

THE VIKINGS

The Vikings lived in Northern Europe during the Middle Ages. They were Norsemen or "Northmen" who became known as Vikings for the old Norse word for bay or creek: vik. They originally settled in the Scandinavian lands that are now Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. Vikings spoke their own language called Old Norse. They played a major role in Northern Europe during the Middle Ages, especially during the Viking Age which took place from 800 to 1066.



RAIDS

The word Viking actually means "to raid" in Old Norse. The Vikings boarded their long ships and headed across the waters to raid villages on Europe's northern coast and the islands of Great Britain, Scotland, and parts of France. Their first raids in England took place in 787. The Vikings were known to attack defenseless monasteries where monks lived. They had a bad reputation as barbarians, but to the Vikings, the monasteries were wealthy and undefended easy targets. Vikings are often depicted wearing helmets, but it is unlikely they actually wore them in battle. Most Vikings used long axes to fight, making it easy to cut through metal shields or helmets.

SETTLEMENTS

The Vikings eventually settled in lands outside Scandinavia. In the 9th century, they settled portions of Great Britain, Scotland, Germany, and Iceland. In the 10th century, they moved into northeastern Europe, including Russia. They also settled on the coast of northern France, where they established Normandy, meaning "northmen."

Many words in English come from old Norse. Here are just a few:

- | | |
|---------|----------|
| *egg | *gawk |
| *dirt | *snort |
| *creek | *lump |
| *cake | *scrawny |
| *shake | *anger |
| *race | |
| *plow | |
| *window | |



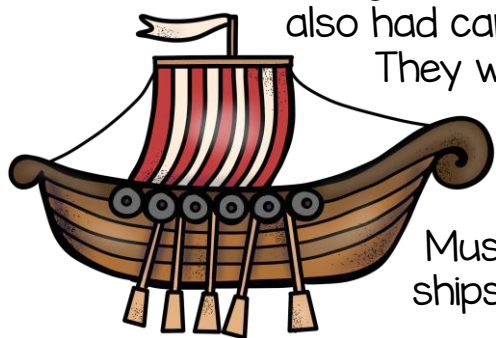
LEIF ERIKSSON

At the 11th century, the Vikings were at their peak of expansion. One Viking, Leif Eriksson, son of Erik the Red, actually made it to North America. He started a brief settlement in present-day Canada. This was hundreds of years before Columbus "discovered" America.



SHIPS

Vikings were famous for their longships made for exploration and raiding. They were long, narrow boats designed for speed. They were gently propelled by oars, but also had a sail to assist in windy conditions. Longships had a shallow draft, meaning they could float in shallow water, making it easy to land on beaches. Their longboats could fit 60 people at a time. The Vikings also had cargo ships called knarr used for trading.



They were deeper and wider than a longship so they could carry more cargo. The Vikings navigated by using the stars and the sun. In Roskilde, Denmark at the Viking Ship Museum, you can see five recovered Viking ships and observe how they built their ships.

HOMES

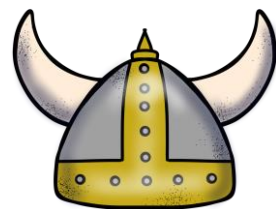
Viking houses were usually oblong in shape and often called longhouses. The main building was up to 100 feet long and sometimes had other buildings added on to it. The walls were built from wood, while the roofs were thatched with straw or weeds. Three generations of the same family often lived together. The hearth (fireplace) was at the center of Viking homes. An iron cauldron was used for heating water and for cooking. There was not much furniture in Viking homes.

END OF THE VIKING AGE

In 1066, the Vikings, led by King Harald Hardrada of Norway, were defeated by the English and King Harold Godwinson. This battle is often used to symbolize the end of the Viking Age. They stopped expanding their territory and their raids became less frequent. One of the major reasons the Viking Age came to end was the coming of Christianity. Scandinavia was converted from pagan religions to Christianity and became part of Christian Europe. The Vikings became more a part of mainland Europe. The identity and boundaries of the three countries Sweden, Denmark, and Norway started to form.

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SHORT ANSWER: Answer each question.

