History of the Anglo-Saxons

Learning Outcome:
I am learning to identify who the Anglo-Saxons were and where they came from
Where did the Anglo-Saxons come from?

Do you know what these places are called today and who lives there? Click here to view a map.

Why do you think they came to England?
The Anglo-Saxons came from **Denmark, Germany** and the **Netherlands**.

These fearsome warriors rowed across the North Sea in wooden boats to England and forced the tribes in Britain to flee their homes.

Within a few centuries, the land they had invaded was known as England, after the Angles.

They ruled England for about 500 years!
Why did they come?

Historians are not sure...

Possibilities:

• Saxon warriors were invited to come, to help keep out invaders from Scotland and Ireland
• Their land often flooded and it was difficult to grow crops... looking for new places
Video: how/why the Anglo-Saxons came to Britain

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/anglo_saxons/who_were_the_anglo-saxons/ “The Journey to Britain”
There were three groups of people who settled in Britain which together, are called the **Anglo-Saxons**.

These three groups are called:

- **Jutes**
- **Angles**
- **Saxons**

The Angles and the Saxon tribes were the largest of the three attacking tribes and so we often know them as Anglo-Saxons.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>350</td>
<td>Anglo-Saxons raid English shores and are beaten back by the Romans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>410</td>
<td>Romans Leave England and England shores are unprotected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>449-550</td>
<td>Arrival of Jutes from Jutland, Angles from South of Denmark and Saxons from Germany.</td>
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<tr>
<td>450</td>
<td>Saxons, from Germany, settle in Kent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>556</td>
<td>Seven kingdoms are created across Britain</td>
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<tr>
<td>597</td>
<td>St Augustine brings Christianity to Britain from Rome and becomes Archbishop of Canterbury</td>
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<tr>
<td>617</td>
<td>Northumbria becomes the Supreme Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>779</td>
<td>Mercia becomes the Supreme Kingdom and King Offa builds a Dyke along the Welsh Border</td>
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</table>
QUIZ TIME!

Think (can write down if you want)
Pair (share answer with a partner)
Share (will pick students to share at random)

1. Where did the Anglo-Saxons come from?
2. How did they get to England?
3. When did they invade/settle in England?
4. Why did they come to England?
   (two possible reasons...
Who were the Anglo-Saxons?

- Warrior-farmers
- Began to invade Britain while the Romans were still in control
- Wanted control and land

The Anglo-Saxons were tall, fair-haired men, armed with swords, spears and round shields.

Their other skills consisted of hunting, farming, textile (cloth) production and leather working.
Who were the Anglo-Saxons?

Men
- Knives/spears found in their graves
- Suggests they were involved in hunting, fighting, and farming

Women
- Sewing/weaving tools often found in graves
- Suggests they made clothes (textile production)

Everyone would help out with the farming.
Your Task...

Create an information passport for an Anglo-Saxon. Use your imagination from what you have learned and you must include:

• Name
• Where they were born
• How they travelled
• What was their job title?
• A picture of an Anglo-Saxon
• A small description of why they came to England.
## Anglo-Saxon Names

### Men:
- Aldfrid
- Bertwald
- Eadbert
- Hengist
- Offa
- Osfrid
- Oswald
- Redwald
- Sigbert
- Thrydwulf
- Wictred
- Wilfrid
- Womar
- Wuffa

### Women:
- Acha
- Aelffled
- Aedelhild
- Blida
- Coenber
g
- Eanfled
- Edyo
- Earcongota
- Ethel
- Gerta
- Hilda
- Helga
- Hereswid
- Mild
- Thieda
- Witta
Anglo-Saxon Life
How we know about them...

Some texts

– The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle
by the Venerable Bede
(a monk from Northumbria)
Part of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. It was written in Old English, so is quite hard to read today. It tells us a lot about Anglo-Saxon history.
This is what an Anglo-Saxon house was like. The people are modern but wearing 'Anglo-Saxon' clothes.
Anglo-Saxon pottery, made between AD 500 and 700. Different shapes and sizes of pots had different uses.
Anglo-Saxon shoes. They are made of leather, probably from a cow’s skin.
Ploughing a field in the spring. Oxen pull the heavy wooden plough. The picture comes from a calendar made about AD 1030.
This picture shows a smith heating iron in a fire. Other men watch and warm their hands.
This picture from an Anglo-Saxon book shows shepherds looking after their sheep.
VIDEOS

• [http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/anglo_saxons/anglo-saxon_life/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/anglo_saxons/anglo-saxon_life/)
  1. Anglo-Saxon Settlement (3:26)
  2. Anglo-Saxon village (2:59)
  3. Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (2:19)
- S1E8: Dung (15:00-16:57)
- S2E7: words we get from Saxons, sign of the cross (13:27-14:50)
- S2E12: cures advert, helmet, words (13:55-16:40)
Anglo-Saxon beliefs/religion
“Pagans” - believed in many gods

- King of Anglo-Saxon gods = Woden
- God of thunder = Thunor
- God of love = Frige
- God of war = Tiw

Superstitious: believed in lucky charms. Thought that magic rhymes, potions, stones, or jewels would protect them from evil spirits/sickness.
• S5E1: gods (00:33-4:43)
• S2E6: weather forecast, keeping ghosts away (9:00-12:30)
• S4E10: mythological monsters (14:35-19:50)
597: the Pope in Rome decided it was time that Anglo-Saxons in southern Britain heard about Christianity.

- Sent a monk named Augustine to Kent.
  - His job = persuade the king to become Christian.
Over the next 100 years, many Anglo-Saxons turned to Christianity.

