

HISTORY · Y4-Y6

# The Anglo-Saxons

Knowledge Organiser — KS2 History

## Key vocabulary

1

**Anglo-Saxons**

Tribes from northern Germany and Denmark (Angles, Saxons, Jutes) who settled in Britain after the Romans left, around 410-1066 AD.

2

**Pagan**

Someone who worships many gods. Early Anglo-Saxons were pagan.

3

**Settlement**

A village or community where people live.

4

**Witan**

Group of nobles who advised the Anglo-Saxon king.

5

**Thane**

An Anglo-Saxon nobleman who served the king.

6

**Ceorl (churl)**

A free Anglo-Saxon farmer — most ordinary people were ceorls.

7

**Thrall**

An Anglo-Saxon slave.

8

**Monastery**

A community where monks lived, prayed, and studied.



9

**Bretwalda**

An Anglo-Saxon king who ruled over other kings — like a king of kings.

10

**Hoard**

A collection of valuable objects buried for safekeeping. Many famous Anglo-Saxon hoards have been discovered.

## Anglo-Saxon timeline

Key events

- 410 AD — Romans leave Britain
- 450 AD — Anglo-Saxons start settling in Britain
- 597 AD — Saint Augustine arrives to spread Christianity in southern England
- 625 AD (approx) — King Raedwald buried at Sutton Hoo with treasure
- 664 AD — Synod of Whitby decides English Church will follow Roman Christianity
- 793 AD — Vikings attack Lindisfarne, beginning the Viking Age
- 871 AD — Alfred the Great becomes King of Wessex
- 899 AD — Alfred dies. His descendants eventually unite England.
- 1066 AD — King Harold killed at Battle of Hastings; Normans take over

## Anglo-Saxon kingdoms

Britain divided

- Northumbria — north England (centred on York)
- Mercia — central England
- East Anglia — east England (Norfolk, Suffolk)
- Wessex — south-west England
- Sussex — south England



- Kent — south-east England
- Essex — east of London
- These kingdoms often fought each other. By 9th century, Wessex (under Alfred) became dominant.
- The name 'England' comes from 'Angle-land' — land of the Angles.

## Anglo-Saxon daily life

How most people lived

- Lived in small villages of about 50-100 people, often near rivers
- Houses made of wood with thatched roofs — single room with central fire
- Most people were farmers — grew wheat, barley, oats; kept cows, pigs, chickens
- Made own clothes from wool and linen
- Ate bread, porridge, vegetables, meat from feast days, fish, honey
- Strong family bonds — extended family lived together
- Storytelling was very important — long stories called 'eddas' shared at feasts
- Beowulf — most famous Anglo-Saxon poem, about a hero fighting the monster Grendel
- Children learned by helping parents, not in schools (only monks were educated)
- Skilled crafts: jewellery-making, metalwork, weaving, woodcarving

## Anglo-Saxon figures

People worth remembering

- ALFRED THE GREAT (849-899) — King of Wessex who saved England from total Viking conquest. Encouraged learning and translated books into English.
- BEDE (672-735) — monk and historian who wrote the first history of the English people.
- EDWARD THE CONFESSOR (1003-1066) — pious king who built Westminster Abbey.



- HAROLD GODWINSON (1022-1066) — last Anglo-Saxon king, killed at Battle of Hastings.
- AUGUSTINE (died 604) — monk sent by the Pope to convert England to Christianity.
- AETHELFLAED (870-918) — Alfred's daughter, ruler of Mercia, leader against Vikings.
- RAEDWALD (died around 624) — King of East Anglia, possibly buried at Sutton Hoo.

