



Anglo-Saxons & Scots



The Anglo-Saxons were a medieval people who, for 600 years, controlled much of what is now England. They built a legacy of culture and beliefs that still influences us today. They were descendants of three different tribes who invaded Britain after the Roman Army left in 410CE. The new invaders brought their own building methods, religious beliefs and language. During their rule, Christianity spread as monks came to England from Rome. The Anglo-Saxons ruled large parts of England until 1066, when England was conquered by William, the Duke of Normandy, after his victory at the Battle of Hastings. Around the 6th Century CE, Scotland and the Picts were invaded by Gaels who originated from Ireland. This is where the Gaelic term derives from and how Scotland got its name as the Irish were called the ‘Scoti.’

Main Events

<p>410CE The last Roman soldiers left Britain</p>	<p>597CE St Augustine brought Christianity to Britain from Rome and built Canterbury Cathedral</p>	<p>601 CE King Ethelbert of Kent converted to Christianity</p>	<p>634 CE St Aidan set up a <u>monastery</u> on Lindisfarne (this is important for when you learn about Vikings!)</p>	<p>871 – 899 CE The Anglo-Saxon <u>Chronicle</u> is started during this period, although the exact date is unknown</p>	<p>878CE King Alfred the Great fights back against Viking invaders</p>	<p>927CE Kingdom of England created by King Athelstan</p>	<p>1066 The Norman Invasion led by William the Conqueror end the time of the Anglo-Saxons</p>
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What else was happening at the same time?



The Vikings (who you’ll learn about next!) were raiding Britain and other countries during Anglo-Saxon times. They eventually conquered parts of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom and fought many battles against the Anglo-Saxons in Britain.

Ancient Baghdad, the round city, which would grow to be the biggest city in the World in its time, was built and established. You’ll learn about Ancient Baghdad and the early Islamic civilisation when you’re in year 6.



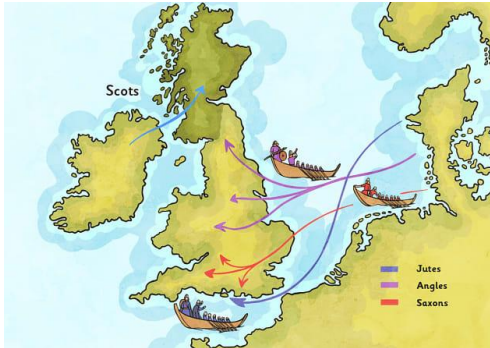
What should I already know?

- We know about history because of historical sources, such as objects or pictures from the time. We know lots about Roman history (Y3) because they wrote things down. Before this, throughout the Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age (Y3), very few people could write, so we only have artefacts, burial sites and monuments to work out history from. We have these things from Roman times too (Y3), but the addition of written sources makes understanding history easier. The Anglo-Saxons left behind a written account of history that helps us to understand what was happening at the time.
- There have been many large empires throughout history – they grow and grow but eventually fall. Remember the Roman Empire (Y3) eventually fell when they were under attack from many different enemies. Soldiers eventually had to be recalled from Britain to go and help fight in other countries and to try to protect Rome itself. The Anglo-Saxons ended when they were under attack from different enemies too.
- In the Bronze Age and Iron Age, there is evidence that people in Britain traded goods with and learnt skills from people abroad, so they were influenced by other cultures. The Roman invasion (Y3) brought bigger changes and things changed more quickly – from the way people lived to the food they ate. The Anglo-Saxons brought their own culture and ideas to Britain, and were, over the course of many years, influenced themselves by Viking culture, and the rise of Christianity.

Settlements

The Saxons came from what is now Northern Germany and parts of the Netherlands. The Jutes and the Angles came from Denmark and other parts of Germany.

The land they conquered (which became known as Angle-land, and later England) was split into small kingdom.



Conflict

Britain was peaceful under Roman rule. When the Roman Empire collapsed, this changed! The Celtic tribes, such as the Iceni tribe (Y3), had lived in harmony with the Romans, and the Romans had protected them. The Anglo-Saxons had tried to invade Britain whilst the Romans were there, but the Romans had fought them off. The Romans had also built and guarded Hadrian's Wall, partly to keep them safe from the tribes who lived in the north (the Picts).

With the Romans gone, the Northern tribes (the Picts and the Scots) attacked! There is some evidence that the Celts asked the Anglo-Saxons to come and help them fight these tribes and the Anglo-Saxons agreed, in return for land to farm (the soil and conditions in Britain were better than where the Anglo-Saxons lived). The Anglo-Saxons helped fight off the Picts and the Scots, but then gradually took over the whole land. By about 600 CE, the Celtic people had mostly been taken as slaves by the Anglo-Saxons, or had retreated to Wales or Cornwall.

Conflict

Early Anglo-Saxon Britain was made up of seven smaller kingdoms, sometimes referred to as a heptarchy: Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Essex, Wessex, Kent and Sussex. These separate kingdoms had their own kings and often fought, trying to conquer each other and by the seventh century. Sometimes a king would try to claim the title of Bretwalda (King of all Britain) and overall control often changed. Kent, for example, was once a separate kingdom in the 7th century, then it was ruled by Mercia in the 8th century and by the 9th century it had become part of Wessex!

