

# Vikings vs Anglo-Saxons

Learning Objective:

To explore what life was like for Vikings living in Britain.



**What have we learnt so far about the Viking and Anglo-Saxon struggle for the kingdom of England?**





## Did you remember these points?

- ◆ Anglo-Saxons invaded and settled Britain after the Romans, forcing the Celts who already lived there into Wales and Scotland.
- ◆ Anglo-Saxons developed seven kingdoms which were constantly battling for power.
- ◆ Vikings first attacked England in 793 and continued to raid Britain for the next century.
- ◆ Vikings began colonising England, gaining control over the northeast by overpowering the Anglo-Saxons.
- ◆ King Alfred of Wessex established peace between Anglo-Saxons and Vikings in 886 with the Treaty of Wedmore.
- ◆ Vikings established the Danelaw in the northeast while King Alfred became 'King of all England' in the southwest.



What do you think  
might have been  
**different** about the  
lives of those living  
under the Danelaw and  
those living in the rest  
of England? What  
might have been  
**similar**?





**For the everyday people living under both Anglo-Saxon and Viking control, life was similar in many respects. Farmers worked the land, growing crops and raising animals for meat, leather, wool and other products.**



**There were also craftworkers who worked with various materials, such as metal and leather, to create weapons, pots, belts, purses, drinking horns, and other objects.**



**What material do you think this Viking is working with?**





**Viking society was structured in a similar way to that of the Anglo-Saxons. There was a king who was the most important and powerful person. Instead of nobles there were chieftains who were often land owners and leaders in battles. Both Anglo-Saxons and Vikings had both freemen and slaves.**

**This picture shows a Viking chieftain with his family. What tells you he is an important person?**



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**For both Anglo-Saxons and Vikings, the women worked in the home, preparing food, looking after the children and making the clothes. Most children did not go to school and could not read or write. Instead, they helped their parents and learnt how to do the jobs they would need to do when they grew up. Boys would learn how to farm, hunt and be brave warriors while girls would learn how to run the household, cook and make clothes.**

**Viking  
women  
preparing a  
feast**



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Some Vikings learnt to read and write using runes. The runic alphabet is a series of symbols to represent a sound, much like our alphabet. They would use runes to label their possessions and so that people like merchants could keep track of their stock and sales. They also used runes to label gravestones. They did not use runes to write stories or religious texts but they carved runes into stone and wood as opposed to writing on parchment like the Anglo-Saxons.



Have a look at the runes on the next slide. They have been matched with the letters of your alphabet. What do you notice about this alphabet?





Ɔ	a	Ɔ	b	<	c	⌘	d	Ɔ	e	ƴ	f
X	g	Ɔ	h		i	⌘	j	<	k	ƴ	l
⌘	m	†	n	⌘	o	Ɔ	p	ƴ	q	Ɔ	r
Σ	s	↑	†	Ɔ	u	ƴ	v	ƴ	w		x
ƴ	y	ƴ	z	<p>Which letters are the same?</p> <p>Which letters are missing?</p>							





**Vikings also used runes to tell fortunes. They would put small stones, each with a different rune written on it, in a small bag. Fortune tellers would then pull individual stones out at a time and use them to tell the future.**





