

History Knowledge Organiser: History skills and Anglo-Saxon England

History skills

Chronology

Chronology is the study of exactly when things happened. When historians put events in **chronological order** they put them in the order that they happened.

Millennium- 1000 years.

Century- a period of 100 years.

Decade- ten years.

BCE (BC)- Before Common Era (before Christ)

CE (AD)- Common Era (Anno Domini)

Finding out which year is in which century can be tricky business. The easiest way to decide is to cover the last two numbers up and add one. For example 1459- 1459 + 1 =15 so the century is the Fifteenth Century.

Using evidence

- Historians use different terms for different types of evidence. These are written evidence for things like newspapers, spoken evidence for things such as interviews and physical evidence for objects.
- Once we know the type of historical evidence we have, we need to decide if it was made at the time of the event and therefore is a primary source; or if it has been made later by people who weren't at the event, making it a secondary source.

When we use sources in history we look at the following:

Content – What is in the source?/ What is it about?

Provenance – this is information about a source that we can learn from the caption that is with a source- its *nature, origins and purpose*.

Nature: type of source and does this affect its utility?

Origin: where and when was it produced, would the person producing it have a one-sided view?

Purpose: reason for it source being created, how reliable is the source?

Context – Linking your own knowledge to details of the source. Does it have any limitations or miss out information? How accurate is the source? (does it match your knowledge. How typical is the source?)

Inference- means 'reading between the lines'- working out things a source suggests without directly saying it.

Anglo-Saxon England

Anglo Saxon society:

- **The King** controlled the country and the groups below him
- **The Earls** led the king's armies and protected his lands. They were normally loyal but could challenge the king to get more power
- **The Thegns** (local lords) were the important warrior class that gathered soldiers during times of war.
- **Ceorls** (free peasants) were not tied to a single lord and so could travel the country and work where their liked
- **Peasant farmers** worked on farms in exchange for living on the land. They could not work elsewhere.
- **Slaves** made up 10 of the population and were seen as property.
- The system was not fixed- it was possible to move up (or down)!

Powers of the monarchy- included law-making, control of money, landownership, taxation and military power.

Duties of the people- obey the law and use the king's coins. Land holders paid taxes and did military service.

Government

The Witan- a council that advised the king, made up of earls and archbishops.

England was divided into **earldoms**. A powerful **Earl** was in charge of each one. Earldoms were divided into **shires**, each had a local government official called a shire reeve or sheriff. **Shires** were divided into **hundreds**. These were divided into units called **hides**.

Each group of 5 hides had to provide 1 man for the **Fyrd** (which was the king's army and fleet).

The succession crisis

Why was there a succession crisis?

- The king, Edward the Confessor, had no children with his wife. This meant that when he died on 5th January 1066, there was a succession Crisis.
- There was no direct heir to the throne
- Several men made a claim to the throne. At least 2 of these said that Edward had promised them the throne.
- The king's council of advisors, the Witan, had to make the decision that it thought was best for England BUT they also thought about how their decision could benefit them.

Who made a claim to the throne?

- Harold Godwinson- he was English, a powerful earl and warrior, his whole family controlled earldoms in England. He claimed Edward himself had chosen him to be king on his death bed.
- Edgar Aethling- was only about 14 and lacked power BUT he was a direct relative of Edward
- Harald Hardrada- a Viking warrior with a fleet of ships and soldiers. His claim was based on a secret deal by Vikings in the past
- William duke of Normandy- a great warrior. Claimed that Edward had chosen him as king AND that Harold Godwinson had promised to support him.

1066

5th January- death of Edward the Confessor

6th January- coronation of Harold Godwinson

8 September- Southern Fyrd disbanded

19th September- Harold hears that Harald Hardrada, king of Norway, had invaded England with Tostig

20th September- Northern Earls defeated at Gate Fulford.

25th September at the Battle of Stamford Bridge Harold Godwinson defeated Hardrada and Tostig

28th September- **William Duke of Normandy** invaded England. A few days later Harold marched south.

14th October- Harold faced William in battle at Hastings on 14th October and was killed.