



HANDS ON HISTORY THE NORMANS




THE NORMANS

The Battle of Hastings and the Bayeux Tapestry: Overview

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Symbol key

-  – Teacher guidance: instructions, information and support to help you run your lesson.
-  – Class resources to be handed out to pupils or put on your interactive whiteboard.
-  – Suggested timings for the session. These can be adapted for the age and skills of your class. The ‘Hands on’ activities can be extended into projects.

With thanks to Reading Museum
www.readingmuseum.org.uk





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The Battle of Hastings and the Bayeux Tapestry: Overview

Learning outcomes:

I understand who the Normans (and the Anglo Saxons) were

I know why the Normans invaded the UK

I know what the Bayeux Tapestry is and why it was made

I know what a Norman kite shield is

I have designed my own crest

Curriculum Links

England

History (The Norman Invasion)

Art and Design

English

Design and Technology

Activity

All Activities

All Activities

Introductory Activity/Hands on Activity 1

Hands on Activity 2

Northern Ireland

The World Around Us – History

The Arts

Language and Literacy

The World Around Us - Science and Technology

All Activities

All Activities

Introductory Activity/Hands on Activity 1

Hands on Activity 2

Scotland

Social Studies (The Medieval Wars of Independence)

Expressive Arts

Literacy and English

Social Studies

All Activities

All Activities

Introductory Activity/Hands on Activity 1

Introductory Activity/Hands on Activity 1

Wales

History – History (The Age of Princes)

Art and Design

English and/or Welsh

Design and Technology

All Activities

All Activities

Hands on Activity 1

Hands on Activity 2



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The Battle of Hastings: Background Information

In 1016 Cnut, then a prince of Denmark, invaded England and became its king whilst King Ethelred and his son Edmund Ironside were in dispute. Many English noblemen had allied themselves with Cnut but following the invasion he murdered many of the nobility and members of the Royal Family. Some of Ethelred's younger children, including Edward the Confessor, survived. They fled to Normandy to live with their uncle, Richard II, Duke of Normandy. Cnut gave lands to the English he trusted such as the Godwins. When Cnut's son died, Godwin asked Edward to return as King. However, Edward depended on the power of the Godwins to maintain stability and married Edith Godwin. Harold, son of Godwin (or Godwinson), her brother, became the Earl of Wessex in 1053. He was a brave, handsome warrior and an astute politician.

In 1047 William, Duke of Normandy won the civil war caused by the death of his elder half-brother, Robert. William ruthlessly established a united and efficient state. William visited Edward in England but it is not known if he was offered the throne of England when he was there.

In 1064 Harold Godwinson visited Normandy but historical sources disagree about the reason for his visit; the Normans say he came to offer William the throne whereas Saxon sources suggest he was on his way to France and was shipwrecked. There have also been suggestions he was going to see William to free his brother Wulfnoth who was prisoner in William's court. Whatever the reason, we know he was captured by Count Guy of Ponthieu, handed over to William, taken on a campaign against Brittany and finally swore an oath. The promise agreed in this oath is one of the great historical debates. The Normans said he promised to support William's claim to the English throne and Saxons said he was promising to be William's vassal (supporter) in Normandy.

1066 onwards

In 1066, Edward the Confessor, King of England, died. Harold was asked to be King of England by the Witan (a national council of leading nobles and spiritual leaders). There was no policy of automatic inheritance (primogeniture). The throne was awarded to the person who had enough support to maintain the stability of England. William was furious and prepared to invade from France. Tostig, Harold's brother, with the help of Harald Hardrada, the King of Norway, also prepared to attack England.

On 25 September 1066 Harold defeated Tostig and Hardrada at the Battle of Stamford Bridge, east of York. Two days later William sailed from France. By 12 October Harold was in London gathering new troops. He marched to Hastings on 14 October. The Battle of Hastings took place at Senlac Hill, outside Hastings. As the battle unfolded, Harold appeared to be winning until William's army pretended to retreat and Saxon soldiers charged after them which broke the line. The battle continued into the night but this was a decisive point and ensured William's eventual victory. Harold was killed. On the Bayeux Tapestry some say he is shown with an arrow in the eye, while others believe he is the man being trampled by a horse. How Harold actually died is still disputed by historians.



Norman Knights

The Feudal System, where the King could bestow land and power on knights (and barons) was an extremely important way of strengthening the loyalty of the nobility and ensuring that the King could always raise an army. William could call on about 500 knights after this system was introduced. As a result, the knight was an essential part of Norman society and his training was taken very seriously. Training from a squire to become a knight could take many years. They needed to be highly skilled in weapons and military tactics to ensure that they survived battles as well as defeated the King's enemies.

