

Y5 HISTORY KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER: WERE THE VIKINGS JUST VICIOUS RAIDERS?

Key Words

Colonised	Settled in a place.	Reputation	Beliefs held about someone.
Descendant	Relative from later generations.	Scandinavia	Norway, Sweden & Denmark.
Explorers	People who travel to a new place to discover what is there.	Seaborne	Carried on a ship.
Evidence	Information showing whether something is true.	Volatile	Likely to change suddenly.

Key Ideas

- **The Vikings, also known as Norsemen, were from Scandinavia and were often seen as just vicious raiders. Their name came from a word meaning pirate as they would raid the lands they sailed too. However, they were also excellent explorers, traders and settlers who colonised many new areas with their farming communities and settlements.**
- The longship was an essential part of the Viking's ability to travel, explore and trade. The Vikings were excellent sailors and very good at navigation. They found their way by using visual landmarks and looking at the colour of the sea. They also sailed as close to the shoreline as possible.
- Longships were also perfect for raiding. They invaded and colonised large parts of Europe between 790 and 1100 AD. They belonged to different clans led by chiefs and they often forced local rulers to pay a tax so they would not attack the locals and destroy their land.
- Churches and monasteries were prime targets for Viking raids because of their ornaments and little defence.
- The same longships that made Vikings such capable raiders also made them great traders and they created many successful trading colonies across Northern Europe.
- They brought their language and customs and changed the culture of the colonised societies forever. We see this in Britain today with Viking words in our language, Viking place names around our country and Viking ancestry.
- They were involved in a decades long and bloody battle with the Anglo-Saxons for control of Britain in the 8th century as they decided to settle across Britain and Ireland. During this time, the balance of power would change between the Vikings and the Anglo Saxons but ended in 1066 when William the Duke of Normandy arrived from France.



How do we know about the Vikings?

-Most of what we know about the Vikings comes from historical accounts and diaries which tell of the terror communities faced when Viking longboats came into view.

-We need to think about how biased these accounts are. The other source of primary evidence are the many Viking artefacts that have been found at burial sites, battle grounds and settlements.



