

**Title: Anglo-Saxons**

A team of history researchers are commissioned by the BBC to do the background research for a series of programmes called 'The Really Interesting History of Britain'.

They visit an Anglo-Saxon excavation site and discover ancient artefacts - uncovered by the archeologists working there - tell amazing stories of the people who once built, lived and died in the village. They learn the villagers were part of a civilisation which was displaced from their homeland, settled in Britain, and created a culture which thrived for over 500 years before being destroyed by defeat at the battle of Hastings.

**Context**

This unit begins with the children looking at the noticeboard of a team of successful and busy history researchers. The associated inquiry introduces the students to the work of the team and creates an opportunity for them to 'step into' the fiction. The first task for the children is to create the meeting room for the history team from the furniture of the classroom. The second (as the experts) is to give feedback to the BBC for their newly commissioned series 'The Really Interesting History of Britain.'

They then visit a local Anglo-Saxon excavation site and talk to the archaeologists with the aim of deciding if the site would make an interesting location for filming. To begin with the site doesn't look promising, however once the team start looking a bit more closely at the background to the artefacts they realise that even the most mundane objects can tell amazing stories.

The found objects in this unit operate as 'bridges' into the past. Creating opportunities for the children to engage in learning and experiences both from the points of view of the history research team and the Anglo-Saxon people who lived in the settlement.

This unit works across the curriculum, creating opportunities for students to:

- apply their imagination, reasoning and inquiry skills
- acquire and apply history skills and develop knowledge and understanding.
- develop knowledge, skills and understanding in areas of history, geography, science, art and design, design technology, music, and ICT as well as skills in English and maths.

### Overview

**Author:** Tim Taylor

**Theme:** The Anglo-Saxons

**Age Range:** KS2

**Main Curriculum Focus:** History

**Inquiry Question:** What was effects did the invasion and settlement of the Anglo-Saxon people have on the culture and history of England?

**Expert Team:** History researchers

**Client:** BBC

**Commission:** to do the background research for a series of programmes called 'The Really Interesting History of Britain'.

### Inquiry Questions

The following inquiry questions are just a sample of the lines of inquiry the students might explore during this unit. They are not meant to be exhaustive or prescriptive. They are meant to be for your planning purposes only and not necessarily for the students in their current form.

#### **Historical**

- Why did the Anglo-Saxons come to Britain?
- What is left for historians to study?
- What effects did the Anglo-Saxons have on English history?
- What effects did the Viking invasions have on life in Anglo-Saxon England?

- How did monarchy and kingship change during Anglo-Saxon times?
- What roles did women play in Anglo-Saxon society and its history?

### **Political**

- Why did the rules of succession become so important during Anglo-Saxon history?
- How did Anglo-Saxon kings (and warlords) establish their authority?

### **Religious**

- What pagan gods did the Anglo-Saxons worship?
- How did christianity become the Anglo-Saxon religion?
- How did the Anglo-Saxon's worship before and after the conversion?
- What was life like in an Anglo-Saxon monastery?

### **Social**

- What was an Anglo-Saxon settlement like?
- What was life like in an Anglo-Saxon settlement?
- How did they change in response to the Viking invasions and the conversion to christianity?
- How did the Anglo-Saxons protect themselves?

### **Cultural**

- What was Anglo-Saxon literature, art and design like?
- How did the conversion affect Anglo-Saxon culture?
- How did the monasteries and the work of its monks affect Anglo-Saxon culture during the 'golden age' and its restoration after the Viking invasions.
- How did the kings of Wessex (beginning with Alfred) help develop Anglo-Saxon culture and the creation of the 'English'?

### **Environmental**

- How was the landscape and the environment affected by the decline of the Romans and the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons?
- What geographical features did the Anglo-Saxon's look for when establishing a settlement?

### **Ethical**

- How much responsibility do we have to tell the truth about the past?

### **Philosophical**

- Is historical reconstruction a valid part of historical research or just guess work?

### **Planning Notes**

- Thoughts on options
- Historical context - moving forward & backward in time
- Keep asking the question: what's going to grab the children and give them an authentic understanding of the topic
- Spend sometime getting to know the subject - the more you research the more options you have

### **Main Curriculum areas:**

This unit can be used as a 'depth study' for curriculum 2014 for both Anglo-Saxon units and (if appropriate) for the local History Study Unit.

#### **Britain's settlement by Anglo-Saxons and Scots This could include:**

- Roman withdrawal from Britain in c. AD 410 and the fall of the western Roman Empire
- Scots invasions from Ireland to north Britain (now Scotland)
- Anglo-Saxon invasions, settlements and kingdoms: place names and village life
- Anglo-Saxon art and culture
- Christian conversion – Canterbury, Iona and Lindisfarne

#### **Viking and Anglo-Saxon struggle for the Kingdom of England to the time of Edward the Confessor**

This could include:

- Viking raids and invasion

- resistance by Alfred the Great and Athelstan, first king of England - further Viking invasions and Danegeld
- Anglo-Saxon laws and justice
- Edward the Confessor and his death in 1066

**A local history study For example:**

- a depth study linked to one of the British areas of study listed below
- a study over time tracing how several aspects national history are reflected in the locality (this can go beyond 1066)
- a study of an aspect of history or a site dating from a period beyond 1066 that is significant in the locality.

**Programmes of study:**

- Develop a chronologically secure knowledge and understanding
- Develop the appropriate use of historical terms
- Know and understand significant aspects of history: nature of ancient civilisations; expansion & dissolution empires; characteristic features of past non-European societies; achievements & follies of mankind
- Gain historical perspective by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts
- Ask questions about change, cause, similarity and difference, and significance
- Note connections, contrasts and trends over time
- Establishing clear narratives within and across periods of study
- Understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources and that different versions of past events may exist, giving some reasons for this.
- Understand the methods of historical enquiry, how evidence is used to make historical claims, & discern how & why contrasting arguments & interpretations of the past have been constructed
- Regularly address and sometimes devise historically valid questions
- Construct informed responses that involve thoughtful selection and organisation of relevant historical information
- Make connections, draw contrasts, analyse trends, frame historically-valid questions and create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analyses

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**Resources for steps in**

(See Resources page: <http://www.imaginative-inquiry.co.uk/2012/12/anglo-saxons/>)

1. Resources for team noticeboard
2. BBC commission letter
3. BBC Information sheets for different episodes
4. Map of the archeology site
5. Archeologist's notes
6. Archeology slide-show
7. (Optional) a collection of ropes, tape, trowels and other tools used by the archeology team
8. Mind map

**Further Steps and Activities**

After this point, where the context is now firmly established it becomes increasingly difficult to suggested detailed planning routes for further activities. Much of what happens from now on depends on the class and how they respond to the different tasks they have engaged in so far. For example, in researching this unit we started the planning steps with three parallel year 4 classes. They all completed the nine steps detailed above but then went in three different directions. The first class were really interested in the Battle of Hastings and the aftermath. The second were fascinated by the skeletons in the archeologist slideshow who appeared to be embracing. The third wanted to stay at the dig and explore the different objects discovered by the archeologists. You may find your own class take a different route. If possible try and follow their interests and plan activities that create opportunities for extending their knowledge and understanding.

Below are outlines of the activities followed by the three classes mentioned above, I have not written them up in the same detail as the previous nine steps but they will give you a general summary of where each class went.

These summaries are then followed by a further 'bridging' activity which you will want to use at some point after establishing the context and following the activities created by the children's interests. The bridging activity involves the class in creating a model of the Anglo-Saxon settlement discovered by the archeologists. The settlement is essential to the development of the context beyond the BBC research team and the Battle of Hastings and will create further learning opportunities for the children to explore the arrival of the Anglo-Saxon people, their effect on English culture and society and how life changed and developed over 500 years ending with the Norman invasions.

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## **Further Activities**

### **The Battle of Hasting**

[Resource: [BBC Information sheet Anglo-Saxon episode on whiteboard](#)]

#### **Sequence 1: The Battle of Hastings**

The purpose of the following activities is to explore what happened at the battle. Both on the battlefield itself and in the Anglo-Saxon encampment. And then to explore some of the repercussions of the battle, especially for Harold's wife.

As a matter of note, not all the children were interested in the 'blood and guts' and so I was careful to include tasks that would engage those children as well as the ones that were.

#### **Step 1: Looking at the battle scene painting**

Using the whiteboard the class examined the painting of the battle as used in the BBC programme information sheet [Episode 2 - The Anglo-Saxons]. I followed the same planning steps as used in the "Roman Box" context [\[Ref\]](#)

Here's a summary:

**(I-Describing)** Project the painting onto the white-screen

*"I'd like to show you a painting. It's quite an old painting, but not as old as the events it portrays. When you look at it could I ask you first just to say what you notice."*

The students might start to interpret the meaning of the painting or try guessing what is happening. For the moment ask them to just to describe what they can see as accurately as possible. Sometimes this can take a little while, but it is an important step.

*"Hold on to those thoughts for just a moment, we will be coming back to them very quickly, but just for now can you say only what you can see."*

As the students work help them to use precise language, as if they were describing the events in a book, without the reader seeing the painting.

Once you feel everything in the painting has been described (and before it becomes boring) move onto to the next mini-step.

**(II - Interpreting)**

*"In art nothing is included by accident. This is not a photograph of the event, but a painting, painted hundreds of years later. The artist has thought carefully about every tiny detail and what it might mean to a person looking at it."*

As the students work through this process they might share some of their own knowledge. For the time being try not to do too much of the work for them and to keep back your own knowledge; let them speculate for the time being. It will be a good opportunity for you to find out what they know, as a group, already. Ask questions that help them dig a bit deeper and make connections. Keep the language speculative...

**(III – Some background information)**

Battle of Hastings - end of the Saxon era - William the Conquer

Before moving onto the next mini-step give the students the opportunity to ask you questions. Be honest about what you don't know and don't make things up. It is important they can use you as an accurate historical source.

**(IV – Consolidating)**

You will need some post-it notes, ideally two different colours.

## Step 2: Creating the Anglo-Saxon camp the day before the battle - Soldiers Training

*“I wonder what the Anglo-Saxon camp was like the day before the battle? Just before Harold arrived with his soldiers having marched directly from the North. I expect there was a lot to organise. The stables for the horses, the kitchens for cooking the food, the medical tent for the sick and wounded. And the armoury for sharpening and repairing the soldiers weapons. If we move the tables and chairs around in our classroom and used our imagination we might be able to recreate what it was like. What do you think? We might need some paper for drawings and possibly some other resources.”*

Give the children support and resources if they need it. Some might have trouble deciding which part of the camp they want to be in. You might find (as I did) that some of the children get very excited and start play fighting. If they do you will need to step in and remind them what the purpose of the activity is. Don't be afraid to take charge, many sessions of this kind have fallen to pieces because the teacher doesn't take a lead.