A knight would go through a knighting ceremony where they would kneel before the King who dubbed them on the shoulder with the flat side of a sword. Once they were knighted they could carry a sword and a kite shield and wear their own armour with their personal coat of arms. They would design the coat of arms following the rules of heraldry and taking part of their designs from that of their parents if they had one.

You can order a free Norman timeline, suitable for your classroom wall, covering the key moments of Norman history (1066–1154) on the Hands on History website (while stocks last). You will also find an original animation of a young Norman boy training to become a knight, suitable for kicking off this lesson: bbc.co.uk/history/handsonhistory



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The Battle of Hastings and the Bayeux Tapestry: Introductory Activity

What's the story?

1. Inform the class that they will be learning about the Norman era and explain that the Normans invaded England in 1066 and won the Battle of Hastings (see Background Information). This session explores what happened in the lead up to the battle.
2. Split the class into 10 small groups of two or three pupils.
3. Assign a section of the Bayeux Tapestry to each group using the links provided on the next page. Give each group a printed version of their section of the tapestry (A-J).
4. Distribute the corresponding 'What's the story?' cards to each group (A-J).
5. Give the groups 15 minutes to look closely at their section of the tapestry and use the cards to understand what is happening in it. Ask them to discuss what they can learn from their source using the questions on their cards.
6. When they have finished their discussion, ask one member of each group to stand at the front of the classroom with their section of the tapestry and report back their findings. This should take around 30 minutes. As each group speaks, display an image of their section on the interactive whiteboard for the whole class to see.
7. Once pupils have given their feedback, the groups must nominate one member of their team to go to the front of the room and hold up their section of the tapestry.
8. The class must now place the slides in chronological order by asking the pupils holding the slides to move their positions until they are in the right place. This will take between 20-30 minutes.
9. When they have agreed an order, check it against the correct order included on the next page and move people around if necessary. Now ask the pupils holding the slides to read out what is happening in order so the events leading up to the battle are told as a story.
10. Finish by summing up the two sides fighting in the Battle of Hastings (Normans and Anglo-Saxons) and what they were fighting to gain.



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The Battle of Hastings and the Bayeux Tapestry: Introductory Activity

What's the story?

Below are links to sections of the Bayeux Tapestry (these are from a full scale replica which you can visit at Reading Museum) to share with each group.

Print out the sections in advance and make a note of the group name on the back of each one, ready to hand out:

Group A www.bayeuxtapestry.org.uk/Bayeux20.htm

Group B www.bayeuxtapestry.org.uk/bayeux22.htm

Group C www.bayeuxtapestry.org.uk/Bayeux13.htm

Group D www.bayeuxtapestry.org.uk/Bayeux6.htm

Group E www.bayeuxtapestry.org.uk/Bayeux11.htm

Group F www.bayeuxtapestry.org.uk/bayeux21.htm

Group G www.bayeuxtapestry.org.uk/Bayeux3.htm

Group H www.bayeuxtapestry.org.uk/Bayeux1.htm

Group I www.bayeuxtapestry.org.uk/Bayeux15.htm

Group J www.bayeuxtapestry.org.uk/Bayeux14.htm

You can hand out the cards in alphabetical order. The correct order to tell the story at the end of your lesson is –

H G D E C J I A F B

What's the story?



Group A: What's the story?

Many Norman ships and soldiers land at Pevensey Bay, Sussex on 28 September 1066. William's soldiers ride towards Hastings to gather food.

Questions:

- What can you learn about William's preparation for battle?
- What can you learn about Harold's defence?



Group B: What's the story?

As they move across Sussex, William's army burns down Saxon homes and many women and children have to flee. The Normans take over Hastings and build a castle which will be their headquarters. A messenger arrives and tells William that Harold has won the Battle of Stamford Bridge (near York), defeating the Danish, and is marching towards Hastings.

Questions:

- What can you learn about William's battle tactics?
- What can you learn about Harold and his army?



Group C: What's the story?

King Edward dies on 5 January 1066. While he is dying in the room on the top floor of the house, his wife and Harold sit with him. Two noblemen offer Harold the royal crown and axe which shows that he will be King. Harold takes them and becomes King of England.

Questions:

- What can you learn about Harold?
- What can you learn about who selects the King in England?



