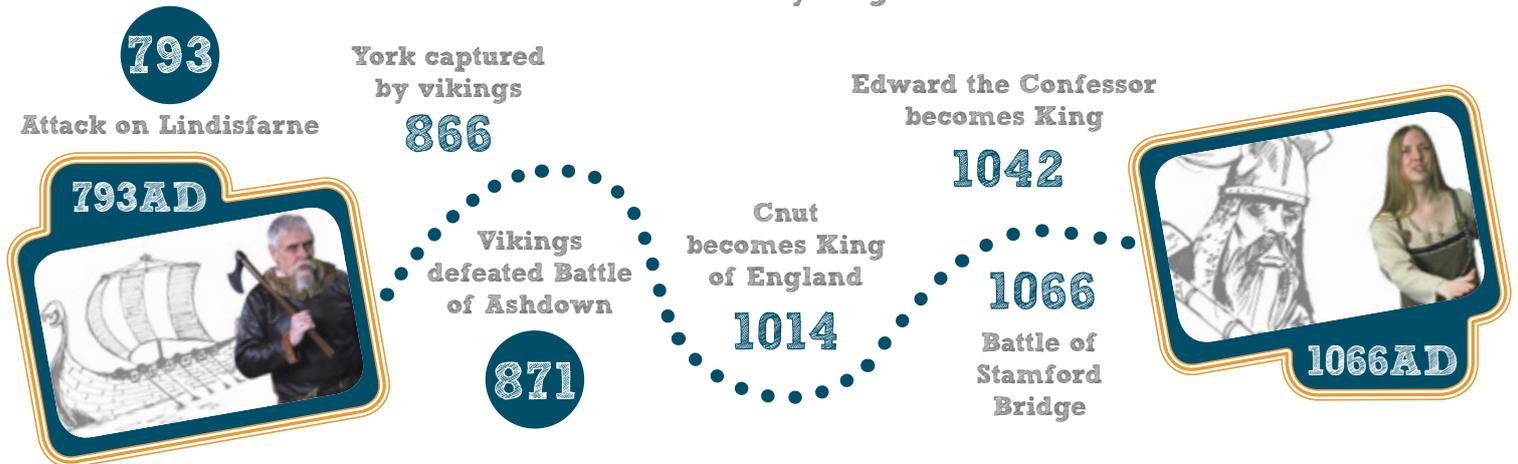


Why did the Vikings invade Britain?

Aimed at Key Stage 2



National Curriculum subject links

- Understand how knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.
- Think of, and ask, historically valid questions.
- Learn about Viking raids and invasion.
- Discover when the Vikings began to invade Britain and place this period as a key event in history.
- Understand how we know about the Vikings.
- Discover where the Vikings invaded from and where they settled.
- Discover what made the Viking invasion successful.

Coverage and links

Before you begin work on the topic, pupils should research information on one aspect of Viking life, e.g. Viking religion, warriors, etc. Pupils should then use this research to create a PowerPoint or a hand-made poster to present what they found out to the rest of the class.

