

Keystage history

Knowledge organiser

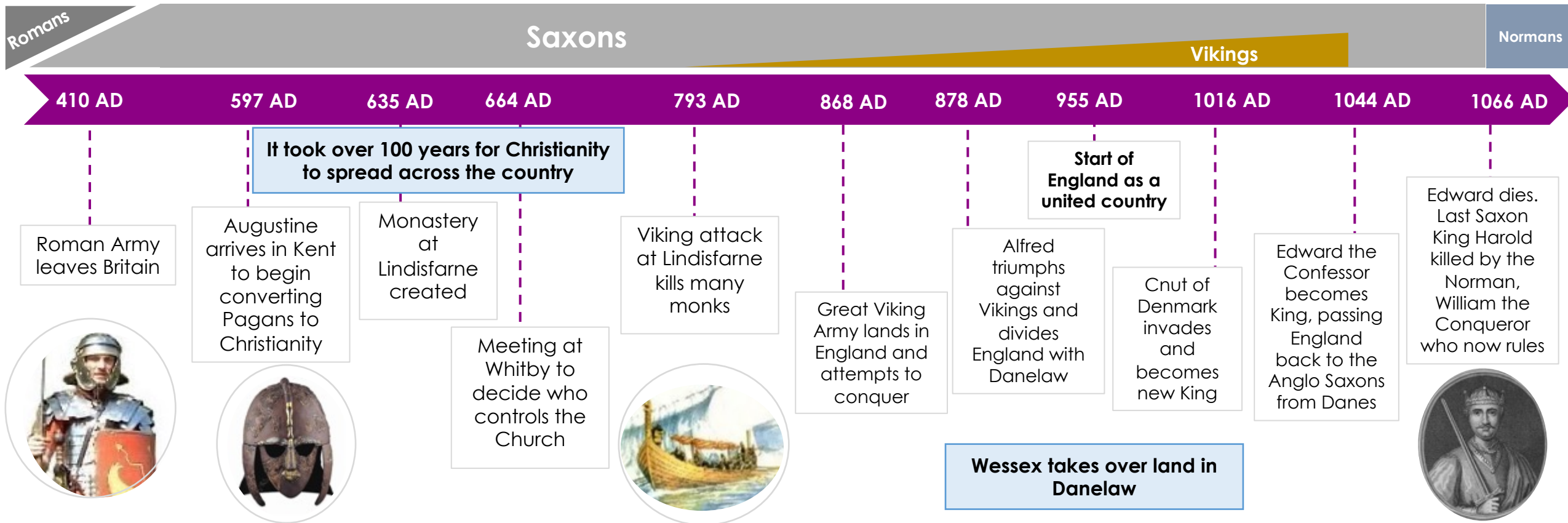
Anglo-Saxons



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Why this period is important

During this period England emerged as a recognisable nation and Christianity became established. The recent coronation of Charles III is the latest for a king of England : over a thousand years ago, that of the Saxon King Edgar was the first. King Alfred was the central Saxon figure, the only king to be called 'Great'. He was responsible for defeating the Vikings who threatened to control the country for many years through raids and then attempts to conquer. The Saxon period is often called the Dark Ages but many think this is unfair as the Saxons were skilled craftsmen who introduced new long-lasting systems of keeping law and order as well as memorable literature.



Key vocabulary

Cemetery	Burial place
Cenotaph	Empty grave to remember someone important buried elsewhere
Christianity	Religion based on life and teachings of Jesus Christ which came to Britain in Saxon times
Danelaw	Name given to northern and eastern part of Britain under Danish control from 9 th to 11 th century
Hoard	Store of money often hidden away to come back to later
Hypothesis	Theory that has to be tested
Monastery	Large religious building where monks lived and prayed
Pagan	Word used to describe people who didn't follow one of the main religions
Picts	Group of people who lived in part of Britain what we think of as Scotland
Sceptre	Looks like a stick richly decorated, carried by kings only
Settlement	Place people moved to live in
Sutton Hoo	Site of very important archaeological excavation in 1939.
Treaty	A formal, legally binding written agreement
Turning point	Time when things changed suddenly
Urn	Container for ashes
Viking	Name given to people from Scandinavia who raided traded and settled in Britain between the 9 th and 11 th centuries
Wergild	Fine to be paid to someone's family if a member was killed or injured

Top takeaways

Having studied this topic you should be able to understand:

1. the reasons why the Anglo-Saxons invaded
2. that it was during this time that England became united, with Wessex as the leading kingdom.
3. that it was at this time that England became a Christian country.
4. that King Alfred was the only English king to be given the name 'Great' and know why not everybody agrees that he deserves it
5. that the Saxons were frequently under attack from the Vikings until Alfred defeated them and they settled in the Danelaw area to the north and east
6. It was during this period that there were better laws and a flowering of literature.



Who's who?

Alfred	King of Wessex, known as the Great, ruled 871-899
Asser	Man who wrote flattering life history of Alfred
Augustine	In the late 6 th century, he was sent from Rome to England to bring Christianity to the Anglo-Saxons.
Bede	He wrote a very important book on the early history of Britain,
Burhs	Forts built in 9 th century to defend against Viking raids
Gildas	6 th century monk who wrote a history of Britain before and during Saxon period
Guthrum	Danish leader and King of East Anglia who fought against Alfred, later christened Athelstan
Hengist and Horsa	Leaders who some people think arrived to take over Britain in AD449.
Raedwald	King of East Anglia died about 625AD
Vortigern	King of the Britons at the time of the arrival of the Saxons under Hengist and Horsa in the 5 th century

Britain 400-500

7 kingdoms before 878

After 878