Group D: What's the story?

William discovers that Guy has captured Harold. William orders Guy to bring Harold to him. Harold is then handed over to William. William then takes Harold with him to fight a war in Brittany.

Questions:

- What can you learn about William?
- What can you learn about Harold?



What's the story?



Group E: What's the story?

William and Harold have become friends. Harold is offered William's daughter in marriage and Harold offers his sister for a Norman marriage. William then makes Harold a Norman knight and Harold places his hand on holy objects. He swears a solemn oath to support William.

The Normans thought he promised to support William's claim to the throne while the Saxons thought he promised to support William as Ruler of Normandy.

Questions:

- What can you learn about William?
- What can you learn about Harold?



Group F: What's the story?

A great feast is prepared with the food taken from local people. They cook chickens on spits and a large stew on open fires. Soldiers carry the food to the table on their shields. Before eating, Bishop Odo says grace (a prayer of thanks).

Questions:

- What can you learn about William?
- What can you learn about his soldiers?



Group G: What's the story?

Harold sails across the Channel to visit William, Duke of Normandy. No one is sure why he went.

William and Edward were distant relatives, Edward grew up in Normandy and the Normans had helped him before. It is possible Edward wanted William, who was a great warrior, to be King when he died and Harold went to ask him.

However, the wind blows the ships off course and Harold is captured by fearsome Count Guy of Normandy.

Questions:

- What can you learn about the English King, Edward?
- What can you learn about William, Duke of Normandy?



What's the story?



Group H: What's the story?

Harold Godwinson, the wealthiest and most powerful Lord in England, has a quick conversation with his brother-in-law, King Edward the Confessor, before going hunting with his dogs and hawk on his family's estate at Bosham, Sussex.

Questions:

- What can you learn about King Edward and his family?
- What can you learn about Harold Godwinson?



Group I: What's the story?

Normans living in England sail to Normandy to tell William that Edward has died and that Harold has been crowned King. William is very angry because he feels he should have been asked to be King. He orders warships to be built and his army prepares to attack England.

Questions:

- What can you learn about William's character?
- What can you learn about William's plans for the future?



Group J: What's the story?

Harold is crowned King of England on 6 January 1066, the same day as Edward's funeral. The people cheer him until they see Halley's Comet in the sky. They are terrified because they believe it means evil events will happen in the future. At the bottom of the Tapestry there is a group of ghostly foreign ships – perhaps this shows William's invasion force.

Questions:

- What can you learn about Harold?
- What can you learn about the feelings of the people in England?





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The Battle of Hastings and the Bayeux Tapestry: Hands on Activity 1: Breaking Battle!

1. Explain to the class that they are going to be BBC News teams reporting the Battle of Hastings as the events unfold.
2. Split the class into two groups, the Normans and the Anglo-Saxons. Tell each group who they represent:

The Normans

They are the families of the knights who have travelled to England to fight. Far away in Normandy, they are eager to hear news of their loved ones.

The Anglo-Saxons

They are Anglo-Saxon noble men and women in the north of England. They are worried about the men who are fighting in the south and wondering if the Normans will come north if they win.

3. Discuss how both sides will report the battle in different ways because of their different points of view. This is a bit like two sides at a football match. This should create a debate at various points during the battle as each group create and present their headlines.
4. Hand out the Group Direction cards.
5. The teacher is a messenger who brings news from the battle to the group. Display the 'Breaking News' slides which go through the Battle of Hastings story one by one on the interactive whiteboard and read out to give the impression of breaking news updates.
6. After each slide tell the groups that they have five minutes to prepare a headline to sum up the story from their point of view. This section of the lesson should take around one hour in total. Use the notes on the slides to direct pupils towards points for discussion.
7. Ask each group to read out their headline. They should be quite different as they represent the points of view of opposing sides. Each headline should be read by a different pupil.
8. Once students have seen, and reacted to, all the slides, discuss why they think the Normans won and if they think they behaved honourably or not.
9. Give each group one hour to produce a newspaper article or TV news report based on one or all of the 10 headlines they have written. If you have a very large group, divide them into pairs to work on different headlines.
10. Newspaper reports should include a main headline, interviews with witnesses and a picture. Groups producing a TV news report should select people to play presenter, reporters and witnesses and perform the final report to the class.

Top Tip

Remind the class that the Bayeux Tapestry was a report of the battle from the Norman point of view.