Its quite natural, particularly if the children are unfamiliar with drama and in an exciting context like this, for the children to misinterpret this activity as play. However, play is the wrong medium and they will need support (and understanding) to refocus the activity as drama.

You can find a good article on this process on the mantle of the expert website by Luke Abbott and Brian Edmiston - “Contexts Between Play, Drama & Learning.” [Ref: <http://www.mantleoftheexpert.com/about-moe/articles/>] & My article from PTU

Basically the shift is from play, through dramatic action, to invested action, by way of the use of the conventions of drama. It sounds more complicated than it is. I'll illustrate by using an example from when I taught this session.

- **Play:** Two boys have made swords out of rulers and are engaging in a mock fight. They are clearly engaged by the context, have made something

which will serve as a sword and have gone straight for the most exciting part of the story, the battle.

This is clearly an example of play. There is little regard for the general narrative or the involvement of others. The action (sword fighting) is playful (happening in real time) and there is no opportunity for interpretation or for making meaning. Its likely others will soon join in and the session will quickly lose coherence and direction.

What is needed is some leadership from the teacher. Without getting angry, feeling disappointed or dismissing the boys' ideas the teacher needs to redirect the boys' energy and excitement into something more controlled and meaningful. He can do this by using one of the conventions from Heathcote's list [Ref: Appendix 8)

- ***Dramatic Action:*** In this example I used convention 4 - *the role is present as an 'effigy'. It can be talked about, walked around and even sculptured afresh if so framed. Further, it can be brought into life-like response and then returned to effigy.* Which all sounds very complicated, but actually (like all the conventions) makes perfect sense when used in context.

*"Let's imagine,"* I say to the two boys, *"that this painting,"* I point to the one on the whiteboard depicting the battle, *"is only one of many paintings of the Battle of Hastings. Some of the other paintings are also of the battle itself, showing different events and moments during the day. Others are of events before and after. Now I can see you two are involved in fight of some kind. Is that right?"* *"Yes we're two soldiers fighting."* *"Right, but this is the day before the battle and the Normans haven't arrived yet. But if you were in a painting of Harold's camp the day before the battle - which is what we're building here - then you could be two soldiers training for the battle. That would make sense. Could we see [this is the use of the convention] the two soldiers in the painting training?"* The two boys make a pose. *"I see, now hold it there, keep it still like a painting."* I step back and look at the pose (the effigy) as if it were a painting (the boys will take note of my seriousness, I'm not playing either). *"I wonder could we see another?"*

By this time a number of other children had taken up rulers for swords and I was obliged to bring them 'into' the painting. After five minutes there were fifteen or so children posing as figures in a painting of the camp training for the next day's battle. They were quite still and self-controlled. However, the focus for the children was on the form (the painting) rather than the meaning. For this they needed an opportunity for reflection.

- *Invested Action*: Invested action is reflection (contemplation) on dramatic action in context. Which again sounds very complicated, but is simple when explained. For example training with a fellow soldier takes on very different meanings in the following three contexts:

Context one: training at home for a fight that might happen

Context two: training at Harold's camp the day before the battle

Context three: training at Harold's camp, with my brother, the day before the battle

This is because in each context the 'level' of investment (what it means to those involved) becomes more and more significant both because of the change in time and location and because of the closer family bonds. Now when the children take up the pose of those training in the painting they are seen as warrior/brothers on the eve of a battle where their lives will never be the same again.

It's a mistake to think drama for learning is about 'acting out' or 'pretending'. There is little value in reenacting the Battle of Hasting with children posing as soldiers on either side, firing arrows or riding horses. The purpose of using drama in the classroom is to bridge the gap between children's own experiences and the content of study. It is not enough for them to know there was a great battle in 1066 that affected the course of English history or who was on which side and what happened to the two kings. Education is about understanding, developing a greater appreciation and insight, which can be applied across a wider range of subjects than those taught at school. The Battle of Hastings was a human experience, the people involved felt the same kinds of emotions we would feel in the same circumstances. For children to understand and appreciate this they have to

develop their imagination beyond playing or reenacting or (worst of all) just being told the facts. **Quote from "Birth of the Nation"**

### **Step 3: Creating the Anglo-Saxon camp the day before the battle - The arrival of Harold**

In the meantime the other children were busy creating the other parts of the camp, the stables, the medical tent, the kitchens etc.

In order to 'invest' the action we used convention 2: *The role actually present framed as a film. Can be stopped and restarted, or re-run.* The children took position as people in the camp at the moment the king arrived. One of the children in the class represented the king, others represented his entourage. After a short discussion the children decided the king should be met by a line of soldiers and then shown around the camp, he could then see everything was in order and ready for the battle ahead.

### **Step 4: The Battle - in five steps**

By this stage the children were very keen to get going with the battle. There were high levels of excitement and expectation with a commensurate potential for disaster. Once again it was the use of conventions that would 'hold' the situation, allowing for tension without losing control.

We returned to convention 4, this time a painting from the beginning of the battle, with both sides lining up for attack. The children chose which side they would represent. I explained the battle would be shown in five paintings, each one depicting a stage of the attack.

"*Stage 1,*" I shouted, *'Make the shield wall.'*" The children on both sides of the classroom shuffled together to make the walls [Action].

I stopped the action for a moment of reflection. "*Lets take a look at this shield wall. Has the artist got the shields locked closely enough together. Remember not a chink of light. No room for a blade or an arrow*" [Invested Action].

"Stage 2," I shouted again, "*Normans step forward and raise your weapons. Saxons hold the line.*"

"Stage 3, *Normans step forward and choose your target.*" The gap between the two lines was now no more than a few feet.

"Stage 4, *Normans strike!*" I was careful to remind them this was a painting, so we would only see one strike.

"Stage 5, *Normans fall back.*"

"And so," I related, "*The first part of the battle was over. Ending in the Saxon shield wall intact and the Normans back in their lines. No side victorious.*"

### **Step 5: The Battle - the death of Harold**

As well as the battle the children were also very interested in the famous story of Harold's death. Many had already heard how he was killed by an arrow in the eye and wanted to 'see' that part of the battle too. So, once again we lined up, the Normans on one side, the Saxons on the other. Only this time the Normans took up bows, ready to fire.

The children were familiar with the format:

"Stage 1, *Normans take an arrow from your quiver. Saxons hold the line.*"

"Stage 2, *Normans fit an arrow to your bow. Saxons hold the line.*"

"Stage 3, *Normans aim high, remember fire over their wall. Saxons hold the line.*"

"Stage 4, *Normans fire!*"

"As the arrows flew through the air," I related "*high above the shield wall, Harold and his body guard looked into the sky. One arrow, from the many thousands, found its mark.*" On this cue the student representing the king fell to the ground, clutching his eye. "*His brothers seeing the king had been wounded rushed to his side.*"

*But nothing they could do could stop his inevitable death and with it the last hope of Anglo-Saxon England.”*

*“Stage 5, the final painting. One side the grief of the defeated Saxons, on the other the joy of the Norman victors.”*

The moment held the whole class for a few seconds and then that part of the story was over.

However, I felt it was important to explore further dimensions of this event and other points of view. I had read that Harold’s body was buried in secret after the battle and had been so badly hacked by William’s soldiers that only his wife had been able to identify the remains - [Ref: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harold\\_Godwinson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harold_Godwinson)]. I thought it would be interesting to follow this event back to when his wife, Edith Swannesha [Ref: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edith\\_Swannesha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edith_Swannesha)], first received the news and might create opportunities for further reflection on the impact of the battle beyond those directly involved.

## **Sequence 2: The news reaches the Queen**

### **Step 1: Setting the scene**

There are many ways to ‘set a scene’ [Ref. [Strategy list for starting and extending inquiries, see Appendix 9](#)] for this one I decided to use Strategy 2 - *Sharing a partial narrative selected/created in advance* - this was because I was working with the class separately on developing the use of dramatic imagination in their writing and thought this would be a good opportunity to illustrate its use.

I therefore started the sequence by using a variation of convention 20: *A story told about another*.

I read the following extract to the children:

*The Queen lifted her head from her sewing when she heard the guards voice outside.*

*There was a short murmur of voices then a soft knock at the door.*

*'Enter' she said. There was the clunk of a lock and the door swung open silently. The candle on her table flickered sending shadows racing like rats into the corners of her bedchamber.*

*The guard dressed in full Armour stepped into the room, his chain mail creaking. 'Your Majesty' he said, bowing, 'There is a messenger outside. He says he brings important news from the battlefield.'*

*'Then let him in immediately', ordered the Queen.*

*The guard nodded and stepped outside. A moment later a short man came into the Queen's room. His face was covered in dry mud, his clothes ripped and stained with blood. He walked with a limp, his left leg dragging painfully behind his right.*

*'Your Majesty', he bowed. 'I have grave news concerning your Lord, the king.' His eyes looked down and his voice trailed off into silence.*

*'Talk man!' The Queen shouted.*

*The poor messenger nearly jumped out of his skin.*

*'Er, I'm sorry', he said, bowing once more. 'The news I bring is very sad your Majesty and my tongue can barely move with the telling, struck, as it is, with grief.'*

## **Step 2 - The children's contributions - ordinary life**

It would have been tempting at this point to have brought the Queen in as an adult in role [ref. [Strategy 3: Interacting with an adult representing a point-of-view \(Adult in Role – AIR\)](#)], but I felt this would have been a mistake as the children had not yet had the opportunity to make a contribution to the context we were building. I therefore decided to hold back on the Queen and spend a bit of time exploring what else was happening at

the same time in the castle [Ref. Strategy 6: Children creating the images and resources].

Using small pieces of A5 paper I asked the children to draw something they thought might be happening in the castle at the same time the Queen was hearing the news of her husband's death.

As well as involving the children in the development of the context my aim was to explore how momentous events often happen while people are going about their normal lives. The Queen was receiving news that would mean the end of 500 years of Anglo-Saxon rule in England, but for the people baking bread or fishing in the moat or mending the walls everything seemed to be the same as it had always been.

### **Step 3 - The story continues**

For this step we turned the telling of the story into a kind of ritual using the line - *'In the castle on the night the Queen heard the news...'* (I wrote this on the board, while the class sat together on the carpet)

Each child then followed the pattern by reading the line - *'In the castle on the night the Queen heard the news'* - followed by their own contribution, for example: *'A traitor was hanging from chains in the dungeon'; 'The dogs were wailing in the kennels'* etc

After they had made their contribution each child would come up and add their picture to the board.

As a side note, it was interesting how many of the children's ideas could be interpreted as portents of things to come - "The dogs wailing, dark clouds blowing in, prisoners screaming". Once we started to spot them the children enjoyed making further links.

### **Step 4 - More bad news**

After setting the scene it was time to return to the Queen. However there would be little value in 're-enacting' her getting the bad news - what would the children do? So the story had to be moved on to the next significant event - the visit of a second messenger (this time from William) who was to invite the Queen to view Harold's body and identify him as the king.

