

TOPIC PACKS · GRADES 3–6

The Vikings

A cross-curricular themed week

Suggested timetable

Day	Subject	Activity
Monday	History	Who were the Vikings? Daily life, beliefs
Tuesday	Geography	Viking journeys — the surprising places they went
Wednesday	English	Runes — write your name; saga storytelling
Thursday	Design Tech	Design and label a Viking longship
Friday	History	Viking gods and Norse mythology

Day 1 — Who were the Vikings?

Question	Answer
When?	About 793 CE to 1066 CE — the 'Viking Age'
Where from?	Modern-day Norway, Sweden and Denmark
Why did they raid?	Population growth, search for trade, ambition, weather changes
What did they eat?	Fish, meat, oats, vegetables, bread, milk, ale
Did they wear horned helmets?	NO! That's a myth from a 19th-century opera



Question	Answer
Were they all raiders?	No — most were farmers, traders and explorers

Day 2 — Viking journeys

Where	When	What happened
Britain	793 CE	First raid on Lindisfarne monastery
Iceland	874 CE	Settled — descendants still there today
Greenland	986 CE	Erik the Red founded settlements
North America	~1000 CE	Leif Erikson reached Newfoundland — 500 years before Columbus
Russia	9th C.	Founded trading routes — gave Russia its name
Constantinople	9th–11th C.	Travelled all the way to modern-day Istanbul

Day 2 mapping activity

On a world map, children mark all the places Vikings reached. They use coloured pencils to draw routes from Scandinavia outward. The discovery that Vikings reached North America 500 years before Columbus surprises every class. Discuss: Why don't more people know this story?

Day 3 — Runes (45 min)

Vikings wrote in RUNES — straight-line letters carved into wood or stone. There are 16 main runes (the 'Younger Futhark'). DISPLAY a rune chart. Each rune corresponds to a sound. Children: 1. Write their own name in runes 2. Carve a 'rune stone' — write a short message in pencil on a piece of cardboard, then go over the lines pressing hard with a bent paperclip to make grooves 3. Paint over with grey/brown to make it look like stone DISCUSSION: Why are runes mostly straight lines? (Easier to carve into wood and stone than curves.)

Day 4 — Longship design (60 min)



Viking longships were perfect for what they did. They had:

- Long, narrow shape — fast through water
- Shallow bottom — could sail up rivers, even in 1m of water
- Pointed at both ends — could go forwards or backwards quickly
- Sail AND oars — wind power on open sea, oars when rowing upriver
- Carved dragon head — to scare enemies and (some thought) frighten sea spirits
- Round shields along the side — protection AND decoration

Children design and label their own longship, including all features above plus a name and an explanation of where they'd sail it.

Day 5 — Norse gods

<p>Odin</p> <p>The chief god. One eye (he traded the other for wisdom). God of war, knowledge and poetry. Two ravens, Huginn and Muninn, fly the world and report back to him.</p>	<p>Thor</p> <p>God of thunder. Wields the hammer Mjölhnir. Strong, often hot-tempered, but a protector of humans. Thursday is named after him.</p>
<p>Loki</p> <p>The trickster. Sometimes friend of the gods, sometimes their worst enemy. Shape-shifter. Father of strange creatures including a giant wolf and an eight-legged horse.</p>	<p>Freya</p> <p>Goddess of love, beauty and fertility. Also a war goddess — she got first pick of fallen warriors for her hall. Friday is named after her.</p>

Day 5 saga writing

Vikings told long stories called SAGAS around the fire. Each child writes a short saga (one page) involving:

- A hero with a strong personality
- A journey across the sea
- An encounter with a god (Thor, Odin, Loki, Freya)
- A challenge that requires courage
- A clear ending — triumph or tragedy

MODEL OPENING: 'In the days when the long ships still rowed from the fjords, there lived a warrior named...'