Breaking Battle! – Group Direction Cards

GROUP 1 – The Anglo-Saxons

- You are a BBC production team in the north of England reporting the events of the Battle of Hastings to your Anglo-Saxon viewers.
- After the messenger brings each piece of news into your newsroom, you will only have five minutes to prepare a headline to broadcast.
- At the end you will use all your headlines to produce a newspaper article or a TV news report on the Battle of Hastings.
- Your headline should be short and snappy, and sum up the most important piece of information for your viewers, for example your headline might be “Norman Archers no Match for Harold’s Army”.

GROUP 2 – The Normans

- You are a BBC production team in Normandy reporting the events of the Battle of Hastings to your Norman viewers.
- After the messenger brings each piece of news into your newsroom, you will only have five minutes to prepare a headline to broadcast.
- At the end you will use all your headlines to produce a newspaper article or a TV news report on the Battle of Hastings.
- Your headline should be short and snappy, and sum up the most important piece of information for your viewers, for example your headline might be “Brave Cavalry Break Anglo-Saxon Defences”.

Breaking Battle! – Breaking News Cards



Breaking News 1

- The Anglo-Saxons march 53 miles in three days.
- The Anglo-Saxons stand united on Senlac Ridge.
- Normans prepare to fight at the bottom of the hill.
- Norman soldiers wonder if chain mail will protect them against the Anglo-Saxon axes.



Breaking News 2

- Norman archers advance and fire their arrows into the Anglo-Saxon lines.
- Norman knights start to charge and throw their javelins into Anglo-Saxon lines.
- Norman knights cry "Dex Aie!" – 'God is our help!'.



Breaking News 3

- The Anglo-Saxons drum their shields shouting "Goddemite" – 'God Almighty'.
- Shields are placed in front, above and behind to protect the Anglo-Saxon soldiers from arrows.



Breaking News 4

- William's Norman army is in disarray.
- Horses stumble over infantry.
- There are rumours that William is dead.



Breaking News 5

- Part of the Anglo-Saxon army breaks rank and chases the Normans down the hill.
- Harold seems to have lost control of his Anglo-Saxon army.





Breaking News 6

- It is rumoured William takes off his helmet and stands in front of his troops to prove he is not dead.
- The Normans circle around the Anglo-Saxons rushing down the hill and cut them off.



Breaking News 7

- The Anglo-Saxons fight on.
- The Normans cannot get to the top of the hill and start to retreat.
- The Anglo-Saxon Army run down the hill after them.



Breaking News 8

- The Norman cavalry turn around and charge back into the Anglo-Saxons running after them.
- Many Anglo-Saxons are killed.
- The Normans have moved onto the top of the ridge and are ready to charge the front line.



Breaking News 9

- Harold has been killed.
- There are rumours he was killed by an arrow in the eye.
- His body has not yet been identified.



Breaking News 10

- The Battle is over - William is victorious.
- All the Anglo-Saxon leaders are dead.
- The Norman dead are to be buried.
- The Anglo-Saxon dead are to be left for their families to find and bury.



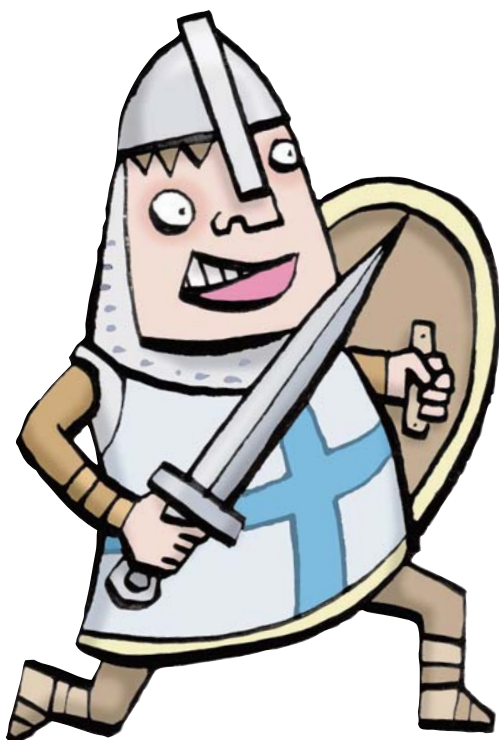


THE NORMANS

The Battle of Hastings and the Bayeux Tapestry: Hands on Activity 2: Make a Shield

Directions

1. Look at the knights on the Bayeux Tapestry and discuss how important they were to the battle.
2. Explain that a knight would take part in a ceremony to be knighted by the king once they had been trained – they could then pick a coat of arms and colours and would receive their armour and a shield (see Teacher Background Information for more guidance).
3. Hand out worksheet 'Make a Shield' and a template for them to use to plan their design.
4. Put the 'Shield Symbols' worksheet on the interactive whiteboard or hand out copies to the class for inspiration.
5. Supervise the group as they make and decorate their shield.
6. Once complete, line up the shields at one end of the classroom. Get the class to stand back and look at the shields from a distance – just as the enemy would have seen them.





