

Voyages of the North: Exploring the Viking Age

Learning objective: To understand the origins, lifestyle, and impact of the Vikings in Britain.

Read the passage below carefully. Use your best handwriting and full sentences to answer the questions. Think carefully about the evidence provided in the text.

During the late 8th century, brave explorers known as Vikings set sail from Scandinavia in their distinctive longships. These expertly crafted vessels were designed with a shallow hull, allowing them to travel across choppy seas and navigate narrow rivers with ease. When the Vikings arrived in Britain, they were not solely raiders; many were skilled farmers and talented craftspeople who sought fertile land to call home.

Ellie the elephant, who loves uncovering the secrets of history, explains that Vikings had a rich culture full of epic sagas and intricate metalwork. They lived in longhouses, which were large, rectangular wooden buildings, often shared with their livestock during the harsh winter months. While they are often remembered for their fierce reputation, the Vikings also established important trade networks that connected Britain to far-off lands. Their influence remains woven into our language, place names, and archaeological heritage today, reminding us that they were a complex society of explorers, traders, and settlers.

Word bank: longship · scandinavia · settlement · raid · tradition · navigational

1. Identify two reasons why the design of the Viking longship was considered an advantage for their travels. (2 marks)

2. According to the text, what types of work did Vikings do besides raiding? (2 marks)

3. Why might the Vikings have chosen to keep their livestock inside their longhouses during the winter? (2 marks)

4. The text suggests that the Vikings were 'not solely raiders'. What does this imply about how history sometimes remembers them compared to the reality? (2 marks)

5. Do you think the Vikings had a positive or negative impact on Britain? Justify your answer using evidence from the passage. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a detailed Viking longship on the water. Include a patterned sail and show the carved dragon head on the prow of the ship.



Extension challenge: Compare and contrast the Viking way of life with how people lived in Britain before they arrived. Explain why their navigational skills were so important for their success. What might have happened if the Vikings had never traded with other countries? Justify your ideas.