1. Which three present-day countries were originally settled by the Vikings?
2. What does the word "Viking" mean?
3. In which years did the Viking Age occur?
4. Why did Vikings raid monasteries?
5. What weapon did Vikings usually use to fight?
6. What place did the Vikings establish on the coast of Northern France?
7. Which Viking actually started a settlement in North America?
8. What symbolizes the end of the Viking Age?
9. What religion became popular in Europe at the end of the Viking Age?
10. Describe Viking ships.

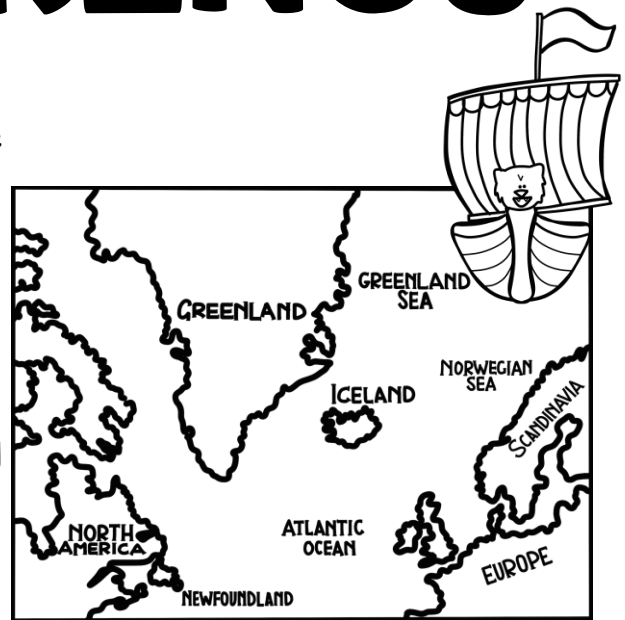


11. What was the Viking cargo ship called?

12. Where can you go to see restored Viking ships today?

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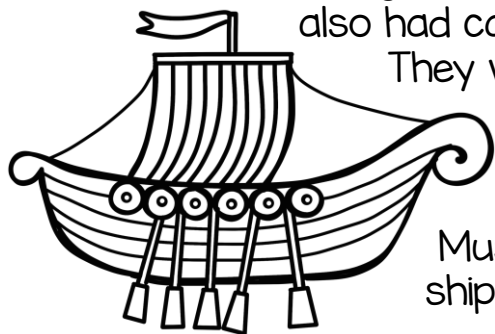
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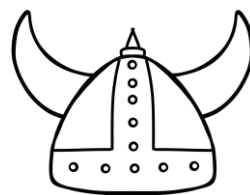
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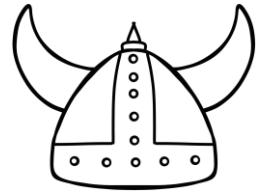


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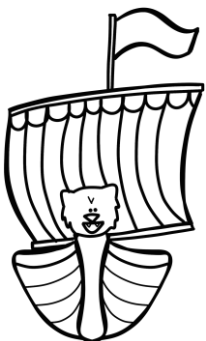
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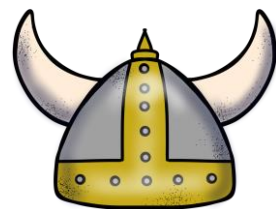


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2. What does the word "Viking" mean? TO RAID
3. In which years did the Viking Age occur? 800-1066
4. Why did Vikings raid monasteries? THEY WERE WEALTHY AND UNDEFENDED, MAKING THEM EASY TARGETS
5. What weapon did Vikings usually use to fight? LONG AXES
6. What place did the Vikings establish on the coast of Northern France? NORMANDY
7. Which Viking actually started a settlement in North America? LEIF ERIKSSON
8. What symbolizes the end of the Viking Age? THEIR DEFEAT BY THE ENGLISH IN 1066
9. What religion became popular in Europe at the end of the Viking Age? CHRISTIANITY
10. Describe Viking ships. LONG, NARROW, FAST, OARS, SAIL
11. What was the Viking cargo ship called? KNARR
12. Where can you go to see restored Viking ships today? ROSKILDE, DENMARK AT THE VIKING SHIP MUSEUM



THANKS!



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