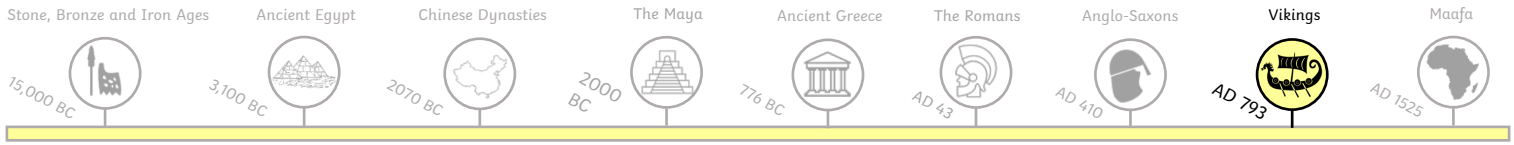
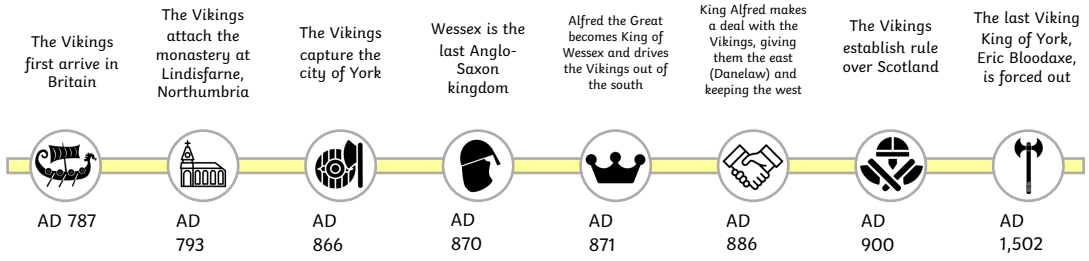
Phase 3 – The Vikings and Anglo-Saxons

When were the Vikings?



Viking Invasion

The Vikings' Timeline



What were Viking Warriors Like?

The Vikings came to Britain looking to steal and trade. They wanted land that they could take and claim as their own. They particularly liked to raid monasteries, like the one at Lindisfarne, as they contained valuable goods like gold and jewels, imported foods and other useful materials.

The Vikings went on to invade Scotland and in time they began to settle and stay there. They were able to build up an army and in AD 866 they captured the city of York. The Anglo-Saxon King Alfred the Great, who became King of Wessex in AD 871, managed to force the Vikings out of the South of England but this was short-lived. By AD 878 the Vikings had settled permanently overran Wessex and forced King Alfred into hiding.

How did the Vikings Live?

- Most Vikings lived on farms where they grew their own crops, such as oats and wheat. They also kept farm animals, such as cows, pigs and sheep which provided milk, wool and meat.
- Vikings used available natural resources to make their houses (e.g. stone or wood for the walls, a thatched roof and wattle and daub on the inside walls to keep in heat).
- The Vikings kept an open fire in their houses to provide heat and a place to cook. They hung meats and fish above the fire to preserve them with the smoke. They also preserved by curing (drying out with salt).
- Viking metal workers made objects from a wide range of different materials, from iron to gold.
- Most Vikings wore clothes made from wool or linen.
- Men wore trousers and tunics which were fastened
- at the waist with a leather belt. Women wore long
- sleeved linen dresses under a woollen apron type dress.
- Jewellery was worn to show off how rich a
- person was.

Beliefs

When the Vikings first came to Britain they were pagans. Vikings believed in a polytheistic religion – a religion with many deities. Gods and goddesses were very important in Norse culture. The Vikings often made decisions or acted in ways to please the gods. There were many different Viking gods, each possessing a mixture of human traits and magical abilities. They were split into different groups who were at war with each other, until they realised they were equally powerful. The pagan Vikings believed in life after death, so people were buried with their possessions when they died so that they could use them in the next life. Over time, many Vikings converted to Christianity.

Key Vocabulary

DANE: A person who comes from Denmark.

KINGDOM: A country or region that is ruled by a king or queen.

MONASTERY: A building in which monks live.

PAGAN: People who did not believe in Christianity but believed in many gods.

PILLAGE: To steal property using violent methods.

PLUNDER: To steal things from somewhere.

RAID: To suddenly attack somewhere with the aim of causing damage, rather than occupying land.

SETTLEMENT: A place where people have come to live and have built homes.