

The Anglo-Saxons (1)

In this chapter the children learn why the Romans left Britain, who the Anglo-Saxons were, and how and why they came. They discover what the Anglo-Saxons looked like and how they fought, find out where they settled in Britain, and work out the meanings of Anglo-Saxon place names. They investigate social order and the system of justice in Anglo-Saxon Britain and learn about Anglo-Saxon homes and settlements. Finally, they consider how historians know about the Anglo-Saxon period, and use artefacts from the Sutton Hoo ship burial to draw their own conclusions about the past.

Chapter at a glance

Curriculum objective

- Britain's settlement by Anglo-Saxons and Scots.

Week	Lesson	Summary of activities	Expected outcomes
1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children explore the reasons for the Roman withdrawal from Britain. • They write a letter from a Roman soldier in Britain, explaining why he is coming home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can explain why the Romans abandoned Britain.
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children find out who the Scots and Anglo-Saxons were and why they came to Britain. • They take part in a debate to classify the newcomers as invaders or settlers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can describe how and why the Scots and Anglo-Saxons came to Britain. • Can discuss whether they should be described as invaders or settlers.
2	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children study images of Anglo-Saxons. • They design an Anglo-Saxon costume. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can describe the appearance of Anglo-Saxon men, women and children.
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children analyse Anglo-Saxon and Roman weaponry and armour. • They play a dice game simulating combat between Roman and an Anglo-Saxon soldier. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can draw comparisons between Anglo-Saxon weaponry and armour and those of the Romans. • Can use these comparisons to make a value judgement about fighting effectiveness.
3	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children work in pairs to map areas where the Anglo-Saxons settled and some of the main Anglo-Saxon towns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can identify the main areas of Britain where the Anglo-Saxons settled.
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children refer to a wordbank to identify place names that are of Anglo-Saxon origin, and to explain what some of them mean. • They discuss what these meanings tell us about Anglo-Saxon life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can identify some place names of Anglo-Saxon origin, explain what some of them mean, and discuss what these meanings tell us about Anglo-Saxon life.
4	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children read how Britain was ruled in Anglo-Saxon times and answer quiz questions. • They draw a diagram showing Anglo-Saxon social order. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can describe in general terms how Britain was ruled in Anglo-Saxon times.
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children study Anglo-Saxon law and order. • They play a game matching crimes to punishments. • They discuss whether laws were fair and whether punishments fitted the crimes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can describe some laws in Anglo-Saxon Britain and express judgement about whether those laws were fair.
5	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children work in groups to investigate homes of people in different social classes in Anglo-Saxon Britain. • They present their findings to the class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can describe a typical home in Anglo-Saxon Britain.
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children compare an Anglo-Saxon village with a Roman town. • They discuss which they would rather live in, and explain why. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can draw comparisons between Anglo-Saxon villages and Roman towns, explaining which they would rather live in, and why.
6	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children list categories of historical source. • They categorise examples of sources about the Anglo-Saxons and evaluate their reliability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can identify and classify some of the evidence we have for what life was like in Anglo-Saxon Britain, and suggest what these sources tell us.
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children examine artefacts from the Sutton Hoo ship burial. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can explain what the Sutton Hoo ship burial tells us about the person buried there and about life in Anglo-Saxon Britain.
Assess and review		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review the half-term's work. 	



Expected prior learning

- This chapter can be taught without prior knowledge of the Anglo-Saxons.
- Children should have a thorough knowledge of Roman Britain in order to draw comparisons with the Anglo-Saxons. In particular they will need to be familiar with the Roman army, and the typical features of a town in Roman Britain.



Overview of progression

- Children will build on their enquiry skills, using a variety of different methods to research what life was like in Anglo-Saxon Britain. They will respond to written, pictorial and video accounts of Anglo-Saxon life, and learn about the way archaeological evidence from Sutton Hoo has contributed to our historical knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon period.
- Children will develop their ability to draw comparisons, as they consider similarities and differences between Anglo-Saxon and Roman warfare and settlements.
- Children will demonstrate their knowledge of the past in different ways, including debate, discussion, diagrams, design, games, practical activities and written work.