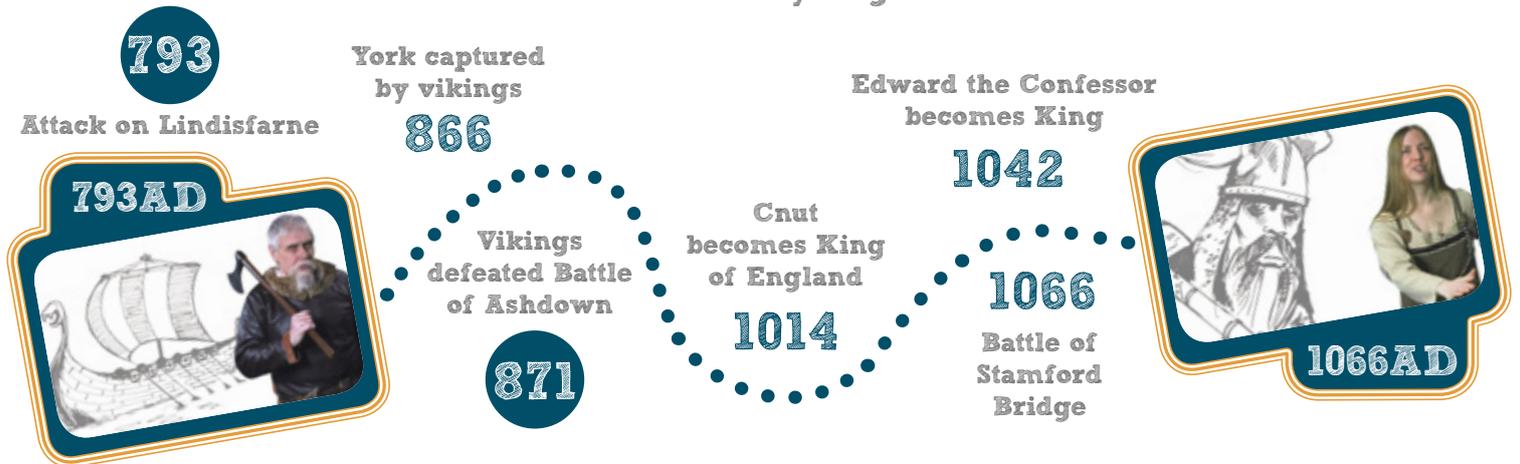
The Vikings invaded from 793 AD until 1066 with the invasion of William the Conqueror. The Normans were descended from the Norse-men. The word 'Viking' was in fact a verb. The warriors would go 'viking', meaning attacking, pillaging and settling. Don't have pictures on the wall with archetypal Vikings wearing horned hats. Their hats were in fact horn-less! Horns were used as drinking vessels.

The Vikings make a fascinating subject for a historical enquiry for Key Stage 2 pupils as it involves warriors, legends and adventure, which are all highly appealing at this age. It can also be linked to the study of the Anglo-Saxons, as both were invaders and settlers in the same period of history. It is good to conduct a study into the reasons for settling in Britain at this point in history.

During this sequence of lessons, pupils will learn about the many contributory factors that led to the Vikings attacking and settling in Britain. They will examine whether the stereotype of a Viking warrior is a correct one.

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Coverage and links continued

Pupils will begin to see that historians piece together their story from the evidence available.

Many links can be made to English learning through the use of questions and question marks, hot seating and role play to explore language and interview structure, report writing, newspaper articles, researching and debating different viewpoints.

Suggested learning outcomes

By the end of these lessons, pupils will be able to...

- **Place the Vikings on a timeline**
- Understand some of the reasons for the Viking invasions
- **Think of, and ask, historically valid questions**
- Understand that history can be viewed in a number of ways and we bring our judgement to it.

Pre-lesson homework

What do the pupils know already about raiders and settlers to the British Isles?

Each pupil should plot their own timeline with their birth date and other key dates such as periods of history they have studied so far in school.

Lesson 1 – Who were the Vikings?

