

Why were the Vikings so successful?

In this unit of work the children will learn who the Vikings people were and where/when they lived, what their religious beliefs were and about areas of their life such as food, clothing and laws.

They will be making Viking porridge, creating Viking long boats and shields and creating Viking settlements on Minecraft.

In this unit children will:

- Develop knowledge of the Vikings - who they were, and when and where they lived.
- Know how their religious beliefs influenced their daily lives.
- Learn how and why the Vikings were so successful with their raids.
- Identify and use sources of evidence to learn about the Vikings settlements in the UK and Europe and attempt to replicate a settlement.
- Understand key features of a Vikings daily life including food, clothes and transport.
- Recognise similarities and differences between this and prior learning.

Prior Learning

Year 1 Explorers

Year 3 Stone Age

Year 4 Ancient Egypt, Romans

Cross Curricular Links

Geography Map work

ART/DT: Sculpting, Cooking

ICT: Using computer programmes to design

Maths: 4 and 6 figure grid references

Key Vocabulary

Chieftain – The leader of a village or small group of people

Danelaw – The area of England ruled by the Vikings

Freeman – A person who is not a slave and free to choose who he or she worked for

Longship – A Viking ship with a sail and oars, also called a dragonship

Monastery – The building where monks live

Pagan – A person who believed in many gods

Runes – The name given to the Viking alphabet

Thatched – A roof covered in straw

Trader – A person who sells goods

Norsemen - The name given to people living in Scandinavia at the time of the Vikings. It means 'men of the North'.

Scandinavia - The countries of Norway, Sweden and Denmark. This is the area Vikings came from.

Plunder - Take loot during a raid, often causing damage at the same time.

Key Knowledge

- The Vikings were famous for sailing huge distances from their home in Scandinavia between AD 800 and 1066 to raid and plunder, but they also traded with people from other countries.
- The name 'Viking' means 'a pirate raid' in the Old Norse language.
- Around 500 years before Christopher Columbus 'discovered' the American continent, Vikings had visited its shores, landing in what is now Canada in around AD 1000.
- Among the many gods Vikings believed in were Thor, the god of thunder, and Loki, a cheeky mischief-maker who could shape-shift to become all different kinds of animals. What a beast!
- The Vikings were expert boat builders and sailors. Keels – central spines along boats' bottoms – made their 16 to 37m 'longboats' easy to steer, and because these were designed to float high in the water, landing on beaches was easy.
- The Vikings were eco-pioneers – sort of! The 'long houses' where families lived would have turf roofs to help keep in the heat.
- Fenrir Grayback, the werewolf in the Harry Potter books, was named after a ferocious giant wolf from ancient Viking mythology.
- When important Vikings died, they would be placed with all their clothes, jewellery, even their



- Bitter Scandinavian winters and frozen fjords didn't stop the Vikings from tucking into their favourite food – fish! During warmer months they would hang up and dry fish to eat later.
- 'Berserkers' was the name of some terrifying Viking warriors who wore bear or wolf skins and howled in battle like wild animals!

Key Questions

- What was Viking life like in Norway, Denmark and Sweden?
- When, where and why did Vikings settle in Britain?
- Why was King Alfred called the great?
- Why is it a myth that Vikings had horns on their helmets?
- What was the Vikings religion?
- What food did they eat?
- What were their homes like?