

Vikings: Raiders, Traders, and Settlers

Learning objective: To analyse the impact of Viking raids and settlements in Britain and evaluate the evidence regarding their way of life.

Read each question carefully and use your knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon and Viking age to provide detailed, reasoned answers. Refer to the word bank if you need help with key terminology.

Ellie the elephant has been digging through the archives of history to understand how the Vikings changed Britain. From their first dramatic arrival in 793 AD to the eventual establishment of the Danelaw, the Vikings were not just raiders; they were also farmers, poets, and master shipbuilders who shaped the culture of the British Isles.

Word bank: Longship · Danelaw · Lindisfarne · Longhouse · Monastery · Settlement · Pagan · Invasion

1. Explain why the Vikings targeted monasteries, such as the one at Lindisfarne, during their initial raids on Britain. (2 marks)

2. Compare and contrast the lifestyle of a Viking farmer with that of an Anglo-Saxon farmer. What similarities did they share? (3 marks)

3. Justify your answer: Were the Vikings more significant to British history as destructive raiders or as creative settlers? Give one reason for your choice. (3 marks)

4. What might happen if the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms had successfully united to prevent the Vikings from establishing the Danelaw? (2 marks)

5. Examine the design of a Viking longship. How did its shallow draught (depth in the water) provide a tactical advantage during an invasion? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a cross-section of a Viking longhouse, labelling the central fire pit, the raised sleeping benches, and the area where livestock would be kept during the winter months.



Extension challenge: Write a short diary entry from the perspective of a Viking settler arriving in Britain for the first time. Describe the landscape, your hopes for the future, and the challenges you face in adapting to a new land. Use at least five words from the word bank.