

Anglo Saxon and Norman England 1a knowledge organiser: Key question: What was Anglo-Saxon England like?

Lesson 1: What were the key features of Anglo Saxon Society?

Key words for this lesson:

Anglo-Saxon: People who settled in England after the Romans left
Aristocracy: Powerful and wealthy people that are seen as important.

Hides: The measurement used for land in Anglo-Saxon/ Norman times

Ceorls: 'Free' peasant farmers not tied to the land

Core knowledge: 10% of the Anglo-Saxon population were slaves. Most of the rest of the population were peasant farmers. Some peasant farmers were 'ceorls' who were free and not tied to the land. Thegns were local lords who held more land than peasants. The social system was flexible. Slaves could be freed and become peasants. The highest part of society was the aristocracy and the most powerful people in the aristocracy were earls. The king needed loyalty from the earls and gained it by giving earls land.

Lesson 2: What were the roles of the King and Witan in Anglo-Saxon England?

Key words for this lesson:

Oath: A solemn promise

Embassy: The official visit by representatives of one ruler to another ruler

Dane Law: Danish laws were kept in parts of the country

Anointed: Sacred ceremony placing oil on someone's head.

Core knowledge: The King made laws and expected everyone to obey them. He could raise the fyrd army, controlled the production of coins and decided on taxes. He granted land to earls in exchange for loyalty. People believed King Edward the Confessor was chosen by God to be their king. The king was given advice by a council called the Witan, however he did not have to listen to it.

Lesson 3: What power did the Earls and local government have?

Key words for this lesson:

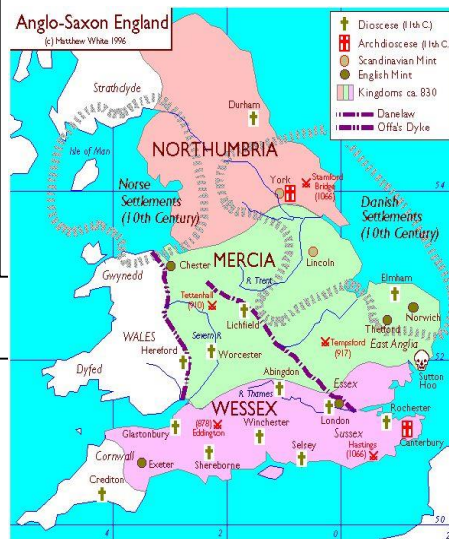
Housecarls: Highly trained troops that stayed with their lord wherever they went.

Fyrd: The men of the Anglo-Saxon army.

Tithings: A group of ten households

Core knowledge: England was divided into the 4 earldoms and the most important family in the earldom would be earl. Earls would collect taxes, make sure the earldom was defended/ run well, oversee justice and legal punishments. They were the lords of hundreds of thegns and housecarls so were like military leaders. The shire reeves were sheriffs who collected taxes and

fines, enforced the law at the shire court, provided men for the fyrd and maintained roads. A burh was a town with strong walls.



Lesson 4: The Anglo-Saxon legal system, economy and the influence of the church.

Key words for this lesson:

Blood feuds: A revenge system. If one family member was murdered, they would get revenge on the other family by killing someone from their family.

Hue and cry: All members of a tithing would hunt a criminal when a crime was committed

Wergild: Rather than murder in revenge, families would be paid compensation.

Core knowledge: The legal system included collective responsibility. This meant if one member of the tithing refused to perform their military service in the the Fyrd, the whole tithing would be punished. There were 6,000 mills for grinding flour. The tax system boosted the economy for the king. Towns were trading hubs and grew based on their trading links. For example, York was a center of trade with Denmark. Villages saw lots of families living in thatched houses together. The church was organised into areas controlled by a rich and powerful man called a bishop. Religion was strongly believed in at this time as people worried about what would happen to them when they died.

Lesson 5: The house of Godwin

Key words for this lesson:

The house of Godwin: The Godwin family

Sub regulus: Deputy King.

Normandy: A part of France today, which was an independent dukedom

Core knowledge: When Godwin died in 1053 many earls jostled for position but the Godwins built up their control with Godwin's daughter Edith marrying Edward the Confessor, Harold Godwinson becoming Earl of Wessex and Tostig becoming Earl of Northumbria. Harold and Tostig helped Edward defeat the Welsh king Llewelyn. Although the Godwin family were powerful in the time of Edward, he was worried that they had become too powerful.