The obvious tension in this scenario was should the Queen leave the relative safety of her castle to identify the body and, as a consequence, put her life in the hands of the enemy?

For the facilitation of this scene I decided to use Convention 1: *The role actually present, naturalistic, yet significantly behaving, giving and accepting responses* and Strategy 7: *Interacting with the children representing one (or more) points-of-view (Children in Role CIR)*

The Queen was represented by an adult, the children then choose to represent either:

1. her family/ladies in-waiting/entourage
2. her personal guards
3. the messengers from William

A note on Convention 1. Convention 1 can be quite tricky if not handled with a certain amount of 'conviction'. By conviction I mean you have to be prepared to take control when needed. This is not so much the case with other conventions because those conventions 'hold' time. By which I mean time can be temporarily paused or rewind. In convention 1 time is happening now, in the moment, which means the dramatic control comes not from the convention itself, but from the participants. For this reason its often considered the most difficult of all the conventions to use successfully in the classroom.

For example, the Battle of Hasting sequence above would be very difficult to manage in convention 1 without the complete co-operation of all the participants. However, the convention we did use - Convention 4, were the children were cast as representing figures in a series of paintings - held time

and the participants in place creating more opportunity for reflection and less opportunities for disorder.

Nevertheless, convention 1 can be very exciting and can give the participants freedom of expression and the chance to improvise ‘in the moment’. For these reasons children often enjoy convention 1 sessions more than any others.

However, as mentioned above, it is crucially important to agree from the beginning that things have to be done in an orderly way, with a sense of calm and control. The teacher’s mediation role is almost as a stage director treading a fine line between keeping the work on track while allowing the participants opportunities to improvise and contribute.

The following text is an approximate account of how the session developed using convention 1.

Scene: the Queen’s bedchamber

Present: the Queen, her ladies in waiting and her guards

Arriving: a number of messengers from King William

- Teacher as mediator (TAM): *“So, how are the ladies in waiting and the guards going to be arranged when the messengers arrive?”*

- Teacher leaves the ladies in waiting and the guards with the adult in role (AIR) as the Queen, while he talks to the messengers.

- Teacher in role (TIR): *“Now you understand she is still a Queen and she has only recently heard the tragic news of her husband’s death? She will need to be treated with understanding and respect.”*

- Teacher ensures those representing the messengers understand how to treat a Queen, bowing etc.

- TIR speaking to the guards: *“The messengers are outside, they have important news from William and wish to speak directly to the Queen.”*

- At this point the ‘guards’ were arguing over who was standing where and were not ready to enter the fiction. To help them I needed to take on a directors role (TAD) outside the story: *“OK. Lets get this sorted. Everyone else is ready. Have you decided where the doorway is? Right (They had made a narrow*

entrance using two table), *I see. So, some of the guards will stand this side and some on the other, lets see that then. We need guards - backs straight, heads up, weapons in-hand. Right, that's it. Have you decided if the messengers can bring in their weapons? They can't, I think that's right. So, you're ready? Lets have the guards back and I'll bring the messengers up, they're at the bottom of the tower.*"

- TIR speaking to the Queen and the ladies in waiting: *"Your majesty there are in the courtyard a group of messengers from the traitor William, Duke of Normandy, they claim to have news of your husband, shall I let them in?"*

- AIR - the Queen: *"Yes, bring them up immediately."*

- TIR speaking to the messengers: *"The Queen will see you now. But her guards have instructed that you must enter the bedchamber only one at a time and must hand in your weapons at the door. Is that understood?"*

- TAM: *"We know from history Edith Swannesha, Queen and wife of Harold Godwinson, did not die this night in her bedchamber so if any of the messengers did manage to smuggle a weapon into the bedchamber they did not use it to hurt the Queen or any of her household."* Its important to make this clear from the start otherwise once the drama enters convention 1 there is nothing to stop one of participants assassinating the Queen and rewriting history.

- The teacher now stands back and only intervenes if things start to loose coherence or if something happens that needs to re-negotiated. This is quite normal, don't worry, the children won't. Treat it as a rehearsal, come to an agreement and carry on.

- In the session I'm describing, the guards at the door let the messengers in one at a time, frisking them 'gently' and placing their weapons on the side. Once all in the messengers spoke to the Queen and respectfully requested that she visit King William's tent and identify the body of her husband. There was then a discussion amongst her household about whether she should go or stay safely protected in her castle. After listening to all the arguments the Queen (in accordance with history) decided to leave as requested and visit William.

- We ended the session with a short discussion on the choices available to the Queen and how her life and the lives of all the other Anglo-Saxon nobility would never be the same again.

### **Follow up activities**

1. BBC documentary: Battlefield Britain - The Battle of Hastings.

After the activities outlined above we watched the BBC documentary - Battlefield Britain - The Battle of Hastings available at time of writing on YouTube.

2. Writing an account from the point of view of a participant in the battle

The children then spent some time drafting and writing accounts of the battle from different points of view. This is was done over two days using the Writing Workshop formula [Ref: Writing Workshop]. Below is a summary of the planning and some examples of the children's writing.

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### **Sequence: Bridging into the past**

Any object or image from the past can be used to imaginatively travel into the past as if it were a place to visit. This is called 'bridging' and the object that creates the opportunity is called a 'bridging device'.

Much like all these strategies and conventions they are much easier to describe and understand in context than they are in the abstract. So, lets look at an example from this context and how a bridging device was used to help the children to imagine themselves as people from the time of the Anglo-Saxons.

#### **Example 1 - The Skeletons**

#### **Step 2: Drawing the skeletons**

As mentioned above, the children in one of the classes were fascinated by the image of the 'hugging' skeletons. Developing this interest into an imaginative-inquiry was a simple matter of re-representing the photo of the skeletons as a drawing. We took a large sheet of appropriately coloured sugar paper and drew an outline around two willing volunteers (one child at a time, to spare them their blushes) and then added some drawings of bones - skulls, rib-cages, etc.

**Note:** The children were fascinated by skeletons and we took the opportunity to later explore this part of the curriculum through looking at books, animated images and 3-D models in a separate lesson.

Once the drawings were made, we sat back and looked at the images.

Teacher (T): *"I wonder what brought these two people together?"*

There followed a short discussion, where the children suggested a number of different ideas.

(T): *"It might be there were some clues on the bodies that were discovered by the archeology team when they looked closer."*

### **Step 3: Clues**

At this point you ask one of the children to take a lead. Its probably best not to ask for volunteers but to choose a student who you think will understand the task and give the others something to think about.

(T): *"Leon could I give you this pen and ask you to draw an injury on one of these skeletons - that was later discovered by the archeology team - which might give a clue to how this person died."*

Leon drew a small crack at the back of one of the skulls.

**Note:** Generally almost anything is useable if an explanation can be made for it. For example, if Leon had drawn a huge crack, I would have asked the

class: *“That’s a much larger crack than I was expecting! I wonder how they missed it?”* Or maybe Leon drew a gun (completely misunderstanding the task, but not wrecking). *“Look at that... A gun. Hum, well it can’t be from Anglo-Saxon times, so how did it get there?”* I would take this as a great opportunity to explore (for a short while) anachronisms and how different artefacts, on different layers, can tell archeologists a lot about the past. For instance, if there was a gun with the bodies, it would have to be on top or beside (indicating it was buried later), or the bodies would have been moved and re-buried on top of the gun. Whichever way, we have an intriguing mystery.

Teacher: *“Oh, you can see why they missed this until they did the x-ray. Leon do you think whatever did that was the cause of this person’s death?”*

Leon: *“Yes.”*

**Note:** if he says no then there might be another mark which was responsible. *“Oh, so not this one. Leon was it an old injury or one that happened close to the person’s death?”* And, *“Lilly, could I ask you to take the pen this time and see if there is a mark which was the one that killed this person.”*

#### **Step 4: Inquiry - What might have caused the injury?**

(T): *“What do you think might have caused an injury of this kind?”*

**Note:** This is an inquiry question opening up a number of different possible hypothesis. **In reference to Lesley Webb’s - Teacher Compass (you’ll find a copy in the Resources section of this Unit)** the aim of the question is to create an opportunity for the children to explore a range of different ideas (a prodigality) without worrying too much about the 'quality' of the ideas (no penalty). In a sense, when in this sector of the compass, we are encouraging the children to be 'playful' with their thinking, not frivolous, but open minded and divergent. The teacher is not waiting for the right answer, but creating an opportunity for a wide range of ideas and scenarios.

Of course I could have asked the children to share their ideas verbally, as a straight-forward inquiry, perhaps supported by a drawing or a piece of

writing, maybe framed as an eye-witness account. But, in this instance, I felt the children had been sitting for long enough and needed something more immediately engaging and challenging. So, I asked them to represent their ideas as if they were images from the past - a picture of the action that caused the wound, the moment before the action happened. [\[ref. Appendix 8\]](#)

*"You might want to work alone or in a small group. What we will be looking for is an image of what happened here about a thousand years ago."*

**Note:** Depending on the experience of the children in using drama this might be an activity they can cope with quite easily on their own. Other, less experienced groups, might need more support and possibly an example or two to illustrate the activity.

### **Step 5: Using drama conventions to represent what might have happened**

The next step is to view one or more (occasionally all) of the images created by the children. As they work, extend the thinking around their ideas, encouraging the other children to contribute. For more guidance on this process take a look at the sequence below in [Step 6: Sharing the stories - invested action.](#)

**Note:** in this example we were using the injury into the deaths of the skeletons as the bridging device and the drama convention as the form representing the children's ideas. In the next example we built on this first device and then created opportunities for the children to invent bridging devices of their own and - by using these - explore the Anglo-Saxon settlement from the time it was first established 500 years before the Battle of Hastings.

### **Example 2: Objects from the settlement**

**Note:** When designing an imaginative inquiry-context there are always multiple points of entry. This is especially true of history contexts, which have the added dimension of time. Some entry points will have obvious

advantages over others - perhaps to do with interest to the children, locality or within the children's own experiences - however they will always involve some compromises and a certain amount of adjustment will be needed to make them work effectively. In this context we chose to start in the present with the BBC commission and then 'step back' through the skeleton 'bridging device' to the Battle of Hastings at the end of the Anglo-Saxon period. This, we felt, would be the most engaging and most accessible route of entry for the children. However, we understood starting the context at the end (as it were) might make it more difficult for the children to understand how the Anglo-Saxon invasion and occupation developed and changed over time. We were always mindful that at some point we would need a bridging strategy to take the context back to the beginning of the period and to create opportunities for the children to study the full historical significance of the Anglo-Saxon occupation and settlement.