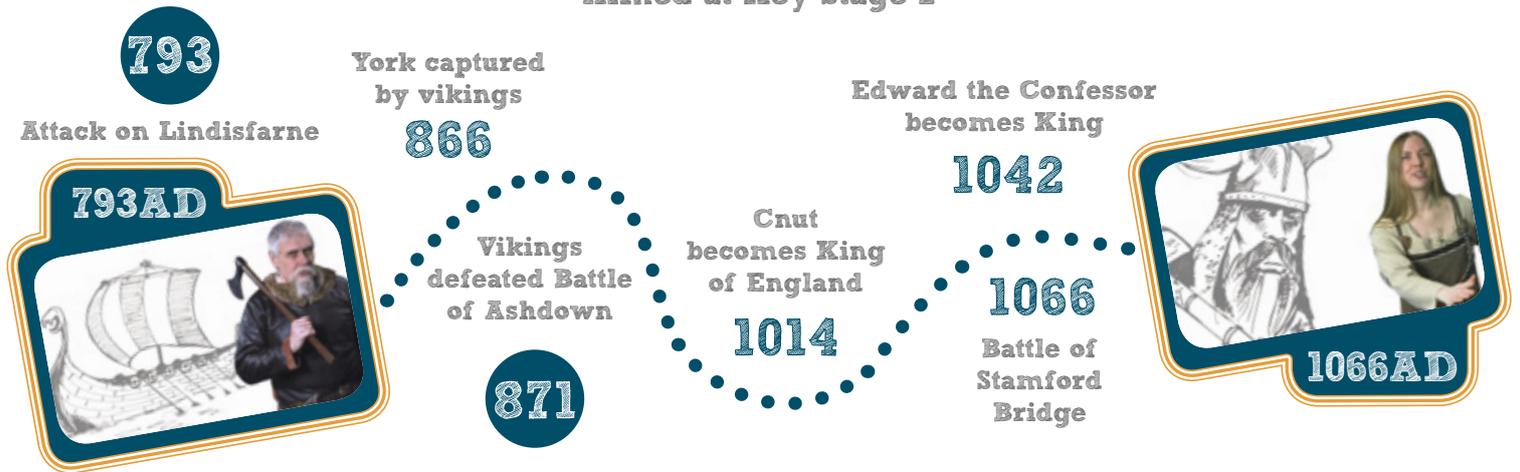
Films to use

- **The Vikings – part 1: Who were the Vikings?**

Revise how the Anglo-Saxons came to Britain before the Vikings. Remind each other why they came and how it happened. Look at class and individual timelines. Add the Vikings to the chronology, noting the overlap with the Anglo-Saxons.

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Differentiation, assessment and reflection

Lesson 1 – The Vikings – part 1: Who were the Vikings? ...continued

What do the pupils know already about life at that time from their study of the Anglo-Saxons? Explain that you will compare some of the following between the Vikings and the Anglo-Saxons:

- **When they came to Britain.**
- Why they came to Britain.
- **Where they landed/attacked and settled.**
- How they came to Britain.
- **Their gods and goddesses.**
- Their food.
- **Their homes.**
- Everyday life.
- **Their myths and legends.**

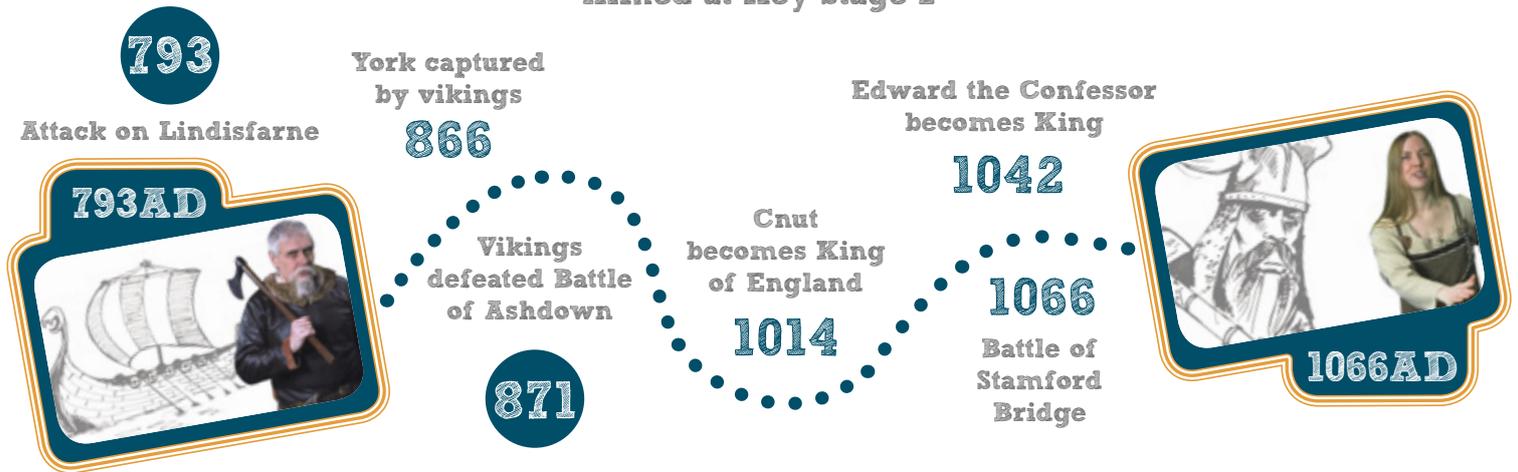
The Vikings settled a vast area of the world as disparate as Newfoundland in Northern America and Baghdad in the Middle East. Demonstrate where these places are on a world map and then those places in the east and south of England, as well as Scotland, where they settled (in relation to the country as a whole and to your school specifically).