Creative context

- The content of this chapter has strong links with the English curriculum, with children engaging in various activities across the domains of spoken language, reading and writing. These include discussing, debating, presenting, reading for information and letter writing.
- Children develop their geographical skills as they explore maps showing the extent of Anglo-Saxon settlement in Britain and locate towns that were important during the Anglo-Saxon period.
- Children undertake historical research online, which addresses several requirements of the computing curriculum, including using the internet safely and responsibly, using search engines effectively, and evaluating online content.
- Lesson 1 in Week 2 has strong links to design and technology, with children designing, and possibly making, an Anglo-Saxon costume.
- Lesson 2 in Week 2, in which children play a battle-simulation game based on rolling dice, has strong links with mathematics, and could build on or lead into work on probability.



Background knowledge

● **Anglo-Saxon sources:** very few buildings survive from Anglo-Saxon times, as most were constructed of wood, with wattle and daub walls. The only stone buildings were monasteries and churches, and relatively few of these still survive today. The main evidence historians have for what life was like in Anglo-Saxon Britain comes from written sources and artefacts. Written sources include law codes, charters, stories, poetry and historical accounts written at the time or in later centuries. The single most important written source is *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, a collection of historical and contemporary annals that chronicle the history of Anglo-Saxon Britain. There are many sources of artefacts from the Anglo-Saxon period, but the richest single source is at Sutton Hoo in Suffolk, the site of two Anglo-Saxon cemeteries. The most magnificent find at the site is the ship burial, presumed to be that of King Raedwald, the ruler of the East Angles.

Week 1 lesson plans

In this week's lessons the children are introduced to the Anglo-Saxon period and locate it on a timeline of British history. They explore the reasons for the Roman withdrawal from Britain and consider whether the peoples who came to Britain after the Romans left are best described as invaders or settlers. The children use and apply skills they will have learned in English lessons, including writing letters and holding a debate.

Lesson objectives

- To develop a chronologically secure knowledge and understanding of British, local and world history, establishing clear narratives within and across the periods they study.
- To regularly address and sometimes devise historically valid questions about change, cause, similarity and difference, and significance.

Expected outcomes

- All children can explain in simple terms why the Romans left Britain.
- Most children can explain in more detail why the Romans left Britain.
- Some children can explain why the Romans left Britain and can describe some of the consequences of Roman withdrawal.

Resources

Interactive activity 'Timeline maker' on the CD-ROM

1: Why did the Romans leave Britain?

Introduction

- Introduce the chapter, explaining that it looks at the period in British history after the Romans – the age of the Anglo-Saxons. Ask children to locate the Anglo-Saxon period on the interactive activity 'Timeline maker' on the CD-ROM.
- Explain that the Romans left Britain in AD410. Introduce this lesson's focus question: *Why did the Romans leave Britain?* Ask the children to suggest possible answers.

Group work

- Divide the class into groups of three or four. Ask each group to discuss why the Romans might have left Britain.
- Encourage groups to share their ideas. Establish that the Roman Empire was under threat from uprisings within its borders and from attacks from outside. The troops stationed in Britain were needed to defend more important territory on the continent. Although the Roman army and government left Britain, and Britain was no longer part of the Roman Empire, most Romano-British people stayed in Britain and did their best to carry on their lives as before.

Whole-class work

- Ask the children to describe the text and layout features of a letter (for example, address of sender and date on top right; forms of address; ways of signing off). Act as a scribe for the class, noting the features of a letter on the whiteboard.
- Present the class with the scenario in which a Roman soldier stationed in Britain in AD410 writes a letter to a friend or a relative explaining why he is leaving Britain and coming home. Discuss and note possible Roman names and a possible address for the Roman soldier.

Independent work

- Ask children to write a letter home from a Roman soldier stationed in Britain explaining why he is coming home.

Differentiation

- Support: provide children a template and/or wordbank for the letter.
- Challenge: let children use books or the internet to research some of the consequences of the Roman withdrawal.

Review

- At the end of the lesson, ask selected children to share their letters with the class.
- Ask the following additional questions: *Do you think the Romans were right to leave Britain? Why?*

Curriculum objective

- To develop a chronologically secure knowledge and understanding of British, local and world history, establishing clear narratives within and across the periods they study.