Our aim then was to work with the children to create an early Anglo-Saxon settlement. We planned various sessions over a two week period which would result in the children making a model of the settlement in the classroom and inventing multiple different stories and people who lived there. Bearing in mind the children only know what they know we gathered and prepared various resources and sources of information which they could use as research while engaged in the work. These included:

- Topic books - many are available from the local library
- Webpages - links can be found in resources section of this context
- Drawings and other pictures of Anglo-Saxon settlements - copied and laminated for the children to look at
- Pictures and descriptions of artefacts - you can find copies of these in the artefacts section of this context

### Step 1: Settlement Story

Resources:

1. A stack of A5 plain paper
2. A list of ordinary, every day, objects that might be found by archaeologists on an Anglo-Saxon dig ([See artefacts list](#))

3. Possibly a map of the Anglo-Saxon settlements from Germany ([see other resources](#))

Gather the children together on the carpet.

*“You know 1066 was the end of the Anglo-Saxon kings. Harold was the last. After William’s victory the Normans became the rulers of England and they built great castles to keep the Anglo-Saxon people in their place. But the Anglo-Saxons were themselves invaders. They came originally from Germany on ships.”*

You might want to show the children the map of the Anglo-Saxon settlements from Germany at this point or save it for later.

*“This happened 500 years before the Battle of Hastings, so they had been in Britain for a long time. They stopped thinking of themselves as Germans and thought of themselves as English. But when the first Anglo-Saxons came they had to find places to live. They didn’t have to fight any battles or defeat a king like William. Britain was very empty, there were lots of tribes - small communities of people - all over the country, living in different places, but there was also a great deal of empty land where the Anglo-Saxon people could build their own villages and settle down.*

*“Often these places became permanent settlements and over time grew into important towns. Many names of places today have Anglo-Saxon origins, like Norwich (-wich means farm in Anglo-Saxon). It’s possible the archaeologists digging in our story will find artefacts going back to the original Anglo-Saxon invasions. The objects themselves would be easy to overlook. They wouldn’t be flashy gold or wonderful suits of armour, but perhaps a tiny piece of pottery or a small round bead. Let me show you...”*

### **Step 2: Drawing a small artefact**

Take a piece of the A5 and draw in front of the children a small broken piece of pottery. [\[Fig.1\]](#)

*“When this was found, by one of the archaeologists, it was covered in mud. It would have been easy, for someone who didn’t know what they were doing, to ignore it or disregard it as unimportant. But the archaeologist knew better, and after cleaning off the mud and using some sophisticated equipment she was able to date the shard of pottery*

*from the very beginning of the Anglo-Saxon period, 550 AD. She was also able to reconstruct what the object looked like before it was broken. I'll show you..."*

Turn over the paper and draw a small bowl [Fig.2]



[Fig.1]

[Fig.2]

*"This bowl, the archaeologist believed, came from Germany and might have been among the original possessions brought over on the Anglo-Saxon ships. Imagine what it must have been like for those people, leaving their homes, packing together their possessions and sailing to a new country? I guess some of them were excited, others scared, perhaps one or two didn't want to leave, but had to. Those are unanswered questions for archaeologists.*

*"After sailing across the sea, they arrived in England. But they didn't leave their ships, they sailed up the rivers looking for islands or bends in the river where they could disembark and build a settlement. I guess whoever brought this bowl was among them. They then cut down trees and built houses, and walls to protect themselves, and dug and sowed fields for crops. Everyone had to help. The first few years would have been the hardest. But they survived and had children, children who never knew the old home, and eventually there was no one left that had come on the ships.*

*"All those people are gone. They're not here to tell their stories. But what if their stories somehow survived in the objects? The things they left behind. Imagine the story this bowl could tell? Of the people leaving their homes and travelling on ships, of arriving in a new land, or building new homes, of struggling and surviving."*

**Note:** The switch here is from story-telling into story-making. Using the bowl as a bridging device to create a human story of an historical event. The language is preparing the ground for the next activity, ‘folding’ the facilitator language, as it were, into the language of story-telling.

### Step 3: A Story involving the bowl

**Note:** This next step involves moving the inquiry from a discussion (Bruner’s ‘symbolic’ representation) around the drawing of an artefact (the ‘iconic’ representation of the bowl) into dramatic action (the ‘enactive’ representation of people’s ideas). The aim is to widen and broaden the inquiry, to involve the children’s imagination and to create opportunities for them to develop and synthesise their knowledge and growing understanding.

*“I wonder if we could see an image, like a picture in a book, of something happening involving this bowl. It might be from the very beginning of the story, before the people left their homes in Germany, or it might be the journey over on the ships, or the first night in the new settlement. I guess, we’d only know from the context.”*

**Note:** This is an invitation. Some classes will grab this opportunity and make something happen instantly, others will need help and support. Every class is different, be prepared to work for them, developing an idea or a group of ideas, looking for dramatic action (using the convention of a drawing) and the *invested* action in the use of the bowl. Remember the difference is between the action - for example offering someone a drink from the bowl - and the investment behind the action - as a peace offering to a local tribe. The investment deepens the work, creating meaning and understanding, be prepared to draw this out through careful and sympathetic questioning.

### Step 4: Other artefacts - playing with ideas

**Note:** Once you’ve explored one or more stories concerning the bowl, as an example of the activity you want the children to engage in, then its time to widen the scope of the inquiry and involve the children’s imagination in a larger project. The aim of this step is to create, with the children, a large amount of different everyday objects which could be found by the

archaeology team from the early years of the Anglo-Saxon occupation. And use these as bridging devices to create new lines of inquiry and understanding.

Make sure you have close by these resources:

1. A stack of A5 plain paper
2. A list of ordinary, every day, objects that might be found by archaeologists on an Anglo-Saxon dig ([See artefacts list](#))
3. Several sheets of A3 paper

*“You know the bowl wasn’t the only everyday object the archaeology team found from the earliest days of the Anglo-Saxon settlement? I’ve got here a list, and this isn’t everything - Broaches, Pendants, Necklace beads, Rings, Bracelets, Horns used for hunting and drinking, Shoe leather and buckles, Belt buckles, Wooden Caskets, tons of Pottery, Metal bowls for cooking and worship, Coins both from England and abroad, Combs, Spoons and Knives, Sewing needles, Horse buckles. As well as Swords, Shields, Helmets, Arrow heads and Spears - By the time they had finished there were boxes full of stuff. All really important to the archaeologists and all, like the bowl, with stories locked inside them.*

*“I was thinking about the archaeologists’ boxes, for the artefacts, [grab a piece of A3 paper and a pen] do you think they would put everything they found in its own compartment? Perhaps wrapped up in...”*

As you talking draw out a grid of compartments on the A3 paper, big enough for the A5 paper the children will be drawing the artefacts on. Involve their ideas... *“Bubble wrap? OK. And should they be numbered?”* etc...

*“So, we’re going to need some artefacts to go in these boxes. We’ve got plenty so don’t worry if you want to draw more than one. I’ll put the bowl in this first compartment. First though, I’ll make a note on the front of what it is - ‘Shard of pottery from drinking bowl, early Anglo-Saxon, possibly made in Germany.’ - And a note on the back of how it might have been used - ‘Could have been used as an ceremonial drinking bowl on important occasions, such as the sharing of wine with another tribe.’ - OK, are you ready? Grab a piece of A5, you can always use this list if you’re short of ideas. Remember you can work together if it helps.”*

**Note:** As the children work walk round and support them, read out some of their ideas to generate interest and encourage them to make notes. The four elements of the activity are:

1. Draw an everyday object as found by the archaeology team - i.e. old, broken etc.
2. On the other side draw the same object as it was in the past
3. Make a note on the front about the object - what it is, which period, where it was made etc
4. On the back make a note about how it was used in the past

By the time this step is finished the class are likely to have drawn a number of different objects and placed them in the archaeologists' 'boxes'. These can now be used, like the bowl, to create 'stories' from the past.

**Note:** These steps are a good example of how an inquiry can be built using a sequence following the model of the Teacher Compass. The Teacher Compass was developed by Lesley Webb, in collaboration with Dorothy Heathcote, and first appeared in "Drama for Learning". In the abstract it can seem enigmatic, even obscure, but behind the arcane language is a extremely useful and practical model for planning sequenced steps that can be used to develop deeper learning and understanding. As we work through the following sequence I'll make reference to the Teacher Compass and use the steps to illustrate how the four quadrants work. You can choose to read these notes or ignore them as best fits your own purpose, the sequence will work either way.

**Note - Teacher Compass (Quadrant 1) [See Teacher compass in appendix]:** In Step 4 - Other Artefacts - the children are working in quadrant 1 of the compass (starting in the top left). They are 'playing' with ideas, and the teacher's role is to enable and energise, create an environment where the children are prepared to take risks, try out new ideas, be open and exploratory. She needs to support, observe and provide a scaffold for the children's thinking. Sometimes in 'open' activities like this the children will create unlikely or impossible ideas - Anglo-Saxon guns for example - which only reveal their lack of knowledge or understanding. The teacher's role is to

acknowledge this and sympathetically work with the student to make the idea coherent. For example, *“Hi Jack, what’s this? A gun? OK. Was it found by the archaeologists? I see, and it was among the other Anglo-Saxon artefacts? That’s interesting. It looks like a modern weapon, from what I understand guns weren’t invented until 500 years after the Anglo-Saxons, so the question is - how did it get there? That’s a mystery for the archaeologists. I think we’ll need to put the gun in its own box. Is it a modern gun? Second World War or older? I see, could you make a note of that? Right, well once the gun is finished did you want to do an Anglo-Saxon weapon for the archaeologists to find? Or were you thinking of working on different idea?”* And so on. As a teacher I don’t worry any more about anachronisms or apparently incoherent ideas, they are nearly always based on a misunderstanding and can be easily worked around. In my experience children (and adults) appreciate having their ideas acknowledged and are happy to negotiate a compromise. They only get upset and annoyed (understandably) when their ideas are dismissed or ridiculed.

By the end of a quadrant 1 activity you’ll find yourself and the class at the top of the Teacher Compass with a ‘prodigality’ of choices. In this example boxes full of everyday artefacts created by the children. In the next Step (a quadrant 2 activity) you’ll help the children ‘focus in’ on a particular idea, working with them to create more significance and quality.

### Step 5: Other stories to tell - creating dramatic action

The aim of this next step is to enhance and develop the ideas of the children, to build a number of coherent stories - or moments from stories - which fit together into the longer narrative of the Anglo-Saxon settlement. Activities like this take a bit of time and patience, few groups of children are able to organise and structure ‘open’ tasks without the need of adult support. As a rule of thumb I like to give children the opportunity to try things first, without being too prescriptive or overbearing, and then intervene if they begin to struggle. The important thing is not to let things fall apart and not to worry about stopping and ‘reshaping’ the activity (by example) if that is what needs to be done.