On a simple class timeline **show** when the Vikings lived and settled in the UK. In pairs and with post-its, the pupils need to think of the questions they want to ask about the Vikings. You should stop them and ask them questions periodically to model the correct structure of a question and what it is they need to find out. Point out good questions (open questions) that will give lots of scope for their research.

The pupils can then **share their questions** and bring the post-its to a central organising place or display. You should group similar questions together. It doesn't matter that this may look messy; this is a working wall showing ongoing enquiry and demonstrates active learning.

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Differentiation, assessment and reflection

Vikings – part 1: Who were the Vikings? ...continued

The next activity for pupils is to plot the date onto a timeline and while this could, of course, be done on a class timeline, it is likely that pupils will have a timeline that they update regularly as they start new history topics. If not, now could be the time to start one! This can sit in the front of their history or general topic book. Alternatively they could have a long strip of paper that they add dates to and keep in their trays. Make sure the timeline includes the pupil's own birth date and other key dates, such as their parents' births, as well as the current date and other periods in history the class has studied.

Now show the film, **The Vikings – part 1: Who were the Vikings?** Lead a discussion with your class. What does the word 'Viking' mean? Where did the Vikings come from? Was it just one place? Where did the Vikings go? Why do we think they left their homes and took such a risk? Have you ever seen pictures of Vikings with horns on their hats? They didn't actually have these (they had the hats, but not the horns).

A thought to take away: Why have the Vikings been portrayed like this over the years?

Lesson 2 – Research: How did the Vikings live?

Films to use

- **Norse women**
- **Farming and food**
- **Norse gods**

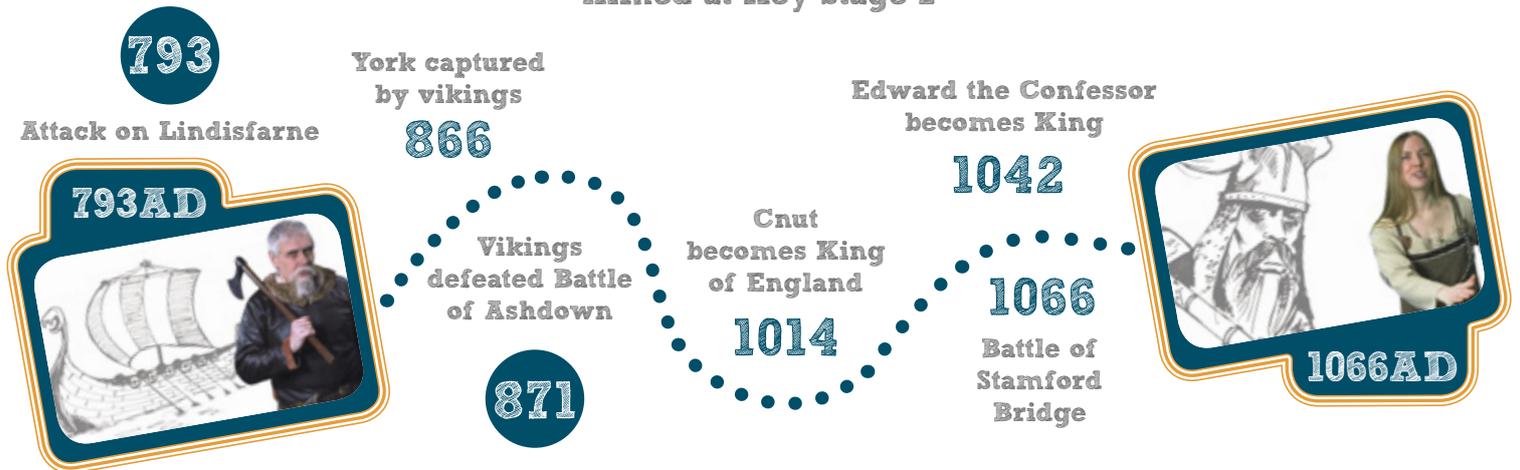
Differentiate the questions appropriately for ability and prior knowledge.

