

# Year 4: Spring 1: Anglo Saxons

## Who were the Anglo Saxons and how do we know what was important to them?

National Curriculum subject content:

**Pupils should be taught about Britain's settlement by Anglo Saxons and Scots.**

Key skills covered:

Chronology, Characteristic features, Historical significance, Historical interpretation, Historical enquiry.

### Timeline of events:

**350 CE:** Some arrivals from North Europe arrive on English shores but were beaten back by the Romans.

**410 CE:** The Romans left Britain. Italy was being attacked by the Barbarians and the Visigoths were one group of them.

**450 CE:** Saxons from Germany arrive in Kent.

**516 CE:** The Battle of Badon

**570 CE:** The Heptarchy (the seven kingdoms of Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Essex, Sussex, Wessex and Kent) emerge in England.

**596 CE:** St Augustine brings Christianity to England from Rome.

**664 CE:** Synod (Council of the Church) of Whitby held.

**731 CE:** Bede completes ecclesiastical history.

**757 CE:** Offa becomes king of Mercia and arguably first king of all England .

**789 CE:** First recorded Viking attack (Dorset) 793 CE Viking attack on Lindisfarne.

**842 CE:** Viking raids on London.

**865 CE:** Great Heathen Army invade

**878 CE:** Battle of Edington

**927 CE:** Athelstan unites English kingdoms.

**950 CE:** Vikings from Ireland & Isle of Man raid the west coast of Wales

**991 CE:** Battle of Maldon leads to the first payments of Danegeld

**994 CE:** Danish attack on London fails.

**1000 CE:** Vikings reach Newfoundland.

**1013 CE:** King Sven of Sweden lands and becomes King of England.

**1016 CE:** King Cnut becomes King of England.

**1042 CE:** Saxon Edward the Confessor returns to become King of England.

**1066 CE:** Edward the Confessor dies, leading to several contenders claiming the throne. Harold Godwinsson becomes King, but is killed by William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings.

### Key vocabulary:

**Primary evidence:** Evidence that was created at the time, e.g. diaries, letters, artefacts.

**Secondary evidence** – historical evidence that is not created at the time but may be based on things that were, e.g. books, paintings.

**Picts** – People who lived in Scotland during Roman times.

**Barbarians** – The Romans described everyone living outside of the Roman Empire as Barbarians.

**Visigoths** – One of the Barbarian groups who lived in areas that today form part of modern day Germany.

**Vandals, Huns and Franks** – all Barbarian groups

**Synod** – A Council for the Church.

**Converted** – When a person decides to adopt a new set of beliefs from another religion.

**Pagan** – A person whose beliefs are different to the world's main religions.

### Things found by archaeologists when excavating a mound at a place called Sutton Hoo in Suffolk (1939).



A warrior battle shield



Five spears



A gold belt buckle

## Where did the Anglo Saxons come from?

When the Romans left Britain, it became a lot weaker and vulnerable to attack. Tribes called Angles, Saxons and Jutes began to invade from Northern Europe. The largest of these tribes were the Angles and Saxons so they became known as the Anglo-Saxons. They originated from lands that now form part of Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany. Many of the Anglo Saxons came to Britain seeking land to farm, having previously lived in frequently flooded areas of Northern Europe. Most of them came after the departure of the Romans. They did not choose to live in the towns the Romans had designed. Instead, they choose to construct their own settlements.

## Anglo Saxon Homes?

Anglo Saxon farmers grouped their homes into villages. Inside their houses was a single room containing simple wooden furniture such as, beds, stools and benches. There were boxes to store things in and valuable items were kept in chests with locks. A reconstructed Anglo Saxon village.



### Kings

King Alfred the Great  
AD 871-899

King Athelstan  
AD 924-939

Edward the Confessor  
AD 1042-1066

Goodwin of Wessex  
Tried to defeat Edward  
between AD 1050 - 1052

Harold II  
AD 1066

### Gods

Wodin – chief God

Frigg – The wife of  
Wodin, Goddess of  
childbirth

Saxnot – God of Family

Wade – God of the Sea

Tir – God of War

Thor – God of Thunder

## Significant women from the Anglo Saxon period

**Hilda of Whitby** (Christian saint and founder of the monastery at Whitby). She started life as a Pagan princess. Eventually her family were baptised as Christians (Celtic Christianity). She was then taken to Kent and became a nun. She then moved back to Northumberland and opened monasteries, was a teacher and a counsellor.

**Emma** was born in Normandy and sent to marry Ethelred. This marriage was made to link Normandy and Anglo Saxon England.

**Wyntflaed** (d. ca 950/960) was an Anglo-Saxon noblewoman, a major landowner in the areas of Hampshire, Somerset, Dorset and Wiltshire.

## Religion

The Anglo Saxons were superstitious people. They came with a religion that believed in many gods. They were called Pagans because their beliefs were not those of the main world religions at the time. In 596, Augustus arrived in Britain sent from Pope Gregory the Great to convert Ethelbert to Christianity. This changed the way of life of the Anglo Saxons.



