

The  
Scholars  
Programme



# Friends or Foes? Vikings in Medieval England

Key Stage 2 Programme

Pupil Name

Tutorial  
Group

PhD Tutor



# Course Rationale

You may have heard of the Vikings and medieval Britain before, but this course will introduce them to you in a new light, as we think about what people living in these times really thought. Were Vikings actually scary, dangerous invaders? Or were they coming to Britain to look for a better life?

How did people talk, think and write about the Vikings during the time they were coming to England? Did everyone think they were 'Vicious Vikings'? Did some people think the English and Vikings would be better off together?

Tutorial 1 is an introduction to the Vikings and what we imagine when we think of Vikings now. Tutorial 2 looks at the story you might be familiar with – that Vikings were raiders. Tutorial 3 looks at a story that shows Vikings differently – as peaceful refugees who save England from bad rulers. Then Tutorial 4 looks at a book that tried to change people's minds about Vikings and encourage the English and Vikings to live together happily. Finally, Tutorial 5 brings all of these stories together with an exciting Viking board-game!

In this course, you will be taught to analyse historical sources and points of view to form your own answers to these questions. You will be asked to question whether history is always as simple as we think it is and how to communicate your ideas clearly with evidence.

Finally, you will write up a university style assignment of 1000 words based around the question 'Vicious Vikings? Analyse different perspectives on the Vikings in England in the tenth and eleventh centuries' which will be assessed against university marking criteria.

Cover image: A serpent-headed ship from British Library, Cotton Tiberius B. V. part 1, f.40v.

This course has been decolonised with support and consultation from **The Black Curriculum**.

The Brilliant Club is a registered charity in England and Wales (no. 1147771) and Scotland (no. SC048774).

The Brilliant Club is a registered company limited by guarantee in England and Wales (no. 7986971).

The Brilliant Club, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor, Millbank Tower, 21-24 Millbank, SW1P 4QP

# Sample Tutorial Activity

The **Vikings** came to England over a long period of time. The earliest record we have is a raid on Lindisfarne Abbey in 793. By 1066 and the Battle of Hastings, we no longer have much writing that talks about **Vikings** invading, though by that point **Vikings** were integrated in English society, and it's likely that there was some movement of people between England and Scandinavia.

Now let's read just a little bit of what was being written at the time about the Vikings.

This is from something that we now call **The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle**, though it wasn't given a name as it was being written.

**The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle** is made up of short entries for each year. No one knows for sure who wrote them, but they were probably written down by **monks** in **monasteries**, and often based on news that was sent out from the royal court.

It mentions things further in the past, but covers from the 400s to 1154CE – so a huge span of time!

What we are going to look at today is one of the mentions of Vikings – we are going to look at the arrival of **King Canute** in 1015, who we will learn more about later on.

1016 – Canute came with his raiding army of 160 ships. He came to Warwickshire where he burned and killed everywhere he went.

Edmund, the son of the English king Ethelred, gathered an army, but they were no more successful fighting off Canute's army than they had been before.

Edmund returned to London to his father, and after Easter Canute followed, coming to London with all of his ships.

Then, King Ethelred died and Edmund was chosen to be king. Not long after, Canute's army attacked the town many times, but they could not get inside.

Then, Canute left London to attack Gloucestershire. The councillors advised that the two kings – Canute and Edmund – make a pact together. They met and agreed to a truce, becoming partners, and Edmund made a payment to the Viking raiding-army.

And so Edmund was king of Wessex in the south, and Canute had ownership of the north.

Now, with a partner, write down similarities and differences between how Vikings are portrayed in the *Horrible Histories* and how they are portrayed in **the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle**

Similarities	Differences
1.	1.
2.	2.