The pupils **watch** the films and, through discussion in pairs, write down what they feel are key facts. Remind them that they must not write down everything they have heard. They are writing the key parts of the information to add to their research.

They can then also **use** a variety of books and other historical artefacts, web pages and pictures to do further research. Mini-plenaries throughout will keep the pupils focused

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Differentiation, assessment and reflection

Lesson 2 – Research: How did the Vikings live? ...continued

upon the task.

Instruct the pupils to answer the following questions about each artefact:

- **What do you notice about it?**
- What might it have been used for?
- **Who might have used it? (A man or woman; someone rich or poor, etc.)**
- What material(s) might it be made from?
- **What does it tell us about the values of the Vikings?**
- What does it tell us about their skills and technology?
- **How is it similar to or different from the modern version of it?**
- How does it show that the Vikings were similar to or different from us?

For each artefact, give the pupils a chance to discuss it in pairs or small groups, before writing about it.

Plenary: If we only had these artefacts to go on, what would we think about the Vikings overall?

Print the images or go to these websites and have these images open:

Amber and bowls

link: <http://jorvik-viking-centre.co.uk/about-jorvik/gallery/>

Brooch

link: <http://www.dkfindout.com/uk/history/vikings/viking-jewellery/>

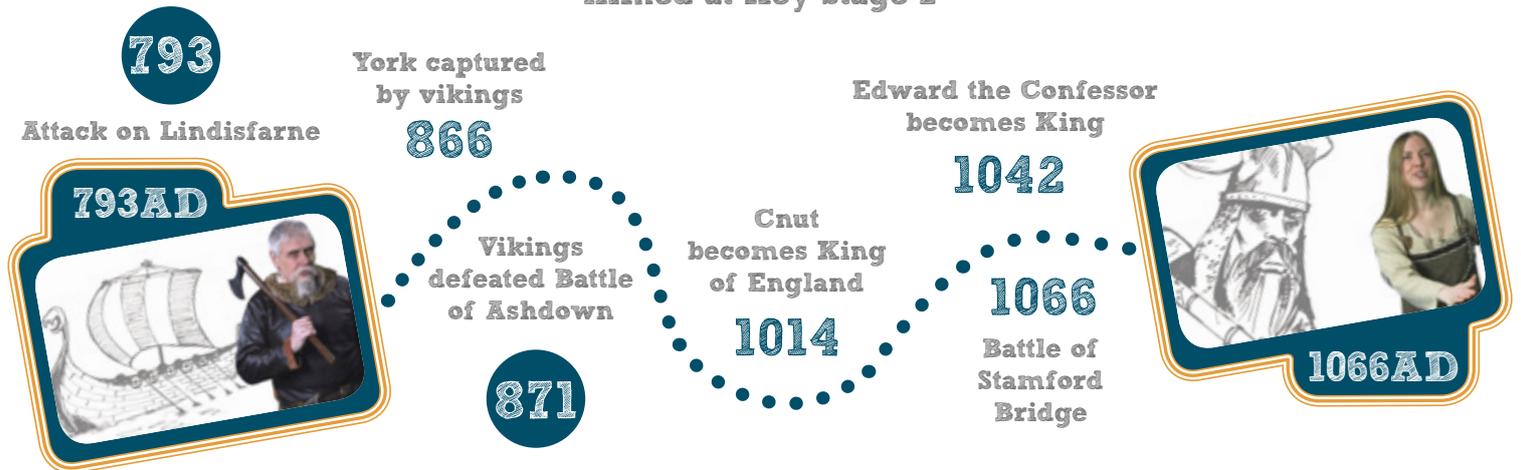
Knives

link: <http://www.medievalcollectibles.com/c-58-viking-daggers.aspx>

There are many more images and artefacts at the Jorvik website. Pick and choose what suits your pupils' interests and include a variety of objects for them to choose from.

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Differentiation, assessment and reflection

Lesson 3 – Why did the Vikings have such a bad reputation?

