

Who were the Anglo-Saxons and what was important to them?

Timeline of events

410	Romans left Britain.
449	Anglo-Saxon invasions. Germanic tribes from the north of Europe settled in Britain.
597	Roman missionary Augustine arrived in Britain, beginning the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity.
750	Beowulf composed the Old English epic poem that has told us about Anglo-Saxon way of life.
793	Viking invasions began against the Anglo-Saxons. The first Viking raid was in 793, when a group landed on Lindisfarne.
871	Alfred the Great (born 849) was King of Wessex from 871-899. He instigated the translation of many Latin works into English.
878	Alfred defeated Danes. Following the Battle of Ethandun, a treaty was signed acknowledging the rule of the Danish king Guthrum in the north and east of Britain.
1066	Norman Conquest. End of Anglo-Saxon rule.

Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms



The Britons fought hard against the Anglo-Saxons but by about 600 AD they had been forced to retreat; mainly to Wales and Cornwall. The rest of Britain divided into seven kingdoms: Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Wessex, Sussex, Kent and Essex.

By AD 878, there was just one Anglo-Saxon kingdom left, Wessex, as the other kingdoms had been overrun by Viking invaders.

King Alfred the Great was the king of Wessex and the first Anglo-Saxon king to defeat the



While the Romans preferred to live in towns, the Anglo-Saxons preferred to live in small villages. Houses were made from wood and natural Resources and centred around a central hall where the Thane of the village lived.

Everyone who lived in an Anglo-Saxon village contributed to the running of the village in some way, even the children.



Bronze Helmet and remains of a 27 metre long Anglo-Saxon ship found in 1938 at Sutton Hoo, Suffolk.





Statue of Alfred the Great



The organisation of society.

King



Thanes (nobles who owned most of the land and acted as judges and rulers).

Churls (free peasants able to own land but had to pay taxes to the thanes).



Slaves (not free to own anything).

Early Saxons were pagans, this means that they worshipped many Gods and Goddesses, but invaders brought over missionaries changing the religion to Christianity over the following 100 years.

St Augustine was the first Archbishop of Canterbury in 597.



Key Vocabulary			
Angles	Tribes from an area today known as modern day Denmark.	Thane	The chief of the village.
Saxons	A tribe from the north coast of Europe, especially Germany.	Churls	Free people able to own land but must pay taxes to the Thane.
Jutes	A Germanic tribe from Jutland in modern Denmark.	Runes	Used by early Anglo-Saxons as an alphabet in their writing system.
Invaders	People who enter an area and take control of it by force.	Settlers	People that come to establish a community for a specific purpose, for example, farming.
Missionary	A religious person who spreads their faith to others.	Paganism	Early Anglo-Saxon religious belief of worshipping many Gods and Goddesses.
Sutton Hoo	Place in Suffolk where archaeologists discovered Anglo-Saxon treasure.	Christianity	A religion based on the teachings of Jesus Christ.
Legacy	The long-lasting impact of particular events that took place in the past.		