

Year 7 History - Autumn 1B : The Norman invasion

Key Words

Claimant	Someone who says they should be king (or queen) and tries to claim the throne.
Heir	The person who is next in line to become king or queen.
Earl	A very powerful noble in England who controlled land and helped rule the country.
Papal Banner	A special flag sent by the Pope (leader of the Church) to show he supports someone — often in battle.
Relics	Holy objects linked to saints or religious figures. People believed relics were sacred and powerful.
Oath	A very serious promise, usually made in front of God.
Illegitimate	When people believe that someone shouldn't rule because their claim to the throne isn't legal.
Knights	Trained soldiers on horseback, wearing armour and fighting for their lord or king.
Archers	Soldiers who fight using bows and arrows.

Key Knowledge:

1. Edward the Confessor	Edward the Confessor was a king of England who ruled from 1042 to 1066. He was very religious and prayed a lot. He helped build Westminster Abbey, a very important church. He wasn't a very strong ruler and often let powerful nobles make big decisions. Edward the Confessor caused a succession crisis because he died without a child and different people thought he had promised the crown to them.
2. Who were the claimants to the throne?	Harold Godwinson - Powerful English earl. Chosen by the Witan (royal council). Became king first. William, Duke of Normandy - From Normandy (France). Said Edward had promised him the throne — and Harold swore to support him. Invaded and later won. Harald Hardrada (Norway) Viking king. Claimed an old treaty gave him the throne. Invaded, but was defeated. Edgar the Atheling - Edward's closest blood relative. Too young, no army — not chosen.
3. Battle of Fulford	In 1066, the Vikings led by Harald Hardrada and Tostig fought the English earls Edwin and Morcar near York. The Vikings won, many English were killed, and York soon surrendered — forcing King Harold to march north.
4. Battle of Stamford Bridge	In 1066, King Harold Godwinson marched north and surprised the Viking army led by Harald Hardrada (and Harold's brother Tostig). The English won, and both Hardrada and Tostig were killed. But Harold's army was left tired, which made things harder when William of Normandy invaded soon after.
5. Battle of Hastings	In October 1066, William, Duke of Normandy invaded England. King Harold Godwinson hurried south with his tired army to stop him. Harold's army stood on a hill and formed a shield wall. William's soldiers attacked again and again (knights, archers, and infantry). Some Normans pretended to run away — when the English chased them, the line broke. William's troops surrounded and defeated the English. Harold was killed (later stories say an arrow hit his eye, but we're not fully sure).
6. Why did William win?	William's leadership - William brought archers, infantry, and cavalry (mounted knights). Harold's army mostly fought on foot with axes and spears. William had planned carefully and brought supplies, horses, and a banner from the Pope. The timing helped him: Harold had to fight two major battles in days. Harold's weaknesses/poor leadership/bad luck - Harold had just fought the Vikings at Stamford Bridge. His men had to march hundreds of miles south. They were exhausted and some soldiers had died already. When Harold was killed, English leadership collapsed. Without their king, the army lost control and morale. William's tactics - The Normans used feigned retreats (pretending to run away). When some English chased them, the shield wall broke — and the Normans attacked.
7. William marches on London	After Harold died at Hastings, William realised he was a foreign invader and the English might try to kill him or drive him out. He still faced several problems such as leftover Vikings in the north, a strong Saxon castle at Dover and a tired army. William acted carefully. He marched to Dover, surrounded the fort instead of attacking, and starved the soldiers inside while letting his army rest. After Dover surrendered, he moved on to Canterbury and took valuable religious treasures before continuing his march.

January 1066- Edward the Confessor dies (January 1066)

Several powerful men claim they should be the next king, including:
 • **Harold Godwinson**
 • **William of Normandy**
 • **Harald Hardrada**

20th September 1066- **Battle of Fulford** Harald Hardrada (from Norway) and Tostig defeat the English forces near York.

25th September- **Battle of Stamford Bridge**- Harold Godwinson marches north and defeats Harald Hardrada. Hardrada is killed.

14th October- **Battle of Hastings**- William of Normandy invades from France. William's army defeats Harold Godwinson, who is killed in battle.

25th December- **William is crowned king of England**. William becomes William I of England, also known as William the Conqueror.

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Important people

Edward the Confessor	Edward was King of England from 1042-1066. He was very religious and built Westminster Abbey. He died without a strong heir, which helped cause the crisis of 1066.
Harold Hardrada	Harold Hardrada was the King of Norway. He believed he had a right to the English throne. He invaded England in 1066 – and was defeated at the Battle of Stamford Bridge.
Harold Godwinson	Harold Godwinson became King of England in 1066 after Edward the Confessor died. He fought two big battles that year and was finally killed at the Battle of Hastings, when William of Normandy took the throne.
Edgar the Atheling	Edgar was a young English prince. He technically had the best blood claim to the throne, but he was too young and weak to rule – so others took power instead.
William of Normandy	William was the Duke of Normandy (in France). He said Edward promised him the English throne. He invaded England and won the Battle of Hastings – becoming William the Conqueror.
Tostig Godwinson	Tostig was Harold Godwinson's brother. He fell out with the English nobles and was kicked out as Earl of Northumbria. He later teamed up with Harold Hardrada to attack England.
Witan	The Witan was a group of powerful nobles and church leaders in England. They advised the king and helped choose who should be king. In 1066, they chose Harold Godwinson.

Video/podcast links

Who were the claimants to the throne?	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1sK4JX0co8I
The Battle of Fulford	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9NdbxQWdJ8
The Battle of Stamford Bridge	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtW7H7yPZLg
The Battle of Hastings	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zigjVCFzZ38
How William secured power after 1066	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGDu-vi8sg



Wider reading ideas:

Horrible Histories: Stormin' Normans by Terry Deary
1066: The Norman Conquest by Jim Eldridge
Norman the Norman from Normandy by Philip Ardagh

Homework

For this unit your homework will be to **create a poster supporting a claimant to the throne.**

Success Criteria:

- ✓ Include one of the claimants to the English Throne, either; William Duke of Normandy, Harold Hardrada, Harold Godwinson or Edward the Atheling.
- ✓ Include a catchy title or slogan that would make people want that person as their King of England.
- ✓ Include an image of that person or something to do with them.
- ✓ Include a minimum of 5 key facts about why the claimant you have chosen would make a good king for England.
- ✓ Make it colourful