

Vikings: Raiders, Traders, and Settlers

Learning objective: To analyse the impact of Viking settlements in Britain and understand the reasons behind their transition from raiders to farmers.

Read each question carefully and use your knowledge of the Viking Age to provide detailed answers. Ellie the elephant is ready to help you recall historical facts!

In the late 8th century, Norse explorers began arriving on British shores. Whilst they are often remembered for their swift raids on coastal monasteries, many Vikings chose to remain in Britain, establishing farms and creating thriving trade networks. This period of history saw a significant shift in how people lived, worked, and governed in the Danelaw regions.

Word bank: Longship · Danelaw · Lindisfarne · Settlement · Norse · Raider · Trade · Longhouse

1. Explain why the Viking longship was such a vital piece of technology for their success in both raiding and exploring new territories. (2 marks)

2. Compare and contrast the Viking way of life as 'raiders' versus their way of life as 'settlers'. What skills would a Viking farmer need that a raider might not? (3 marks)

3. The Danelaw was a specific area in England where Viking laws were followed. Justify why the English King Alfred the Great might have agreed to this arrangement rather than continuing to fight. (3 marks)

4. What might happen to the culture of Britain if the Vikings had never settled and instead only visited for short raids? Give two examples. (2 marks)

5. Look at the word 'Danelaw'. Based on your historical knowledge, explain the significance of this geographical area to the development of early English society. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a cross-section of a Viking longhouse. Include details such as the central hearth, the wooden walls, and the animal living quarters to show how a Viking family lived.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are a Viking settler writing a letter home to Scandinavia. Describe your new life in Britain. Compare the climate, the crops you are growing, and the people you have met. Use at least four words from the word bank in your letter.