Ellie’s Viking Discovery

Learning objective: To understand who the Vikings were, where they came from, and how they travelled to Britain.

Read the text carefully and answer the questions below. Think about why the Vikings were known as skilled explorers.

Ellie the elephant has a wonderful memory for history. She loves to tell stories about the Vikings, who arrived in Britain over one thousand years ago. The Vikings came from Scandinavia, which includes the countries we now call Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. They were famous for being brilliant shipbuilders and brave sailors. To travel across the choppy North Sea, they built longships. These ships were clever because they were long, narrow, and had a shallow base, which meant they could sail across the deep ocean and also up shallow rivers to reach inland villages.

At first, the Vikings were known as raiders, but many eventually stayed to become farmers and traders. They brought new skills with them, including metalworking and crafting beautiful jewellery. They lived in wooden houses and loved to tell long, exciting stories called sagas around their fires. By learning about the Vikings, we can see that they were more than just warriors; they were explorers who changed the way people lived in Britain forever.

Word bank: Scandinavia · longship · invaders · settlers · navigators · fjord

1. Which three modern-day countries make up the region known as Scandinavia? (2 marks)

2. What were the two main features of a Viking longship that helped them travel up rivers? (2 marks)

3. Why do you think the Vikings had to be skilled sailors to reach Britain? (2 marks)

4. Based on the text, how did the role of the Vikings change after they first arrived in Britain? (2 marks)

5. Do you think the Vikings were more like explorers or warriors? Explain your answer using evidence from the text. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a Viking longship sailing on the sea. Add details like a dragon-shaped prow on the front and a colourful striped sail.

Extension challenge: Research one Viking craft, such as jewellery making or wood carving. Write three sentences explaining why this skill was important to their community.