Gather the children around the archaeologists’ boxes. *“As I said, the team found boxes of stuff. All kinds of different objects, look at some of these things...”* [take

out one or two artefacts to show the class] *This for example, a beautiful metal brooch, it says here: "A woman's brooch in the shape of a bird head, worn on a headdress or cloak. Early Anglo-Saxon, made in Germany... [etc]*

*"I would imagine every object here, like the bowl, has its own stories to tell. Imagine if they were in a book, like a chronicle, telling the whole story of the Anglo-Saxon occupation and settlement, from the time when the people left their homes in Germany up until they found a place to settle and make home in England? It would make a wonderful tale. I wonder if we could put the stories in order, starting with the earliest and finishing with the building of the settlement? Of course we couldn't include everything here, there wouldn't be time, but we could do some. What do you think? Five, or six of the stories? Maybe more. Why don't we make a start and see how far we get. Either work together in groups or alone if you like. Take an object and see if you can show what a moment in its story might be like, just a snippet, perhaps 30 seconds. Have a practice and we'll get together in a little while and see what we've got."*

As I mentioned above different classes need different levels of support with activities like this, don't leave them floundering but give them the space and time to work together and develop ideas. As they work make a note of the action each group is working to represent and where it appears in the timeline of the Anglo-Saxon settlement. You will need this information for the next step (see below).

**Note - Teacher Compass (Quadrant 2):** In this quadrant although the class are still working with a 'prodigality' of ideas the ideas themselves are being worked on and refined. There is more collaboration and compromise and more of a commitment to making their ideas coherent and intelligible to others. On the compass the children are moving from activities were 'they are playing' with ideas (what Webb calls 'no penalty') into activities where they are 'working' on ideas which will be judged and evaluated by others ('penalty').

The term 'penalty' might seem odd in this context, but I think it means 'a commitment to quality'. In the first quadrant the students are 'playing' with ideas, not being silly or frivolous, but open and playful. In terms of the language of Thinking Skills they are thinking divergently and creatively without the 'worry' of being wrong or inconsistent. There is 'no penalty' in

the sense of their ideas being judged or evaluated by others. In quadrant 2, however, the emphasis switches from 'play' to 'work' and the commitment now is on developing and evaluating the original ideas against a more exacting set of criteria. In quadrant 3 the student's ideas will be judged and evaluated by others in the context of the inquiry, so in quadrant 2 inconsistent or incoherent ideas will need to be refined and adjusted or they will be discarded as not important to the 'work'. This is the 'penalty' termed by Webb. If the students stay in quadrant 1 then their work will not develop beyond a 'draft' - sketchy and undeveloped - and can be a genuine criticism of teachers who use imaginative inquiry and don't manage to move the children into making a commitment to quality.

In quadrant 2 the teacher's role is to help orientate the activity, guiding and supporting the students as they work, creating choices, helping structure and shape their ideas and helping them to focus clearly on what they are trying to convey. Often the teacher will move around the class, from one group to another, listening in, asking questions, gently making suggestions. Sometimes she will need to intervene and be more assertive - *"That's not we need right now. We're after something more controlled. Remember you don't have long, 30 seconds max. So every move, every word, every action needs to be considered. Lets start again, what are your starting positions?"* etc.

### **Step 6: Sharing the stories - invested action**

In this next step the children will share their stories in short, 30 seconds, moments of action. The convention is number two on the list - "The role actually present framed as a film. That is, people have permission to stare, but not intrude. Film can be stopped and started or re-run."

The aim of this step is to use the short 'films' as a sequence of events from the history of the Anglo-Saxon people, documenting their journey from the homeland to their new settlement in England. The convention creates an opportunity for the children to synthesise their new knowledge and to be creative in the way they represent their understanding.

The teachers role is to 'draw out' the meaning from the episodes the children have created. By this I mean each event will have significance

beyond the dramatic action and the students will need help discovering and reading these deeper interpretations. The teacher's careful questioning will be critical to this process. To do this we'll be using a questioning framework model invented by Dorothy Heathcote (see below).

**Note:** This is a complex step, in fact a complex series of mini-steps, and I've included a number of different notes explaining the process. For this reason I've added a summary at the end of this section, listing the various teacher moves.

**Mini-step 1:** Gather the children together. *"I've been making some notes, can I just check with everyone I've got the right information."* Go through your list (see above) and check with each group you have the sequence right. Something like... *"So, Jamie your group involves a sword and is from a time when the people were still in Germany preparing the ships, is that right? OK. Molly your group are next I think, there's a broach and it's actually during the voyage?"* Etc.

**Mini-step 2:** *"Right, Jamie you want to get your group together? Are you happy with us watching from here or do you want us a bit closer to the action?"*

**Note:** Facilitation of an activity of this kind should allow the group the opportunity to represent their ideas without interference or interruption from outside. Sometimes classes who are unfamiliar with this kind of work can find it difficult to watch and listen and it is the teacher's responsibility to 'protect' those in role and their work from being wrecked by the outsiders. Insist on the highest standards from the audience, respecting those who are doing the work. If you have to you might find yourself saying something like - *"Now look this group are working really hard here to make something work and each and everyone of us is going to give them the respect they deserve. It's hard enough standing up in front of your classmates and doing this kind of thing without people giggling and talking. Now lets get back to work. Is everyone ready?"* Etc.

**Note:** The teacher's other role during this activity is to involve the rest of the class in interpreting the action being represented by the group. This is done through a series of questions that can help the class 'unpack' the meaning behind the actions.

**Mini-step 3:** Lets imagine Jamie's group consists of five children. The action they choose to represent depicts an Anglo-Saxon warrior and his fellow soldiers loading weapons, including the sword found later by the archaeologists, onto a ship which will be soon setting sail for England. We see the five children line up and then the weapons being passed, hand-to-hand, along the line and onto the ship, as the sword is passed it cuts the hand of one of the soldiers and falls into the sea. The soldier gasps and puts his hand into the water, retrieving the blade. He passes the sword on, ignoring his cut. The action ends.

To begin with don't allow any of Jamie's group to explain the action. Let it stand for itself. If they try, gently cut them short. *"Hold on Jamie, don't make it too easy for us. If you and the others could just hold that last moment, it will give us the chance to talk and think."*

**Mini-step 4:** Start by asking the watchers only what they saw. *"What did you see?"* or *"What did you notice?"*

*"It looked like they were passing things from hand to hand."*

*"And one of them dropped something."*

*"I think it was sharp, like a sword, because he made a noise."*

*"Yes, then he picked it up."*

*"I think they were putting the weapons in the boat, because Ryan is up high and they're passing them up to him."*

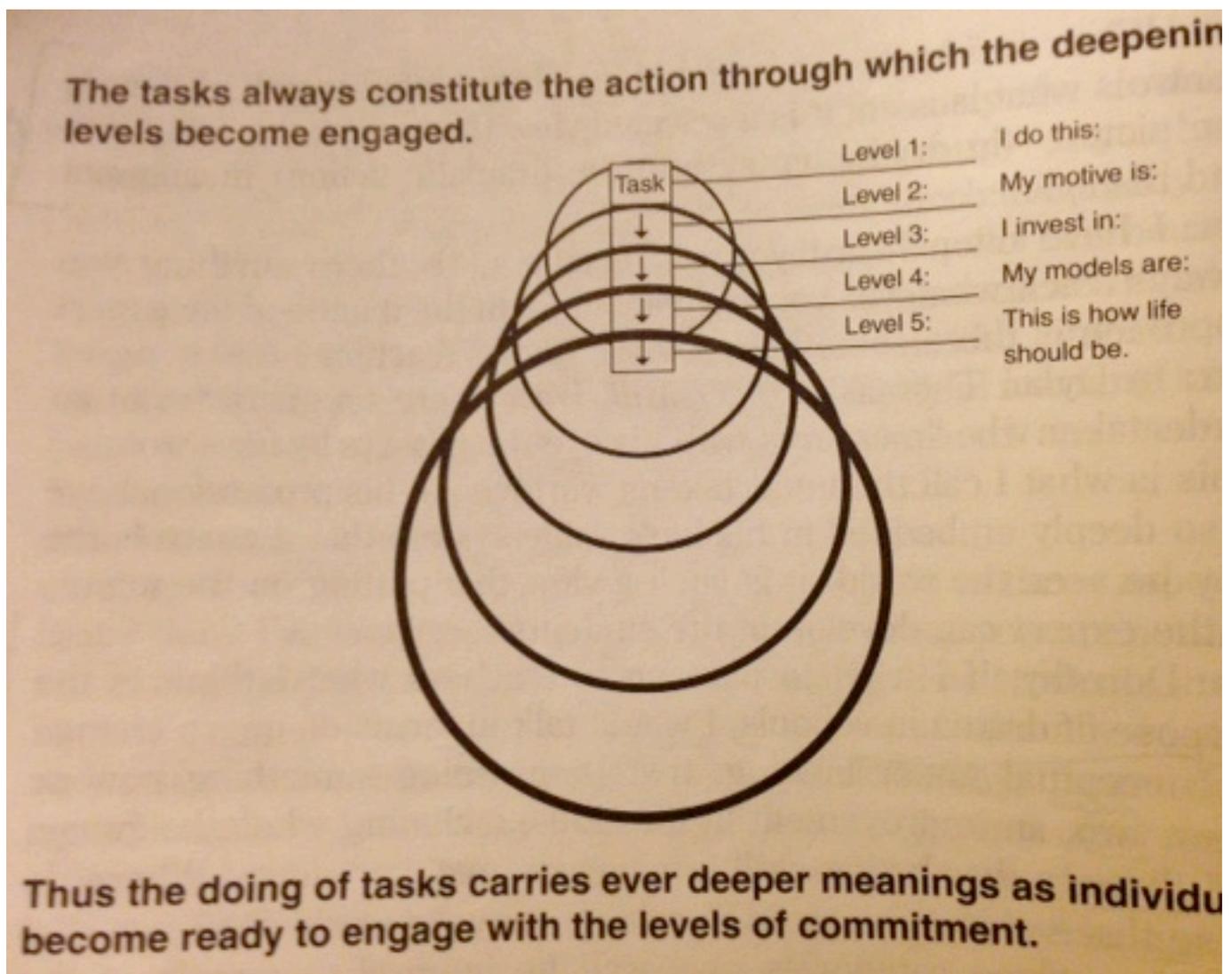
Teacher: *"So when the sword was dropped do you think it was dropped into the sea?"*

**Note:** Sometimes, as in this case, it is quite obvious what the action is representing and the class need very little help describing what's happening. At other times the action is more opaque and the children will need more support. Don't be afraid to turn to the group if you get stuck - *"Can we ask, when you dropped the sword did it fall into the sea?"* Etc. But, again, don't let them tell the whole story, unless the class really have reached a dead end.

At this point the class are focusing only on the action being represented - soldiers loading weapons onto a ship - it is the teacher's responsibility to move the inquiry now onto the 'significance' of the action - that is the soldier's investment behind loading the weapons.