Shield Symbols



Lion = you have courage and bravery



The Crescent = the King likes you and/or you hope for greater glory in the future



Martlet = you work hard and use your intelligence to make money



Fleur-de-lis = purity



A star (the Estoile) = the goodness of God and that you behave in a noble manner



A ring = you are faithful and always do your duty



A rose = hope (but if red it means grace and beauty and if white it means love and faith)



Cross Moline = you have faced a great event in your life



= you live near the sea or water



= you live in a town with a castle and/or fortifications



= you are experienced and have overcome problems

Colours

Gold (Or) = generous

Silver or White (Argent) = peaceful and honest

Red (Gules) = warrior-like

Blue (Azure) = truthful and loyal to King and country

Green (Vert) = hope, joy, and loyal to your wife/husband

Black (Sable) = doesn't keep changing their mind, or grief

Maroon (Sanguine or Murray) = patient and doesn't rush into fights, yet will win in the end

Purple (Purpure) = has royal connections and treats others fairly

Orange (Tawny or Tenne) = ambitious



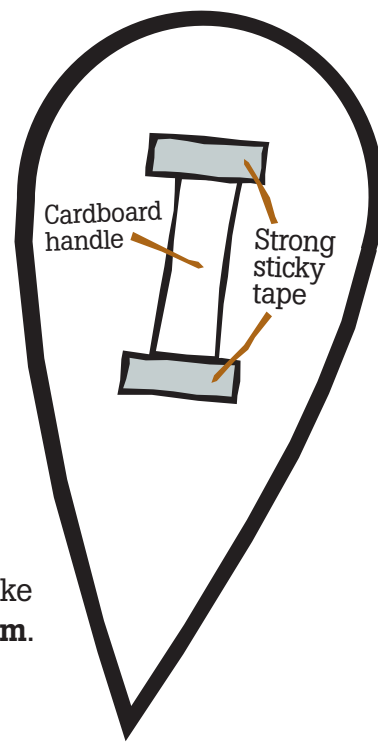
MAKE A SHIELD

You will need:

- A simple, bright coloured pattern using the symbols on the Shield Symbols sheet'
- Strong sticky tape
- Scissors
- Coloured crayons, felt tip pens or paints

Make your shield

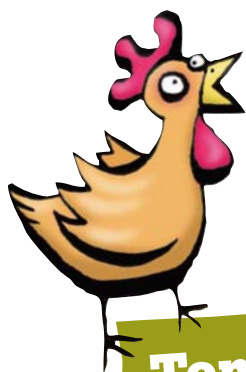
- On your large piece of card, draw out a Norman Kite shield - shaped like a teardrop. You can use our shield template to create your design.
- Make a handle by cutting a strip of card and attaching it to the back of your shield with strong sticky tape. Make sure it's big enough to fit your arm through. **See diagram.**
- Paint the front of your shield with your own bold, clear design. It could be:
 - A simple, bright-coloured pattern, like a large cross
 - A monster to frighten your enemies! Many Normans painted a dragon on their shields
 - A picture of your castle – you are defending it after all
 - An image or crest to represent your family



Creating a family crest

Some Norman shields were decorated with images of themselves or their 'tribe'; you can do the same to represent your family.

- Divide the front of your shield into four sections with paint.
- Choose four images that represent things that are important to your family – you may want to include a pet, your family name, an image of your house or something to represent your favourite hobbies (like football or reading).
- Draw one item in each of the four sections, first in pencil, then with paints.



Template

Plan the design for your shield



THE NORMANS

The Battle of Hastings and the Bayeux Tapestry: Evaluation

As a class, discuss the points below:

- Why did the Normans invade England?
- Why is the Bayeux Tapestry a useful historical source?
- Why do Saxon and Norman descriptions of the Battle of Hastings differ?
- What was a Norman shield and how was it decorated?
- What are the 10 most important things everyone should remember about the Battle of Hastings?

You can make the final list of 10 things everyone should remember as a class and put them on the whiteboard.