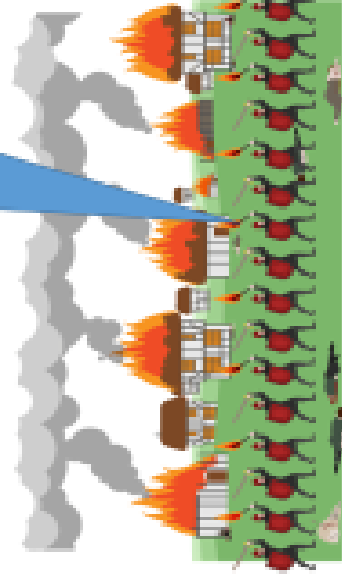
- **FOREST LAW:** - William made large areas of land in England '**Forest**' – royal hunting grounds, such as '**The New Forest**' in Hampshire. William saw hunting as an essential part of military training for knights, as well as sport and a way of providing meat for feasts. The forests were not under the same law as the rest of England. There were **harsh penalties** (mutilation, e.g. blinding for killing a king's deer) for anyone on this land without the king's permission.



- **MURDRUM FINES:** - This was another Norman change to the law. If a Norman was murdered and the killer was not captured, a **heavy fine** was imposed on **all the Englishmen** in the manor.



- **CHANGES TO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE:** - The Normans spoke French. Gradually many of their words became part of the English language – **over 20%** of what we say today comes from French, including words like '**power**'; '**castle**'; '**forest**'; '**law**'; '**beef**'; '**mutton**' and '**pork**'.



The Medieval Period (up to c.1500)

- England was ruled by kings from **French families**: the **Normans** (1066 – 1154) or the **Angevins** (1154 – 1485).
- Most Kings of England spent time **fighting wars in France to protect or add to lands** they had controlled there since the reign of William the Conqueror.



English & French knights in battle

- **WHAT WOULD THEY THINK OF ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND AND THE NORMAN CONQUEST?**

Medieval English Kings' Flag



English Lands in France over 300 years after William the Conqueror



The Early Modern Period (c.1500 – c.1750)

- **England changed its religion** in the 16th Century: it became Protestant; **most of the rest of Europe (including France) remained Catholic.**
- England was divided by the **Civil War (1642-46)** at this time: **King Charles I vs Parliament (Cromwell)**. They thought **he had too much power** – he lost the war and his head in 1649!
- **France was the most powerful country in Europe** by the 17th Century – **England fought wars with France** over trade.

Dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII (1536-40)



The English Civil War and execution of Charles I

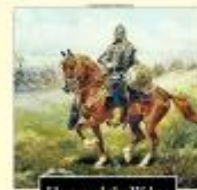


- **WHAT WOULD THEY THINK OF ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND AND THE NORMAN CONQUEST?**

The Industrial Revolution (c.1750 – c.1900)

New industrial towns grew up around factories

- Britain was now the richest country in the world and the country changed massively: towns & cities replaced villages; factories replaced farms.
- France was still a rival empire: Britain fought France for over 20 years during the Napoleonic Wars (1792 – 1815). The country was in danger of being invaded then and there were fears of a French invasion later in the 19th Century.
- **WHAT WOULD THEY THINK OF ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND AND THE NORMAN CONQUEST?**



Hereward the Wake: Last of the English - a Victorian novel



Napoleon Bonaparte, dictator of France – threatened to invade Britain in 1805



The 20th & 21st Centuries (since c.1900)

Sutton Hoo Saxon Ship Burial and treasure, excavated in 1939.

- Britain allied with France in both world wars (1914-18 & 1939-45). Germany was seen as the main threat to Britain in the 1st half of the 20th Century.
- There was much more cooperation than ever before between European countries in the 2nd half of the 20th Century. The European Union (EU) has been one of the ways countries have been brought together.
- Archaeology has advanced enormously in the last 100 years – this has made it possible to find out more about the distant past and has increased our interest in times about which less was known, such as Anglo-Saxon England or the Viking expansion.
- **WHAT WOULD THEY THINK OF ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND AND THE NORMAN CONQUEST?**



The Hobbit by JRR Tolkien, Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford University, published in 1937: its hero Bilbo Baggins lives in 'The Shire'.

Summary of Interpretations Over Time:

- In the **medieval period** William tended to be seen as a good king to be copied, (except for the English during and just after his reign who still resented being conquered).
- In the **Early Modern Period** fear of royal power and France made ‘The Norman Yoke’ the most widespread view of William’s reign.
- During the **Industrial Revolution** fear of France, nostalgia for a pre-industrial England and pride in Britain’s difference to the rest of Europe meant ‘The Norman Yoke’ remained a popular view. Anglo-Saxon England was seen as a ‘golden age’.
- In the **20th and 21st Centuries** fear of Germany and alliances with France (world wars) and later greater cooperation with other European countries meant some started to focus on William’s strength’s as a ruler. However archaeological finds have increased our evidence for Anglo-Saxon England and made some historians more interested in England before 1066.
- **Many now think it is too simple to see England as enjoying a ‘golden age’ in Anglo-Saxon times or under a ‘Norman Yoke’ in William’s reign.**