Resources

Photocopiable page 25 'The Anglo-Saxons: what have you learned?'; teaching assistant (optional); sound recording equipment (optional); book-making materials (optional)

Curriculum objective

- To understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.

Resources

Six to eight replicas of Anglo-Saxon artefacts; laptops or tablets (optional)

The Anglo-Saxons: what have you learned?

Revise

- Divide the class into mixed-ability teams for a quiz about the Anglo-Saxons. The quiz on the CD-ROM is not suitable yet, as it tests material not covered until Chapter 2. Use the questions supplied on photocopiable page 25 'The Anglo-Saxons: what have you learned?', or write your own.
- Quiz answers: 1c, 2b, 3c, 4a, 5b, 6c, 7a, 8c, 9b, 10a

Assess

- On the board write the following questions:
 1. How do we know about the Anglo-Saxons?
 2. What do you know about Anglo-Saxon society?
 3. What do you know about Anglo-Saxon laws?
 4. What do you know about Anglo-Saxon homes and settlements?
 5. What else do you know about Anglo-Saxons?
- Give children a set length of time (for example, 20 minutes) to answer these questions. Emphasise the importance of working independently.
- To encourage children to attempt all five questions, either remind them when it's time to move on to the next question, or display the questions one at a time.
- If any children struggle with reading or writing you could give them an alternative way of recording their answers (perhaps working with an adult and giving verbal responses which are recorded in an audio file).

Further practice

- Ask the children to incorporate what they know about the Anglo-Saxons into a picture book to give to a Key Stage 1 class.

Anglo-Saxon artefacts

Revise

- Review children's work on Anglo-Saxon sources of information from Week 6. Mix up the artefacts, images or documents and ask children in groups to examine, discuss or write about at least one source they have not previously covered.

Assess

- Place each replica artefact on a separate table, giving each a unique identifying number. Do not provide any information about the artefacts.
- Give children a set length of time (such as 20 minutes) to examine a given number of artefacts (for example, three). Children should move around the tables independently, so you may want to set a maximum number of people allowed at each table at any one time.
- Ask individuals to examine each object, list its *number*, write a *description* of it, and then write their *interpretation* of it – for example, what they think the object might be, what clues it gives about the person who owned it, and what else it might suggest about life in Anglo-Saxon times.

Further practice

- Ask the children to prepare a similar activity for their classmates, using photographs of Anglo-Saxon artefacts. They should bookmark their sources, so that children's interpretations of the artefacts can be compared with those of experts.

The Anglo-Saxons: what have you learned?

- Read the question and circle the correct answer.

1. Why did the Romans leave Britain?

- a) They were defeated by the Picts.
- b) The weather was too cold.
- c) They needed to defend their homeland from attack.

2. Where did the Anglo-Saxons come from?

- a) North-eastern Europe
- b) North-western Europe
- c) South-eastern Europe

3. Why did the Anglo-Saxons come to Britain?

- a) They were invited.
- b) They were looking for a better life.
- c) Both a) and b).

4. What shape were Anglo-Saxon shields?

- a) Round
- b) Square
- c) Rectangular

5. What does this Anglo-Saxon place name mean: Oxford?

- a) A farmstead on a hill.
- b) A place where cattle are driven across the river.
- c) A village in a forest clearing.

6. Which of these social classes was the highest?

- a) Churls
- b) Slaves
- c) Thanes

7. What was the punishment for stealing?

- a) Having your hands cut off.
- b) Paying a fine of 20 shillings.
- c) Being ducked.

8. Which of these things would you find in an Anglo-Saxon village?

- a) A forum
- b) A theatre
- c) Neither a) nor b)

9. Which are the two richest sources of evidence we have about the Saxons?

- a) Buildings and artefacts
- b) Artefacts and documents
- c) Documents and buildings

10. Who was buried in the ship at Sutton Hoo?

- a) King Raedwald
- b) King Vortigern
- c) King Ethelred

I can work independently to answer detailed questions on Anglo-Saxon life.

How did you do?