**Mini-step 5:** Teacher: *"I thought it was interesting when the soldier dropped the sword. It looked like he was cut by the blade, but ignoring the pain he put his hand straight into the salty water. That must have hurt, but he didn't stop work."*

**Note:** This is a 'provocative' statement rather than a question. A favourite technique of Dorothy Heathcote's, a provocative statement of this kind, left 'hanging' in the air, can often be a very effective stimulus to new thinking and conversation.



**[Fig.3]**

**Note:** Another very useful thinking model for inquiries of this kind is the Levels of Commitment in Social/Cultural Development framework introduced in “Drama for Learning” (p.20) [Fig.3]. Not, one would have to admit, a very catchy or easy to remember title. But, nonetheless, incredibly useful once you understand how it works. For many years I kept a copy pinned on the wall of my classroom ready to use at times like these. The framework can give structure to your questioning during an inquiry and, by degrees, unveil deeper levels of meaning behind the character’s actions:

Level 1 - ACTION - I do this:

Level 2 - MOTIVATION - My motive is:

Level 3 - INVESTMENT - I invest in:

Level 4 - MODELS - My models are:

Level 5 - VALUES - This is how life should be:

If we look at the framework in the context of this inquiry the different levels could generate the following questions:

ACTION - A soldier, ignoring the pain, rescues a sword from the salty water

MOTIVATION - *“Why would he do that?”*

INVESTMENT - *“But the salty water must have made his cut hurt and he didn’t stop?”*

MODEL - *“Where would he have learnt to put pain aside?”*

VALUES - *“What do you think it is so important to him?”*

By working in this way deeper levels of understanding and appreciation are unveiled beyond the simple action of dropping and retrieving a sword - invented by Jamie and his friends - revealing new information about the qualities and values of the soldier and his people. As you can imagine very often these meanings are not apparent from the beginning, even to those who created the actions, and only become evident through careful questioning and the children’s application of their knowledge and imagination.

**Mini-step 6:**

ACTION - A soldier, ignoring the pain, rescues a sword from the salty water.

MOTIVATION - “Why would he do that?” - *“Because the sword is really important”* - *“Because he’s a soldier and he needs a sword.”* - *“Because the sword is expensive.”* - *“Because it was a gift from his father.”*

INVESTMENT - “But the salty water must have made his cut hurt and he didn’t stop?” - *“Because the pain is not as important as the sword.”* - *“Because they’re in a hurry and he can’t stop for a small cut.”* - *“Because he’s a tough warrior and doesn’t feel pain.”*

MODEL - “Where would he have learnt to put pain aside?” - *“From his training as a soldier.”* - *“From his father.”* - *“From his tribe and his friends.”*

VALUES - “What do you think is important to him?” - *“His family, his people and the other soldiers.”*

### **Summary:**

- **Convention 2:** “The role actually present framed as a film. That is, people have permission to stare, but not intrude. Film can be stopped and started or re-run.”

- **Aim:** To use the short ‘films’ as a sequence of events from the history of the Anglo-Saxon people, documenting their journey from the homeland to their new settlement in England.

- **Mini-step 1:** Gather the children together. *“I’ve been making some notes, can I just check with everyone I’ve got the right information.”* Go through your list...

- **Mini-step 2:** *“Right, Jamie you want to get your group together? Are you happy with us watching from here or do you want us a bit closer to the action?”* The first group prepare to demonstrate their ‘episode’, gather the rest of the children to watch. Ensure everyone is ready before the group begin.

- **Mini-step 3:** The group demonstrate their 30 seconds of ‘film’ action. Repeat if necessary.

- **Mini-step 4:** Ask those watching only what they saw: *“What did you see?”* or *“What did you notice?”* Give the children the chance to answer, support them with ideas of your own if necessary. Ask the group for help if they get really stuck.

- **Mini-step 5:** The teacher draws attention to a particular action: *“I thought it was interesting when the soldier dropped the sword. It looked like he was cut by the blade, but ignoring the pain he put his hand straight into the salty water. That must have hurt, but he didn’t stop work.”*

- **Mini-step 6:** The teacher asks a series of questions (using the Levels of Commitment framework) to deepen the inquiry and structure the children's thinking: ACTION - MOTIVATION - INVESTMENT - MODEL - VALUES. After each question give the children time to think and answer, help them with your own ideas if they need it.

**Repeat** for each group.

**Note - Teacher Compass (Quadrant 3):** In this quadrant the inquiry focuses in on particular details and then, by using the Levels of Commitment framework, burrows deeper, unravelling more and more layers of significance and meaning. In the language of the Compass this is termed Parsimony - 'doing more with less'. In the example above the detail under inquiry is the retrieval of the sword. Each new group will introduce a new detail.

There is an emphasis on quality and precision and those watching are as important to the process as those involved in the action - The Work/Penalty axis.

The teacher's role in this quadrant is to guide the inquiry into deeper levels of thinking, she needs to provide information, teach skills and set limits. At times she will need to step in and help, offer opinions and give guidance. As well as insist on high standards, make demands and provide feedback.

### Step 7: Review, reflection and evaluation

The aim of this step (the last of the sequence) is to look back, reflect on what has been done and evaluate the process. This can be done immediately after the drama sequence outlined above or later if time is short. Sometimes it makes sense to give the students time to 'digest' everything that has happened before starting a review.

The teacher's role during this step is to help the students consolidate their thinking and to reflect on what the work tells them about the subject under investigation. In this case the Anglo-Saxon emigration from Northern Europe and settlement in England. It is also to draw attention to the skills they used and the different strengths and qualities demonstrated.

Gather the children together on the carpet and start by asking a question. Generally nothing so blunt as: *“So, what did we learn?”* This can be a bit off putting and (what Dorothy would call) ‘teacher talk’. The way in is less of an interrogation and more of a discussion. Something like:

*“You know when Jamie dropped the sword it made me think how different the world is now. I mean some of the soldiers would have been teenagers, not much older than you and some of the teenage girls would have already been married, or at least promised to a boy...”*

Or,

*“It must have been hard, leaving your home and everything you knew so well, to go off in a ship into an uncertain future. Some of them must have been scared...”*

You will notice neither of these two sentences are actually a question, they are more a ‘provoking’ statement. A little like dropping a line into a river and hoping the fish will bite. Here’s another,

*“It must have been strange also for the Britons. In less than ten years the Romans leave - leaving behind their stone cities, aqueducts, and amphitheatres - and then a completely different group of people arrive, looking entirely different, speaking a strange language and worshiping strange Gods. Hard to imagine what it must have been like...”*

Some classes will pick up on these kinds of statements and run, others might need a bit of help. Generally I like to keep the discussion informal and relaxed in the hope the children will not feel I’m asking them to guess the ‘right answer’.

As the discussion develops try to introduce other areas of conversation, such as:

- Group dynamics - *“Did anyone find it difficult working with other people’s ideas?”*

- Using drama - *“Did it feel strange being in role?”*

- Personal perceptions - *“Was anybody surprised by what happened or something someone said or did?”*

- Developing skills - *“Did anyone change their minds or think differently during the work?”*

- Curriculum exploration - *“Obviously we were using drama, but do you think we explored other parts of the curriculum as well?”*

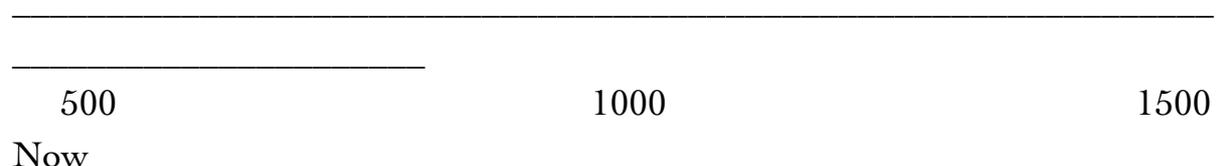
Another useful strategy is to use a “Learning List” like the one in the resources section. I like to laminate and cut out this list, then (its a bit of a palaver) stick each one to one side of the whiteboard. At the end of the discussion I ask the children to look at the list (it becomes familiar after a while) and say if they think we used any of the skills and when. They then move the skill to the other side of the whiteboard, often there aren’t many we left.

**Note - Teacher Compass (Quadrant 4):** In this quadrant the emphasis is on reflection and evaluation. The discussion can be wide-ranging and open-ended, there is no striving for the ‘right answer’, rather the class are exploring ideas, implications and other possibilities. We are back at the playful/no penalty end of the axis and no one should feel judged or under any obligation to agree or come to a consensus.

The teachers role is to question, provide opportunities for consolidating ideas, provoke new thinking by turning things around and/or playing devil’s advocate, she should create a relaxed atmosphere where the students feel comfortable taking risks and saying what they think.

### Using Time Lines and Planning Nodes

Its worth pausing at this moment and reflecting on where the context has got to and where it is going next. Sometimes it can be a bit confusing, following the planning as it is written down, to work out where we are and were we have been. Its worth saying this is less a problem when the action is happening in the classroom. I liked to use a time line to keep track of events.



A favourite planning method used by Heathcote was to make a quick list of different possible next moves centring on a particular event or scenario. She called these 'nodes' are used them to think divergently and not always take the most obvious route.

### **Further Activities**

#### **Society**

Invasions

Vikings

Danelaw

Scotland & the Celts

Normans

#### **War**

Anglo-Saxon Army

Anglo-Saxon Soldiers

Organisation

Armour & Weapons

Helmet

Armour plate

Shield

Weapons

Horses

Training

Law

Fines

Werguild

Executions

Clothing

#### **Religion/Worship**

Gods

Names of the Gods & powers

Woden

Once king god of war & wisdom (Wednesday)

Frigg

Goddess of love (Friday)

Thunor

god of thunder (Thursday)

Tiw

god of battle (Tuesday)

**Places**

Statues

Holy places

Sacrifices

Animals

Flowers

Money

Rituals

Burials

Family

Family structures

**Health**

Short, hard lives

**Embellishments**

Broochs

Jewellery

Animals & monsters

**Celebration**

**Leisure**

Games

Hunting

**Territory**

Named after chiefs

On rivers - bends & islands

**Shelter**

Long Houses

Gardens

Livestock

## **Curriculum**

Maths

Using & Applying

Problem solving

Calculations

Processing, representing and interpreting data

Number

Shape, space and measures

properties of position and movement

English

Speaking & Listening

Discussion

Standard English

Drama

Text Types

Fiction

Story writing

Play/film script

Myths & legends

Non-Fiction

Instructions

Explanation

Letter/email

Discussion

Persuasive

Newspaper

Non-chronological report

Recount

Writing

Composition

Planning & drafting

Grammar

Presentation

Include. using ICT

Reading

Reading strategies

Literature  
Reading for information  
Science  
Life processes  
Humans, animals and plants  
Materials and their properties  
History  
Chronological understanding  
Historical interpretation  
events, people and change  
Organisation and communication  
Local history study  
British history  
Anglo-Saxons  
Geography  
Geographical enquiry  
Knowledge and understanding of places  
Geographical skills  
Art & Design  
Exploring and developing ideas  
Evaluating and developing work  
Investigating and making art, craft and design  
D&T  
Developing, planning and communicating ideas  
Working with tools, equipment, materials and components to make quality products  
Evaluating processes and products  
Knowledge and understanding of materials and components

