

?Why was the 'Dark Ages' so named? Is it a fair name?

Key Figures

- People– How did William the Conqueror contribute to the government we know today?
- Power– Why do we know so little about this period of history?
- Place in History– What happened in the Middle Ages to provide opportunity for future change?
- Purpose– How did life change after the Romans left Britain?

Marco Polo
William The Conqueror

Links



Year 3 (Summer Term)
EMPIRE– Romans, Georgians ,& Victorians

Key Knowledge Focus

- ⇒ The 'Dark Ages' started when the Roman army left Britain and finished when the Saxons ruled the whole of England.
- ⇒ From about AD 410 to AD 710.
- ⇒ By the year 550, the Roman Empire had collapsed, leaving only small bits and pieces of its culture throughout Europe, such as the many roads they had built. This important year (550) is what we consider to be the beginning of “the Early Middle Ages” and lasted until 1000.
- ⇒ As the Roman Empire fell so the culture and knowledge was lost. Art, history, engineering and technology disappeared.
- ⇒ During the Roman Empire records were well kept and information stored within local government, however when the Romans left there was no central government, no record keeping hence the term 'Dark Ages'.
- ⇒ The Anglo-Saxons first tried invading in the **4th century**, but the Roman army were quick to send them home again! Years later – around 450AD – the Ancient Romans left Britain, the Anglo-Saxons seized their chance and this time they were successful! Anglo Saxon chieftains Heingist and Horsa led an attach on Kent in 455.
- ⇒ 556 Seven kingdoms are created across Britain
- ⇒ Such communities were organised and led by chieftains or kings.
- ⇒ Following the final withdrawal of the Roman legions from the provinces of Britannia in around AD 408 these small kingdoms were left to preserve their own order and to deal with invaders and waves of

migrant peoples such as the Picts from beyond Hadrian's Wall, the Scots from Ireland and Germanic tribes from the continent.

- ⇒ By AD 650, the British Isles were a patchwork of many kingdoms founded from native or immigrant communities and led by powerful chieftains or kings. In their personal feuds and struggles between communities for control and supremacy, a small number of kingdoms became dominant: Bernicia and Deira (which were united to form Northumbria in AD 651), Lindsey, East Anglia, Mercia, Wessex and Kent.

Saxon Britain 600-900AD

- ⇒ Until the late seventh century, a series of warrior-kings in turn established their own personal authority over other kings, usually won by force or through alliances and often cemented by dynastic marriages.



* See additional sheet on the Vikings

Religion

- ⇒ The most famous of these kings was Aethelberht, king of Kent (reigned c.560-616)became the first English king to be converted to Christianity.
- ⇒ It wasn't until the **Pope in Rome** sent over a **missionary** – a monk called **Augustine** – to England in 597AD, that the Anglo-Saxons became Christians. Augustine convinced the Anglo-Saxon **King Ethelbert of Kent** to convert to Christianity and slowly the rest of the country followed suit. Pagan temples were turned into **churches** and more churches (built of wood) started popping up all over Britain.
- ⇒ *One of the biggest changes that impacted the world during the middle ages, was the spreading of*

Key Vocabulary

Topic	Skill
Noble	Evidence
Vassals	Sources
Serfs	Compare
Famine	Consider
The Black Death	Anglo Saxons



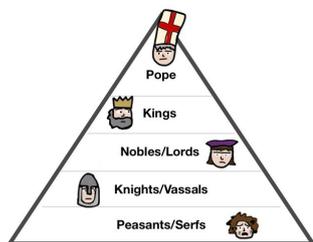
?How did the Magna Carta change life in Britain?**Key Figures**

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Key Knowledge Focus

Christianity. By the time the early middle ages had come to an end, nearly all of Europe was Christian or under Christian rule.

- ⇒ From 793AD, the Vikings invaded Anglo-Saxon Britain several times, plundering and raiding towns and villages along the British coastline. The Anglo-Saxons tried to hold them back but groups of Vikings eventually settled in different parts of the country, especially York (or Jorvik, as they named it) – making it the second biggest city after London. The next invasion came in **1066AD**, in one of the most famous battles of our history – the **Battle of Hastings**. When the Anglo-Saxon **King Edward** died without an heir, a new king was chosen to rule England – **King Harold II. William the Conqueror** of Normandy and **Harald Hardrada**, the **King of Norway**, weren't keen on the new English king and thought that they both had the right to rule Britain.
- ⇒ Britain changed to a system of **Feudalism**. Noble classes owned land and lower classes were loyal to land owners which in turn earned them protection. This was a way by which William controlled land and landowners across the country.
- ⇒ **Feudalism** The king was at the top of society, and therefore at the top of the feudal system. When he conquered England, King William took all of the land in the country. To manage this, he gave large areas of land to noblemen, including the clergy, lords and barons, in return for them raising him money and an army.
The social structure of the Middle Ages was organized round the system of Feudalism. Feudalism in practice meant that the country was not managed by the king but by individual lords, or barons, who administered their own estates, dispensed their own justice, minted their own money, levied taxes and tolls, and demanded military service from vassals.



- ⇒ During this period farming increased as climate in Europe improved. Therefore there was an increase in food and the population levels increased.
- ⇒ The development of larger cities offered protection to

inhabitants.

August 1042 Edward the **Confessor** becomes king of England

6 January 1066 Edward the Confessor dies and is succeeded by **Harold Godwinson (Harold II)**

25 December 1066 William of Normandy (**William the Conqueror**) is crowned king of England

- ⇒ William the Conqueror attempted to unite the Normans of France with Anglo Saxons. Norman culture began to influence society so much that French became the common language spoken by nobles.
- ⇒ William changed the feudal system and created the first form of government.
- ⇒ In 1085 the **Domesday Survey** was begun and all of England was recorded, so William knew exactly what his new kingdom contained and how much tax he could raise in order to fund his armies.

Other significant aspects of this period

- ⇒ The plague arrived in Europe in 1347. Carried by fleas that infected rats and were then transported via boats across Europe. Poor conditions in England at the time allowed the disease to spread rapidly.
- ⇒ This period brought with it the realisation that improvements needed to be made in medicine. Once the plague had ended Europe began to rebuild. English was widely spoken, literature became available, trade increased. Exploration was on the rise.
- ⇒ Marco Polo was a merchant and explorer who travelled throughout the Far East and China (*The silk road*) for much of his life. His stories were the basis for what much of Europe knew about Ancient China for many years. He lived from 1254 to 1324.
- ⇒ *The Silk Road* was a trade route that went from China to Eastern Europe. It went along the northern borders of China, India, and Persia and ended up in Eastern Europe near today's Turkey and the Mediterranean Sea.