



KS2 History Lesson Plan: The Viking and Anglo-Saxon Struggle for the Kingdom of England to the Time of Edward the Confessor

Lesson title	KS2 History Lesson Plan: The Viking and Anglo-Saxon Struggle for the Kingdom of England to the Time of Edward the Confessor
Subject	History
Year group	KS2 (Year 4/5 or 5/6)
Duration	60 minutes
Topic	The Viking and Anglo-Saxon struggle for the Kingdom of England
Focus	Raids, invasions, resistance, laws and Edward the Confessor

Learning objectives

By the end of the lesson, pupils will:

- Place key events from the Viking and Anglo-Saxon struggle on a timeline up to 1066.
- Describe who the Vikings and Anglo-Saxons were and why they fought over England.

- Explain, in simple terms, how kings like Alfred the Great, Athelstan and Edward the Confessor shaped England.
 - Use appropriate historical terms (e.g. raid, invasion, Danegeld, kingdom, law, justice, succession).
 - Ask and answer historically valid questions about cause, change, similarity/difference and significance.
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Key vocabulary

Viking, Anglo-Saxon, raid, invasion, longship, Danegeld, kingdom, Alfred the Great, Athelstan, Edward the Confessor, law, justice, wergild, succession, 1066

Resources

Resources needed

- Timeline showing key dates (early Viking raids, Alfred, Athelstan, further invasions, Edward the Confessor, 1066)
- Map of Britain showing Viking and Anglo-Saxon areas
- Short texts or story summaries about: Viking raids, Alfred the Great, Athelstan, Danegeld, Anglo-Saxon laws, Edward the Confessor
- Image/fact cards (longships, shields, coins, law codes, churches)
- Large paper for group work, pens, pencils, glue

Lesson procedure

Time	Activity	Description	Materials
10 minutes	Starter Activity	• Show an image of a Viking longship approaching a coast. • Ask: “What do you think is happening? How might people living here feel?” • Introduce the idea of Viking raids and the struggle for control of England.	Image/fact cards (longships, shields, coins, law codes, churches)
10–15 minutes	Main Teaching Input	• Give a brief narrative overview: • Early Viking raids and invasions. • Resistance by Alfred the Great and the creation of a more united kingdom. • Athelstan as the first king of (almost all) England. • Further Viking invasions and the use of Danegeld. • Anglo-Saxon laws and justice (e.g. wergild, local courts). • Edward the Confessor and the question of	Timeline showing key dates (early Viking raids, Alfred, Athelstan, further invasions, Edward the Confessor, 1066) Map of Britain showing Viking and Anglo-Saxon areas

		who should rule after his death in 1066. • Place these events on a class timeline and highlight key turning points. • Model using cause and consequence language (e.g. “Because the Vikings raided... the king decided to...”).	
25–30 minutes	Pupil Activities	Activity 1: Timeline and Story Strip • In pairs, pupils arrange event cards (raids, Alfred, Athelstan, Danegeld, Edward, 1066) in order. • They create a simple “story strip” with one sentence and a small drawing for each event. Activity 2: Laws, Raids and Rule • In small groups, pupils sort picture/fact cards into three headings: “Raids and Invasions”, “Kings and Resistance”,	Timeline showing key dates (early Viking raids, Alfred, Athelstan, further invasions, Edward the Confessor, 1066) Image/fact cards (longships, shields, coins, law codes, churches) Large paper for group work, pens, pencils, glue

		“Laws and Everyday Life”. Each group chooses one card from each heading and explains how it shows the struggle for England	
During pupil activities	Challenge	Higher-attaining pupils write a short paragraph answering a question such as “Why was Alfred called ‘the Great’?” or “How did Viking raids change the way England was ruled?” using historical terms.	Large paper for group work, pens, pencils
5–10 minutes	Plenary	- Groups share one event they think was especially important and explain why. - Revisit the timeline and ask: “What patterns or trends can we see over time?” (e.g. from raids to more organised kingdoms and laws). - Briefly link Edward the Confessor’s death in 1066	Class timeline

		to later events (without going into full detail of the Norman Conquest unless planned)	
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Homework

- Homework task: pupils design a “news report” headline and picture from one moment in the struggle (e.g. a Viking raid, Alfred’s victory, payment of Danegeld, Edward’s death).
- They write a few sentences describing what happened and why it mattered.

Assessment notes

- Look for pupils placing key events in roughly correct chronological order.
- Check use of historical terms and ability to describe key features of the struggle.
- Note who can explain at least one cause, one change and one reason why this period is significant for England.

Teacher notes

Before the lesson: _____

After the lesson: _____