**Inquiries**

Social  
Organisation  
of resources  
Food supplies  
Water supply  
Materials

of people  
Slaves  
Enemies  
Subjugated people  
Communication  
Letters  
Beacons  
Transport  
Using Anglo-Saxon roads  
Canals & rivers  
Sea  
Structure  
Classes  
Status & Power  
Women  
Non Anglo-Saxons  
Slaves  
Entertainment & Leisure  
Games  
Relaxation  
Health & wellbeing  
Cultural  
Art  
Jewellery  
Anglo-Saxon Games  
Pastimes

**Memories and myths**

Stories  
Written  
Beowulf  
King Arthur  
Oral  
Golden Age

**Power**

Viking destruction  
Restoration  
Political  
Distribution of power  
Changes in social structure  
Role of women  
Status

### **Historical Study**

Learning about the past  
Archaeology  
Jewellery  
Pots  
Coins  
Artefacts  
Historical sources  
Paintings  
Histories  
Bede  
Alfred  
Monks and monestries  
Anglo-Saxon invasions  
Historical legacy

### **Environmental**

On the countryside  
Building  
Settlements  
Dev of towns  
Forts & walls-burhs  
Changes in the use of land

### **Ethical**

Anglo-Saxon ethics  
Treatment of women  
Captured people

Animals esp wild animals

War

Freedoms

Rights of citizens

Electing chiefs

Monarchs

Growth of Kingship

### **Spiritual**

Anglo-Saxon rituals & beliefs

Role of the Gods

Conversion to Christianity

belief systems

Life after death

Remembering the dead

Honouring the dead

Burials

Monsters

Sutton Hoo

Pagan & Christian

Transformational

Effects of Anglo-Saxon & Viking invasions

### **People of Britain**

Customs

Freedoms

To travel

To marry

To trade

To worship

Power

Social health

Taxes

Ownership of land

Ownership of weapons

Social standing

Loyalties  
Trade  
Connection to a wider world  
Influences  
Art  
Commerce  
Buildings  
Communication & transport  
New beliefs & Religions

### **History Team**

Skills developed  
Researching  
Background information  
History of the time  
The Anglo-Saxon cultures  
Explaining  
Questioning  
Working as a team  
Information processing  
Creating  
Tasks  
Mapping the site  
Reports to the BBC  
Ideas  
Reconstructing the settlement  
3-D model  
Creating the artefacts  
Facsimiles  
Drawings  
Creating the stories

### **Historical speculation/hypothesis**

What happened here?  
Who where the people?  
Further excavation

New finds  
Other artefacts  
Evidence of the A-S community  
Of the burial  
Ship?  
Artefacts pagen and christain  
Evidence of war  
Communication  
Communicating  
With the BBC  
With the arch team  
Media  
Wider world  
Methods of communication  
Letter  
Email  
Website  
Press release  
Information leaflet  
Guide book  
Powerpoint display  
Newspaper reports  
Radio/TV/Podcast  
Reconstructions  
Paintings/drawings  
Models  
Stories  
Ceremonies  
Dance/music

**From the POV of the Anglo-Saxons**

Recollections  
Letters  
Oral stories  
Eye-witness accounts  
Soldiers report

Possible outcomes  
Report to the BBC  
Extracts from the programme

## Historical Background

- The **Romans** officially **withdrew** from Britain in **AD 410**.
- **Anglo-Saxon** is used by some historians to designate the [Germanic tribes](#) who invaded and settled the south and east of [Britain](#)
- **Anglo-Saxon** era denotes the period of English history between about **550 and 1066**.
- Three Germanic tribes - **Angles, Saxons & Jutes**
- Old English was divided into four main dialects: **West Saxon, Mercian, Northumbrian and Kentish**.
- **Anglo-Saxons** way of life can be paralleled in northern Germany and Denmark, but also in northern France, the Netherlands and Scandinavia and there would have been an element of the original Romano-British population.
- **Christianisation** of the Anglo-Saxons began in **597** and was at least nominally completed by **686**.
- 

## Kings & Succession

- **600 - 800 seven kingdoms** of Northumbria, Mercia, Kent, East Anglia, Essex, Sussex and Wessex - and - Hwicce, Magonsaete, Kingdom of Lindsey and Middle Anglia.
- **800 - 1066** In the 9th century, the **Viking challenge** grew to serious proportions. First began to appear around 789, three longships appeared off the coast of Wessex. Local official sailed out to greet newcomers but the men from the ships struck him down at once and

killed him. In 869 King Edmund of East Anglia was captured by the Vikings. One legend describes how they tied him to a tree, fired arrows at him and then beheaded him. Body buried in Bury St Edmunds.

- **Offa - King of Mercia (758 - 796)** to be king for 40 years - a very powerful man and a successful warrior. Offa's Dyke by far the largest structure built in Anglo-Saxon times. 128 km long ditch running from north to south along the Welsh border. Land from the ditch made a bank or **dyke**. It may have been over 8 m high.
- An important development in the **9th century** was the **rise of the Kingdom of Wessex** - by the end of his reign **Alfred** was recognised as overlord by several southern kingdoms.
- **Alfred the Great King of Wessex (871-900)** - battles against the Vikings (the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles) - Vikings were attacking along the east coast for 50 years. **865-6 Kingdom of Northumbria** defeated by the Vikings. East Anglia was next, and finally Mercia.

Viking King, **Guthrum's**, army forced Alfred into the **marshes of Somerset** - he built a fort on the island of Athelney. Tale of the burning of the loaves.

Alfred tried to buy time by exchanging prisoners. In 878 Alfred struck back and defeated the Danes at the **battle of Edington**. Alfred was renamed Alfred the Great. To protect the country from more Viking invaders Alfred set up a **network of forts** known as **burhs**. Many of these burhs developed into towns.

**Alfred** instigated a resurgence in English culture - scholars from overseas, rebuilt monasteries and commissioned new books. He promoted English language and what united the Anglo-Saxon people.

- **Vikings established Jorvik and the Danelaw.**
- **Edward - son of Alfred became king of Wessex. (899 - 924)** Fought back against the Vikings driving them north.
- **Æthelstan (925 - 939) was the first king** to achieve direct rule over what is considered "**England**". **Æthelstan** - great-grandson of King Alfred - defeated the Vikings. He captured their stronghold at York in 927. Scotland, Wales and Cornwall soon also accepted him as king of all of Britain. In 937 he defeated a vast army of Britons and Vikings.

- **Edgar the Peaceful (959 - 975)** 16 years of peace free from Viking attacks. But many rich nobles were unhappy with Edgar's reforms that gave their land to the church.
- After Edgar died trouble returned. Edgar had two sons - **Edward (12 yrs) & Ethelred (9 yrs)**. Edward became king but was murdered 3 yrs later by **Ethelred** supporters. Edward was murdered while he visited his brother. Some accounts claim Aelfthryth (**Ethelred mother**) was involved. She offered Edward a drink as he arrived, while the murderer crept up behind and stabbed him. **Ethelred** turned out to be a weak king (and always tainted by his brother's murder).
- In **991 the Vikings** came back. **Ethelred was called the Unready** (meaning ill-advised). The English were defeated at the **Battle of Maldon** (despite the efforts of the giant, Byrhtnoth, who was beheaded). **Ethelred** tried to bribe the Vikings to stay away, but they continued to raid and in 1002 he ordered the **murder of all Danes in England**. The massacre enraged King Swein of Denmark who attacked.
- By **1014 Swein** defeated the whole of England and **Ethelred** and his family fled to Normandy.
- Swein's son - **Canute (1014 - 1035)** became King of England. He was then defeated by **Ethelred's son Edmund (Ironside)**. Canute returned in 1016 and after winning a victory agreed to split the kingdom with Edmund. After Edmund died, Canute again became king of all England. An apocryphal story tells of Canute demonstrating his lack of godly power to his nobles by failing to turn back the tide. Canute was very unpopular. To prevent an uprising he divided England into four regions Wessex, Mercia, Northumbria and East Anglia. He gave control of Wessex to an Englishman called Godwine. His strategy was largely successful and England was ruled peacefully while he was king. Canute married Ethelred's widow Emma. Edward, Ethelred's son continued to live in Normandy.
- A messy succession. **Harold (Canute's son) 1035 - 1039**. Then **Harthacanute (1039 - 1042)** first act was to order Harold's body dug up and thrown in a bog. When **Harthacanute** suddenly died after a drink at a wedding feast, **Edward** succeeded him as King of England.

- **Edward (1042 - 1066) The Confessor.** Was popular with ordinary people but he never got on with his nobles, especially the ambitious **Earl Godwine** of Wessex. **Godwine** was a powerful and rich man, in 1036 he had been involved in the murder Edward's brother, Alfred. Edward had no choice but to make an ally of Godwine by marrying him to his daughter, Edith. Edward established Westminster as the centre of English government. Edward knew that he was the last of Alfred's line to rule as he had no children, so in 1051 he named a distant cousin, William, Duke of Normandy as his heir. However, **Godwine** died and was succeeded by his son **Harold Godwinson**. By the Time Edward died in 1066 Harold was effectively running the country. He was Edward's natural successor.
- **Harold (1066 - 1066)** is crowned king. He defeats a Viking attack from the north at Stamford Bridge. And then takes his arm south to meet William at Hastings. His army is defeated.
- **William (1066 - 1087) The Conqueror, first Norman King.**

### Sutton-Hoo

Sutton-Hoo who was **found in 1939**.

There is a large mound of earth covering the burial of an important Anglo-Saxon chief probably keen Raedwald who ruled East Anglia in the seventh century. He was buried inside the ship along with lots of treasures which the Anglo-Saxons believed he would need in the afterlife. This ship is huge around 30 m from bow to stern and nearly 5 m at his widest. Archaeologists think the ship was dragged to the top of a cliff from the river below. It was then placed in a trench that had been specially dug for it. A hut was built in the middle of the ship and the coffin and treasures - grave goods - placed inside it. The ship was then completely covered with a mound of earth.

This is a pagan burial because Christians do not need grave goods. So the king that was buried had not converted to Christianity.

Some of the grave goods were not made in England but other countries. Some large silver dishes for example were made in the Middle East in about AD 500. This tells us that trade between England and the rest of

Europe was common in Anglo-Saxon times. The fact that these foreign goods are often much older than the grave tell us that people handed goods down from one generation to the next.

The shield found at Sutton-Hoo had to be reconstructed. This is because all of its wooden parts have rotted away in the ground leaving only the metal parts intact. The metal parts included a gold covered bird of prey and a six winged dragon. These may be symbols of courage.

Anglo-Saxon people were cremated after they died and their remains placed in urns. Grave goods have also been found near urns.