Films to use:

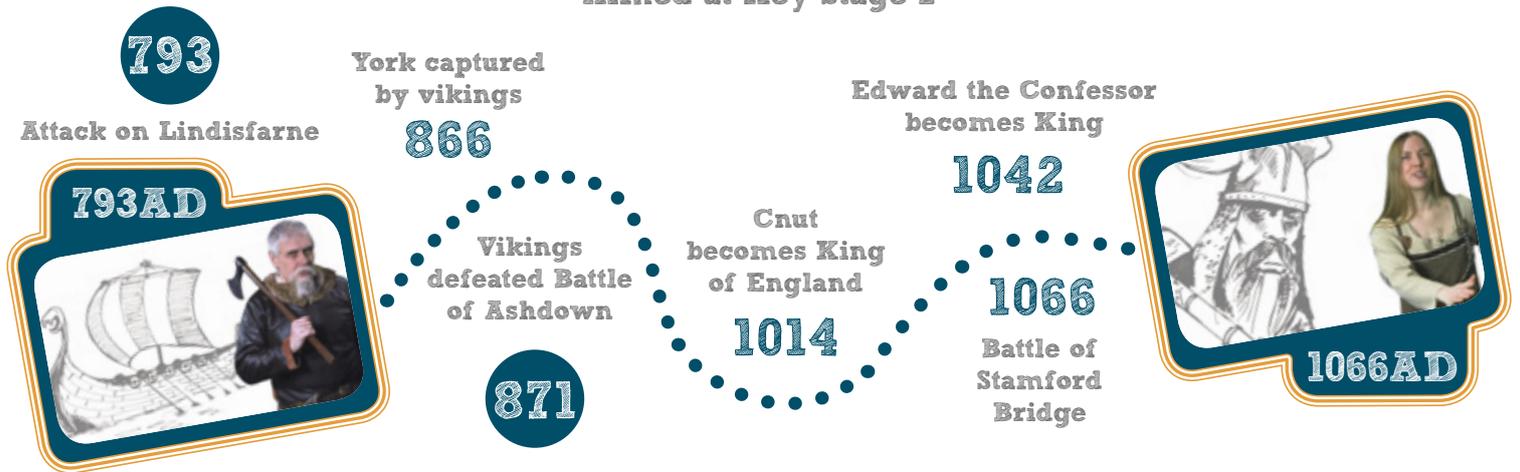
- **Why did the Vikings raid?**
- **Viking exploration**
- **Lindisfarne: A Viking's view – part 1**
- **Lindisfarne: A Viking's view – part 2**
- **Lindisfarne: A monk's view – part 1**
- **Lindisfarne: A monk's view – part 2**

Viking warriors were homemakers and they were always keen to ship their wives and families over to their newly conquered lands as soon as possible. They were farmers who grew wheat and barley and raised animals. So why did they have such a fearsome reputation? They undoubtedly struck fear into the natives when they landed in their longboats, but there is a lot of evidence to suggest their primary intent was to be traders. The lingering impression we have of the Vikings was that they were fearsome warriors. Today we will look at why we have this impression.

In October 2011 there was a discovery made of the first fully intact Viking burial site in the UK in the Ardnamurchan peninsula in Scotland. It is a 16 ft long grave containing the remains of an important Viking individual. He was buried with his axe, sword and spear, suggesting the typical warrior stereotype. He was also buried with his boat (which links to the Anglo-Saxons, such as King Raedwald at Sutton Hoo). Other things they found with him were a knife, the tip of a bronze drinking horn, a ring pin from Ireland, pottery and a whetstone from Norway.

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Differentiation, assessment and reflection

Lesson 3 – Why did the Vikings have such a bad reputation? ... cont

Ask the class whether these other items suggest the Vikings were more than just warriors. Or would a warrior have these items too?

We need to look at other factors, like how far the Vikings travelled. Their DNA is found strongly across Britain, and also in North America, Europe and the Middle East. Viking clan names, such as MacIvors and MacSween, also persist in Britain.

In groups, with a large piece of A2/A1 paper, pupils should list factors for and against the warrior image. They should add notes as you play the films. Spend some time after each one discussing what has been heard and where the evidence should go.

