

Key Enquiry Question

- Who wanted to be King of England in 1066?

Lesson Objective

- To evaluate the main contenders for the throne of England in 1066

<https://www.teachithistory.co.uk/?resource=19697>

Timeline

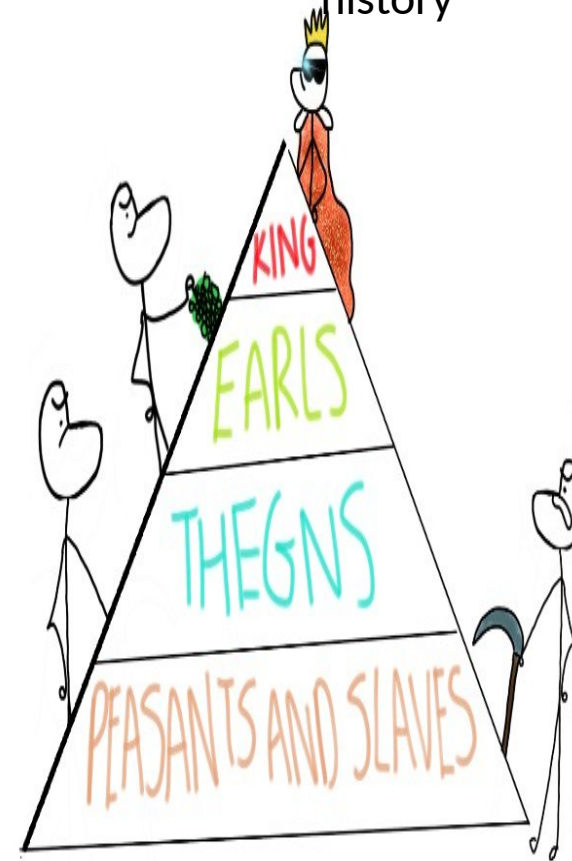
BC (Before Christ)					AD (Anno Domini)																							
					500 AD				1000 AD				1500 AD				2000 AD											
0																												
Century					1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	13th	14th	15th	16th	17th	18th	19th	20th	21st			
Periods in British History					Romans in Britain 55BC – 410AD				Saxon and Viking Britain 410AD – 1066AD						Medieval Britain 1066AD – 1485AD				Tudor Britain 1485AD – 1603AD		Stuart Britain 1603AD – 1714AD		Georgian Britain 1714AD – 1837AD		Victorian Britain 1837AD - 1901AD		Living history	

Anglo-Saxon England

Most people in Anglo-Saxon England lived in the countryside. There were towns, but they were small and served as places for trade to take place. At the top of the social system was the royal family which was made up of the king and his relatives. Although the right to be king often passed from father to son, it was more complicated than that. The king was expected to name his successor and the Witan, or council of leaders, also had the right to choose the person they thought should be the next King from the royal house.

Earls helped the king rule England and were his deputies around the country. Below the earls there were thegns, who formed the main part of the Anglo-Saxon army. If the king wanted to reward them for their service they could rise up to become an earl.

Most people did not form part of these groups and instead were commoners. The most well-off commoners held land freely and did not pay rent to a lord. They made a living by selling or exchanging crops or by following a trade such as blacksmithing. Serfs held no land and had to work for others in exchange for food and shelter. By the time of the late Anglo-Saxon period, England was a Christian country. It was also relatively rich in comparison with other countries in Europe at the time.



Background

- In January 1066, King Edward the Confessor of England died. He did not have any children.
- Two people claimed Edward had promised them that they could be the next King of England whilst he was still alive. These men were William of Normandy and Harold Godwinson, an English nobleman.
- Two further candidates felt they also had a claim to the throne. These individuals were the Viking Harald Hardrada and Edgar Atheling, the closest surviving relative of Edward.
- The Witan, a council of leaders responsible for helping the king to make decisions in Anglo-Saxon England, had to choose who they thought should be king.

Contenders map

<https://3dhistory.co.uk/timeline-british/images/medieval01.jpg>