Most Anglo Saxon burial sites have been looted.

## Culture

### **Power - Rulers & Kingdoms**

The Saxon society was made up of rich and poor, of Freeman and slaves. It was war like times the stronger and more ruthless you were the more successful and powerful you became.

**The King ('over-King' - Bretwalda)** was a warlord. His job was to provide opportunities for plunder and glory this was how he paid his followers if he did not, then he could expect to be murdered and a stronger person put in his place. You remained King for as long as you could defeat your enemies. Kings could not remain peaceful because they had to get treasure or bounty for their followers. There were no clear rules of succession, would-be kings were often stabbed to death by rivals before they could be crowned. Kings were often executed after a battle, if they lost.

Below the king were **freemen**. If you had more than five hides of land you were a **Thane**, Thanes were noblemen. Bodyguards to the king and full-time warriors. Senior noblemen were called **Earls**. People who owned less than five hides of land called **Ceorls** (churls). They had to work their own land and the land of their Lord. They could also be called up to the part time army. The slaves were called **Thralls**. Slaves were captured enemies.

If you were poor, you might sell a son or daughter into slavery so that someone else would take over the job of feeding them. And if you could not pay off your debts you would be made into a slave until you had paid

them off. The children of slaves were also slaves, it was possible to be bought out of slavery.

## War

**Enemies** - Picts and Celts. Later Vikings.

Earth bank was often built around the village for protection. With wooden stakes driven into the top of it. There might also be a stone watchtower which made part of the church. The church towers had upper rooms that could only be reached by ladder. Defenders could throw rocks on attackers below. Many Stone churches were built against existing stone watchtowers.

## Family

Lived in single room huts made of wood. Nobles lived in larger single room houses called Hall Houses. Some homes had a sunken floor which was filled with straw and then covered with planks. This helped keep the home warm in winter and was also somewhere to store things. There was usually a hearth in the centre of the house a place for cooking and heating.

## Shelter

Anglo-Saxon is **settled** in places near to rivers and the sea. The British fled to hilly lands in the west or stayed often living as the Anglo-Saxon slaves. At this time most of Britain was still covered in Forest. Usually settled in places that could easily be reached by boat. Most settlements were small home to a chieftain and a small number of followers. They had to be places that were easy to defend. An island in the river was a favourite choice. Another popular place was inside a sharp curve or meander in the river. Third place was in the angle where two rivers met.

The first Anglo-Saxon settlements were tiny. But over the centuries they grew larger and became more organised. Nevertheless even the largest were home to no more than a few hundred people.

The basics. Village people needed water, food, fuel for heating and cooking and materials for homes and clothes. The village also need to protect itself. Water could most easily come from a river or spring. With more effort, it could come from a well. If the village was sited next to a river, however, it was vital to choose a place that did not get flooded. Food

could only come from nearby land, so most villages would be placed near to easily worked fertile soils. Other areas, with heavy clays or acid soils, were left alone. Wood for fuel and wood, mud, straw, reeds and dung to make buildings. Wood came from woodland, and reeds from marshlands by the river. The forest could also feed pigs.

### **Work**

Anglo-Saxons villages were surrounded by two or three large open fields. The fields were divided into narrow strips and each family received a number of strips to farm. Each year one field was left without any crop growing so that the soil could recover.

### **Child - rearing**

#### **Embellishment**

Anglo-Saxons made fine weapons and armour and the most beautiful and intricate jewellery.

Most people wore Lucky charms, some women wore strange keys like metal objects which they hung from their waste.

Colourful brooches and fine weapons. The Lindisfarne gospels - pages are alive with illustrations of spiralling and coiling lines of beaked serpent creatures.

They loved to listen and tell stories and particularly enjoyed trying to solve word riddles.

### **Worship**

Bede

Pagans and Christians

Christianisation of the Anglo-Saxons began in 597 and was at least nominally completed by 686.

Pagan - customs and beliefs - anglo-saxons became warriors because to die in battle was a glorious death and you could enter Valhalla a banqueting hall ruled over by Woden.

#### **Pagan Gods**

- Woden - god of war & wisdom (Wednesday)

- Frigg - Goddess of love (Friday)

- Thunor - god of thunder (Thursday)

- Tiw - god of battle (Tuesday)

Gods were believed to live in special or 'holy' places, usually where a spring bubbled up through the ground or where a group of trees clustered.

Anglo-Saxons also believed that the world was inhabited by giants, dragons, monsters and elves.

**Christain conversion** - Pope sent missionary St Augustine in 597.

Converted Ethelbert King of Kent to Christianity. Ethelbert gave Augustine the site of the old Roman church at Canterbury.

By the second half of the seventh century there were monasteries and churches all over Britain. Long-running conflict between the Irish and Roman Christians. Came to a head over the dating of Easter, in 664 they held a meeting at Whitby Abbey to settle their differences. They agreed to follow Rome.

Monasteries followed certain rules.

From 668 there was a golden age of Anglo-Saxon learning. Some Monasteries began to make elaborate manuscripts with exquisite illustrations known as illuminations.

## **Myth & Memory**

### **Beowulf**

**King Arthur** - legends and myths - some Britain's fought back against the Anglo-Saxon invasions. Modern historians think they have found a British war leader who fought against the Anglo-Saxon invaders around 500. The evidence for Anglo-Saxon history is incomplete. This is why it is sometimes called the dark ages.

Later Anglo-Saxons believed Roman remains were built by Giants and haunted by ghosts.

## **Nourishment**

Food was fairly basic and often difficult to find if the harvest had been poor. Most river water was polluted and unsafe to drink. So barley was used to make weak beer, which was drunk instead of water. People rarely ate meat pigs were the only animals raised for meat. Wild animals such as deer and wild boar was still common and could be hunted in the forests, but only

if you were the land owner. Food was dried salted or pickled so it would last throughout the year.

### **Learning**

What we know about the early years is almost entirely from a few accounts written much later. All of the accounts are written by monks and other men at the church. Venerable **Bede**, Jarrow and Monkwearmouth - The Ecclesiastical History of the English People.

**Monasteries** were centres of learning. Monks copied the bible and other religious books. They had to be written by hand on the skin of calves, they had no paper.

Anglo-Saxon runes.

### **Travel**

Most people travelled by boat and lived close to rivers.

### **Celebration & Ritual**

Burial ritual - the dead received grave goods.

### **Law**

Crime and punishment

The Anglo-Saxons didn't have prisons. People found guilty of crimes were either executed or punished with fines. If they ran away, they became 'outlaws' (outside the law), and anyone could hunt them down - unless they hid in a church. The fine for breaking into someone's home was 5 shillings (25p), paid to the home-owner. For minor crimes like stealing, a nose or a hand might be cut off.

If a person killed someone, they paid money to the dead person's relatives. This was 'wergild'. The idea was to stop long quarrels or 'blood feuds' between families. Had a blood price, even parts of the body had a price. An eye was worth more than a ear, a leg more than an arm.

### **Health**

Life was very harsh. They made their own soap from a mixture of ashes, animal fats and urine. Even nick combs have been found in their graves.

They did not know how diseases could be spread and they relied on cures and remedies. People rarely lived beyond their mid 40s because of injury and disease.

### **Clothing**

Loose fitting tunics. Women's tunics came down to their ankles, men wore knee length tunics over cloth leggings. They wore a bely which was also used to carry knives, keys and other tools. In winter they would wear cloaks fixed in place with branches. They carried leather bags and ornaments such as beads and metal clasps, they wore leather shoes.

### **Leisure**

### **Climate**

### **Territory**

Some of the Anglo-Saxon tribes were invited in by the British who needed help fighting against the Celts. The Vortigern of Kent invited in Anglo-Saxon army to help him fight against other raiders, it was a big mistake, as soon as they had defeated his enemies they turned on Vortigern and took over his kingdom.

The first Anglo-Saxon villages or often named after the chieftain who won the land. 'Ing' and 'folk' both mean people. The first part of the place name will probably be the name of the local chieftain. Four example Reading means 'Redda's' people and Hastings 'Haesta's' people.

Later villages were named after a feature of their surroundings for example Oxford got its name because it was a place where Oxen were driven across a ford in a river and wic means farm as in Norwich.

Other places were named after pagan gods. Four example the town of Wednesfield in the West Midlands was named in honour of the god Woden.

King Alfred established burhs were no more than 30 km apart. A burh a fort with earth walls and a dyke. Many places fortified at this time have names ending in - bury (Glastonbury). Good places for merchants to live and trade. Many recaptured towns became burhs. Many have names ending in - wic or -wich (Norwich and Ipswich).

## **Historical Record**

Three main types of evidence: written records, objects found in the ground, and objects passed down through the generations (artefacts).

Very little evidence survives. Called the dark ages. Four main reasons: 1. peoples moving home, 2. fighting possessions destroyed, 3. built in wood, 4. very few written records.

Most famous written record is the Anglo-Saxon chronicle written by a man called Bede who lived in a monastery at Jarrow in Northumbria.

Beowulf also contains useful everyday information. Although some parts are inevitably exaggerated.

Aerial photographs can also give useful archaeological information.

Buildings, pottery and coins also provide useful information.

Archaeological Discoveries: Sutton-Hoo and Staffordshire hoard.

## **Further Activities**

**Geography** - rivers, settlements, forests, use of the land, hills

**RE** - Pagan - customs and beliefs - Anglo-Saxons became warriors because to die in battle was a glorious death and you could enter Valhalla a banqueting hall ruled over by Woden. Christian conversion - Pope sent missionary St Augustine.

### Pagan Gods

- Woden - god of war & wisdom (Wednesday)
- Frigg - Goddess of love (Friday)
- Thunor - god of thunder (Thursday)
- Tiw - god of battle (Tuesday)

**English** - riddles

The moon is my father  
the moon my mother.  
I have a million brothers,  
I die when I reach the land.

Thousands lay up gold within this house,  
but no man has made it.

Spears past counting guards to this house,  
but no man looks after it.

## Artefacts

Staffordshire hoard: <http://www.staffordshirehoard.org.uk/staritems> &  
<http://www.staffordshirehoard.org.uk/gallery>

### **Ordinary (every day) objects**

Broaches

Pendants

Necklace

Rings

Bracelets

Horns - hunting, drinking

Shoe leather and buckles

Belt buckles

Casket

Pottery

Metal bowls - cooking

Coins

Combs

Spoons

Knives

Sewing needles

Horse buckles etc

### **Objects of war**

Shields

Swords (pommels & hilts)

Helmets

Armour

Arrow heads

Spear heads

**Religious objects (pre and post Christian)**

Crucifix

Book bindings

Cauldrons - worship and ceremony

**Ceremonial or high-status objects**

**Motifs**

Animals - Zoomorphic

Patterns

Fine gold and Garnet - jewellery

Ivory (whale and walrus)

**From all over Europe and the middle east**

**Relics**