Now set up a role-play, hot seat interviewing a Viking and a Briton to explore their different perspectives. You could also add in a modern historian who might give a more balanced account of the Vikings.

Discuss how and why our knowledge is limited by time and a lack of evidence. Much of history from this far back in time has to be speculation based upon the evidence available. This is a difficult concept for young pupils and will need lots of scaffolding and explaining as you go through the unit.

Extension

To challenge pupils, they could be given some more difficult sources in the lessons. They might, for example, read accounts from Lindisfarne of the attacks. They could also do a research homework on the Viking city of York (Jorvik), thinking about what lasting impact the Vikings had on Britain.

Pupils could also watch the films about:

Viking Shipbuilding: Part 1

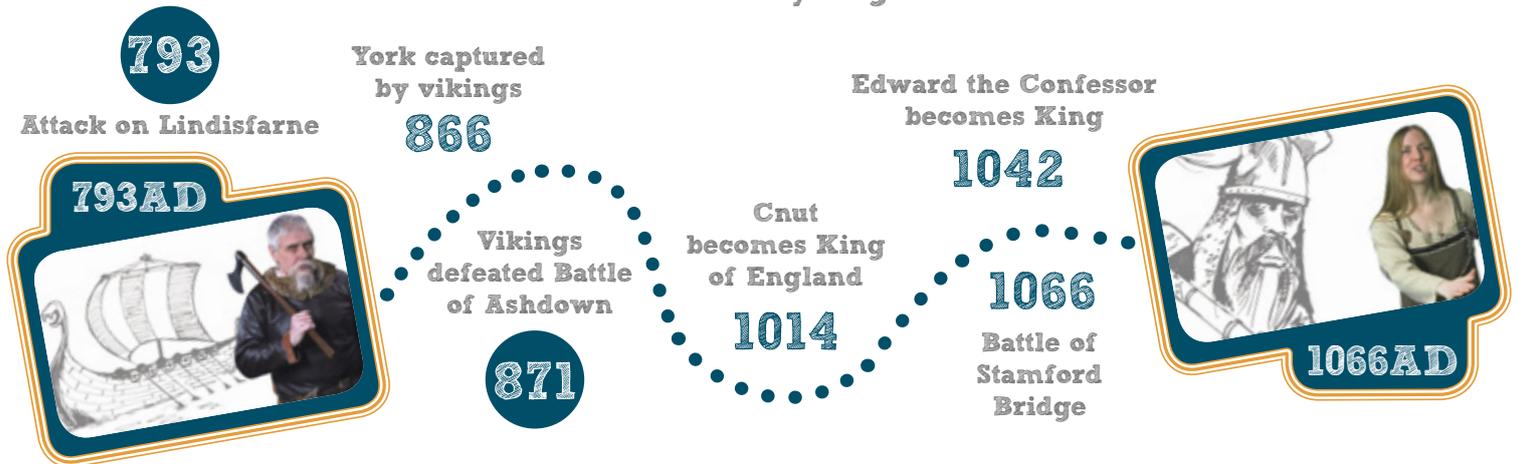
Viking Shipbuilding: Part 2

Viking Shipbuilding: Part 3

and do a small research project on what made the Vikings successful.

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Lesson 3 – Why did the Vikings have such a bad reputation? ... cont

Scaffolding

Pupils who need support might be asked more targeted questions about the pictures of artefacts and be given a more simplistic view of the Viking mentality to research for debate.

Formative assessment opportunities

- **What prior knowledge do the questions the pupils want to ask about the Vikings show? Are they open questions that promote wide research?**
- **Are the pupils able to gain an overview of Viking life from their studies? Look at the quality and variety of facts and information found.**
- **Are the pupils able to view history from two different perspectives? Can they accept that we will never know the entire truth?**

Reflection

To conclude the topic, ask pupils to think about what we have not learned about the Vikings. What questions do they still have? What do they suppose that historians will never be able to know? What might have happened if the circumstances had been different in the Vikings' homelands? Would they still have travelled and explored other lands?

Has their view of the Vikings changed over the course of their studies?