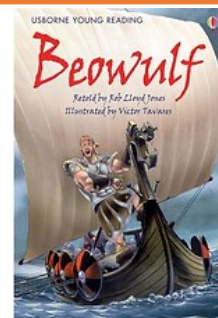
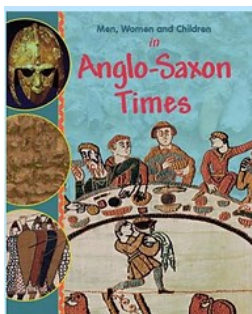
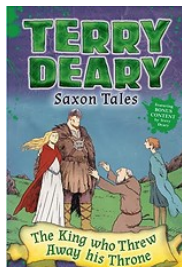
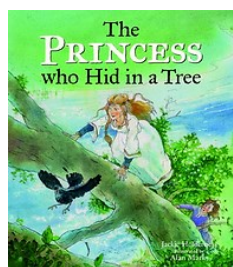


Theme Overview

“Saxon King” is a competency-based thematic unit with a history focus, telling the inspirational story of Harold Godwinson. He is famous for being the last Anglo-Saxon king of England, ruling as a talented leader in peace and war. Pupils will learn, through his life story, all about his achievements and what makes him such an important historical figure.

Recommended Reading...



What we should know...

Harold Godwinson was born around 1020 in Wessex, England. This was during the Anglo-Saxon period, which lasted from 410 to 1066. Harold's mother, Gytha, belonged to a powerful Danish dynasty with close connections to Canute, the Danish king of England. Harold's father was Godwin, Earl of Wessex and Kent, an important supporter of the king.

Who?



Line of Kings

After King Canute died, the next king was Edward I, the Confessor. Godwin supported Edward and he soon became a very powerful earl in Edward's kingdom. As Harold grew up, he too became an earl and worked closely with his father and Edward. Kings had earls and dukes to control areas for them, so they did not always have to travel there. Harold's father was one of these earls - the Earl of Wessex. In 1045 Harold became the Earl of East Anglia, Essex, Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire in England. This meant that, during this time in history, England was ruled by all of the Godwinsons and King Edward, making Harold Godwinson and his family very powerful. Harold's life went from being an earl alongside his father, to being chosen to be king by the Witan Council because he was deemed to have a rightful claim to the throne.

Big Battles

The Battle of Stamford Bridge: The Battle of Stamford Bridge took place near the village of Stamford Bridge, Yorkshire. On the 25th of September 1066, an English army under King Harold Godwinson fought an invading Norwegian army led by King Harald Hardrada. The English king's brother Tostig Godwinson, joined Hardrada's forces. After a brutal battle, both Hardrada and Tostig, along with a large number of the Norwegians, were killed.

The Battle of Hastings: Harold Godwinson was killed just weeks later when his army was defeated by William, Duke of Normandy and his army on 14th October 1066, who then became king.



The Bayeux Tapestry

The Normans made a huge embroidery for William that depicts the key events that happened from 1064 – 1066 and shows aspects of daily life, as well as the triumphs of the battlefield. It is believed that this evidence is a biased source.



Key Vocabulary you should discuss with your child

Bayeux Tapestry: an embroidered picture record showing the events of 1064 - 1066

Biased: an opinion or idea that isn't fair; prejudiced

Claim: to state or demand as one's right

Defeat: to beat in a game or battle

Dynasty: a series of rulers from the same family (or group)

Earl: a British nobleman

Evidence: something that gives proof or a reason to believe

Heir: a person who receives or has the right to receive another person's property or title after that person's death

Patronymics: where names are derived from the name of a father or male ancestor

Reign: rule by a king or queen

Rule: control

Supporter: someone who agrees with an idea, person, or group and wants it to succeed

Witan Council: a group of Anglo-Saxon noblemen who met to decide important matters, including who would be the next king

Concept Flow

- To know and be able to retell the life story of Harold Godwinson
- To know what Harold Godwinson was famous for
- To understand what makes Harold Godwinson an inspirational historical figure
- To understand the importance of courage and commitment

Please talk to your children about the information on this sheet. The more children discuss their learning the more likely they are to embed the learning to their memory. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact your child's class teacher.