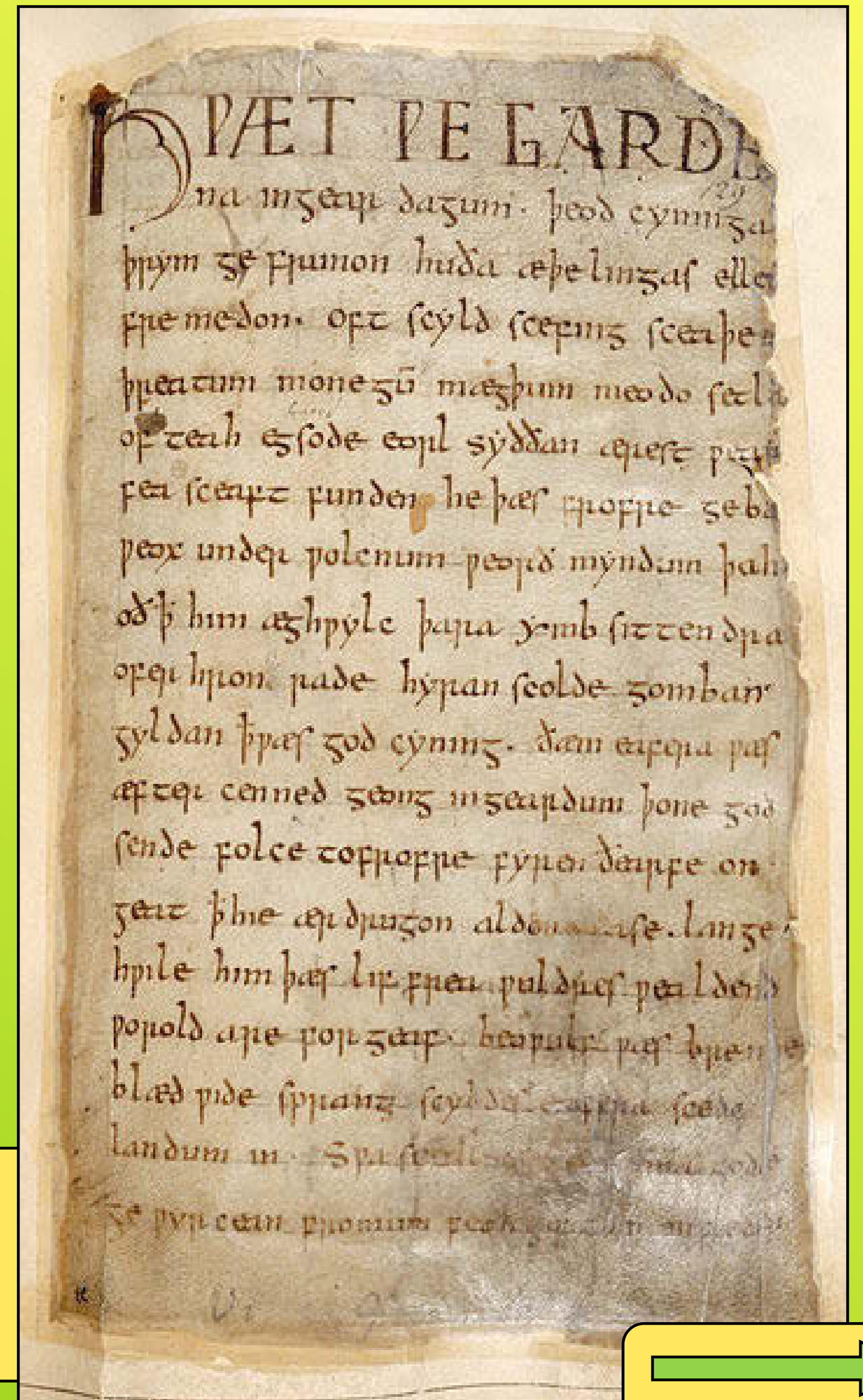


Like the Anglo-Saxons, it was generally the wealthier people who learnt to read and write. Poor farmers did not have the time. The Anglo-Saxons wrote using the alphabet we use today. After the rule of Alfred the Great, they wrote in both Latin and English. They recorded history and wrote out beautiful holy texts.



Like the Anglo-Saxons, Vikings told stories orally. They would be learned by heart and passed down from generation to generation. One of the most popular was Beowulf which told of a Swedish prince battling a fearsome monster called Grendel. This story was finally written down by a monk in the tenth century which is why we still have it today. These Viking tales were known as sagas.

This is the first page of the Beowulf saga, written by an Anglo-Saxon monk around the year AD 1000.





Homes were very similar for both Anglo-Saxons and Vikings. They were made from wood and mud with thatched roofs. Some Viking houses in the northeast were covered with turf instead of thatch.





The Vikings brought their language with them when they settled in Britain. This language is known as Old Norse today but the Vikings themselves called it 'dönsk tunga' meaning 'Danish tongue'. Much of our modern English language comes from this language. For example, many words starting in 'th' and 'sk' originate from Old Norse.

### Words we got from the Vikings

they	there	then	thrust	thrift
skirt	skull	skin	skid	skittle
gill	gale	knife	troll	husband
clown	keg	freckle	window	gate

Many of our place names come from Old Norse too, such as anything ending in -by, -thwaite or -thorpe.





The Vikings also brought their religion to England. The Norse gods were similar to the old Anglo-Saxon gods. These have influenced our lives today, much like the Old Norse language has. Our days of the week, for example, are named after the Viking gods. However, like the Anglo-Saxons, the Vikings converted to Christianity soon after they settled in Britain.

Can you guess which of our days of the week are named after these Norse gods?



Tyr



Odin



Thor



Freyja







**Tyr**

**Tuesday**



**Odin**

**Wednesday**



**Thor**

**Thursday**



**Freyja**

**Friday**



**Did you guess those correctly?**







Let's think back...

**What was life like for Vikings  
living in England?**

**What was similar about their  
lives and the lives of Anglo-  
Saxons?**

**What was different?**