In 927CE the separate kingdoms were united under the rule of one king, King Athelstan, and the Kingdom of England was created.



The Anglo-Saxons were often attacked by the Vikings. Small raiding parties eventually became almost total conquest and by the 9th century, 3 of the 4 main Anglo-Saxon kingdoms were under Viking rule. The Kingdom of Wessex remained under Anglo-Saxon rule and, under the leadership of King Alfred the Great then other kings including Athelstan, they fought the Vikings and took land back.

Eventually, Athelstan was crowned King of all of England. Peace didn't last though, and there were further Viking raids and invasions. When King Edward the Confessor died in 1066 there was a struggle for the throne between his son, the Anglo-Saxon king Harold Godwinson, Harald Hardrada, the Viking king of Norway, and William, Duke of Normandy. Harold defeated Harald Hardrada at the Battle of Stamford Bridge then went to fight William of Normandy at the Battle of Hastings. William won that battle and became known as William the Conqueror. He became king of England and the Anglo-Saxon period was over.



Beliefs

Some Celts had been Christian during Roman times but the Anglo-Saxons brought their own beliefs to Britain. They were pagans. They worshipped different gods at festivals and believed in good and bad omens, lucky charms and magic spells. During Anglo-Saxon times, monks came from Rome (which had been Christian since the 4th century) to persuade the Anglo-Saxon kings to convert to Christianity. St Augustine was a famous monk who arrived in Canterbury from Rome and helped spread the religion. It is thought he started in Kent as the King there (King Ethelbert) was powerful had a Christian wife from France, so they thought he would be more interested in Christianity than other Kings. He did convert to Christianity eventually but it was several hundred years until Christianity became the main religion of England.

Pope Gregory sending St Augustine to convert the people of England to Christianity (from an 11th-century manuscript)



Artefacts

The Sutton Hoo Helmet is the most famous artefact from Anglo-Saxon Britain. There is a burial site at Sutton Hoo where, because of the valuable artefacts found there, historians believe a king was buried. This further supports the notion of burial rituals and the contrasting pagan and Christian rituals and beliefs. As well as the helmet, archaeologists found weapons, gold, jewellery and a ship! Lots of our knowledge about the Anglo-Saxons comes from this site. Before this site was found, people often thought of this time as being quite limited, with little culture, particularly when compared to the Romans. However, this site included beautifully made objects from all over the World, showing people were skilled and that they must have travelled so that they could trade.



The Sutton Hoo helmet was put together from hundreds of small, rusted pieces. It had shattered when, at some point in the past, the earth mound above the burial site collapsed.



Archaeologists dig around the imprint of the ship at Sutton Hoo (1939)

Society

Villages were usually near to forests so wood was easy to collect for building and making fires. They would also usually be near a stream or river for water. They were usually quite small, with only a few hundred people. They had high walls around them.



The Thane (village leader) followed orders from the King, and the villagers had to follow the orders of the Thane. The Anglo-Saxons had armies, but the soldiers didn't stay together when they weren't fighting – they went back to their normal lives as soon as they could. The normal people in each village had to fight for the Thane if he commanded them to, known as a fyrd.

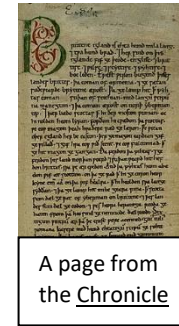
The villagers' houses were made of wood with thatched roofs. They usually had one room where everyone cooked, ate and slept.

People were mostly farmers, or had a trade like being a blacksmith, weaver, jeweller or leather worker.

Wergild (also known as man price or blood money) was a code where a monetary value was established for a person's life, paid as a fine or compensation to the person's family if that person is killed or injured by another.

Artefacts

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle was started in the late 9th century, probably in Wessex, during the reign of Alfred the Great. It recorded historical events (as far back as when Julius Caesar tried to invade Britain) as well as things happening at the time. Copies of the original were sent to different monasteries around the country, and they were carried on by different authors. Therefore, different versions of history are recorded and can be compared today. Only 9 copies remain, and some of them are just fragments, but they are the most important source of history from the time the Romans left to when the Normans invaded. They are also important for seeing the development of the English language. The chronicle that continued for the longest was a version kept in Peterborough and this is one of the only documents in English from its time, and shows how the language changed over time, as it was written in Old English, gradually becoming more like the English language we use today.



Culture and Pastimes

The Anglo-Saxons wrote some of England's earliest works of literature, including the epic poem Beowulf. Beowulf is an adventure story about monsters, dragons, good and evil. It also gives examples of values that were probably important to the Anglo-Saxons: truth, bravery, loyalty and perseverance.

Vocabulary

Angles	Germanic tribe who originated from present-day Germany.	monk	A man who lives under religious vows such as obedience.
conquered	To take over land from other people.	monasteries	The place where <u>monks</u> live.
Chronicle	A factual and historical account that is written down.	pagan	A person who worships more than one God or Goddess.
conversion	The act of changing someone's religious beliefs.	Saxons	Germanic tribe who originated from present-day northern Germany.
Heptarchy	An area governed by seven rulers.	Thane	Village leader.
Jutes	Germanic tribe who originated from present-day Denmark.	wergild	A fine or compensation paid for a person's life to their family, should they die or are injured.