Many new churches & monasteries were built.
• S5E5: universe, conversion to Christianity (0:33-4:32)
MONASTERIES

• Centres of learning
• Monks & nuns pray, study, work in field/workshops
• Copied out books by hand
• S1E12: ink, monastery food (00:33-4:26)
Kings & Laws
One king or many?

- Each group of Anglo-Saxon settlers had a leader or war-chief.
- A strong leader became 'cyning' - Anglo-Saxon for 'king'.
- Each king ruled a kingdom and led a small army. There were many quarrels and wars between kings, to see who was the strongest.
Thegn

- A lord
- Held land from the king
- Led a small army
- Owed the king military service
• By around AD 600 there were five important Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. They were Northumbria, Mercia, Wessex, Kent and East Anglia.

• From time to time, the strongest king would claim to be 'bretwalda' - which meant ruler of all Britain.
By around AD 600 there were five important Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. They were Northumbria, Mercia, Wessex, Kent and East Anglia.
Sutton Hoo: A King’s Burial
Why was Alfred so great?

• Great Anglo-Saxon kings included Offa of Mercia (who built Offa's Dyke) and Edwin of Northumbria (who founded Edinburgh or 'Edwin's burh'). But the most famous of all is Alfred, the only king in British history to be called 'Great'.
Alfred the Great

- Born 849, died 899.
- His father was king of Wessex.
- Alfred became king of all England.
- He fought the **Vikings**, and then made peace so that English and Vikings settled down to live together.
- He encouraged people to learn and he tried to govern well and fairly.
Anglo-Saxon Crime and Punishment
• The Anglo-Saxons didn't have prisons
• People found guilty of crimes = executed or punished with fines.
• If a person killed someone, they paid money to the dead person's relatives. This was 'wergild'. The idea was to stop long quarrels or 'blood feuds' between families.
Even body parts cost money! Try to match the body part with the cost.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body Part</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nose</td>
<td>1 shilling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big toe</td>
<td>9 shillings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little toe</td>
<td>60 shillings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back tooth</td>
<td>4 shillings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nail of little finger</td>
<td>20 shillings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Crime & Punishment

Nose = 60 Shillings
Big toe = 20 Shillings
Little toe = 9 Shillings
Back tooth = 4 shillings
Nail of little finger = 1 shilling
Unlike in Canada today, the Anglo-Saxons had the death penalty and torture for all sorts of crimes.

Which would you choose and why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Punishment</th>
<th>Hanging</th>
<th>Drowning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stoning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burning</td>
<td>Beheading</td>
<td>Having your neck broken</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Punishments

- If a judge didn’t want you dead, he could cut off your body parts instead.

Which could you do without? Why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand</th>
<th>Scalp</th>
<th>Foot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nose</td>
<td>Eye</td>
<td>Ear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper lip</td>
<td>Tongue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Punishments

• You could also be...
  – Branded
  – Put in the stocks
  – Whipped
Quiz Time!

Question 1:
Thieves were legally allowed to hide in a church before they were taken away to be punished for their crimes. How long could they hide for?

a) 40 hours   b) 40 days   c) 40 years
Quiz Time!

Question 2:
A man has been caught stealing – not once – but twice! How will he be punished?

a) Cut off his hair
b) Cut of his hand
c) Cut off his head
Quiz Time!

Question 3:
In Anglo-Saxon England, many parents accidentally hurt their children but trying out 'cures' to illnesses. In the 700s a law was passed to try and protect children from these dangers. A mother gets 5 years of punishment for trying to cure her child's fever. What did she do?

a) Held her too close to the fire
b) Ducked her in the village pond
c) Put her in the oven!
Question 4:
Foreigners in England couldn't be trusted – they may have been spies for an enemy. They had to stay on main roads, and blow a horn if they left the path he was on! What happened to the foreigner who broke this law?

a) Killed as a thief
b) Send him home
c) Fine him a penny for every step he took off the path
As we said, there were no prisons in Anglo-Saxon villages. Fines were much easier to give. Which of these crimes was punished with a fine?

a) eating meat on a 'fast' or holy day

b) making a sacrifice to a pagan god

c) unlawful marriage
Question 6:
Murder was seen as an act against the victim's family, not the victim. Accidentally, a man chops down a tree and it kills his neighbour. What must he do?

a) Pay the family their weregild money, the same as for a real murder
b) Take the place of the victim in the family
c) Kill himself
Question 7:
There is no police force in Saxon England, so no evidence against a suspect like fingerprints. How do you check a suspect's story then?

a) If he swears an oath on the Bible then he is telling the truth
b) If he remains silent then he is innocent
c) If he swears an oath, but stammers, he is guilty!
Question 8

A man says he is innocent and wants to take a trial by 'ordeal' – a dangerous test where God will protect him if he is innocent. Which one should he take?

a) He must grip a red-hot iron bar and not be burned
b) He must be tired up and thrown in the river and float
c) He must pull a stone from boiling water...and not be scalded.
Question 9:
Someone has been found guilty of witchcraft! How can you execute them?
a) Boiling
b) Starving
c) Guillotine
Quiz Time!

Question 10:
A man has run away from punishment – he has then lived outside the law and is now an 'outlaw.' This means...

a) He doesn’t have to pay tax
b) He is not allowed to go to church
c) Anyone can kill him without him having to stand trial
Fun Facts

Cow-stealing was a common crime. There are records of people tracking down stolen cows, like detectives.

Fun Facts

To test if a person was guilty of a crime, he had to hold a red-hot iron! If his hand healed quickly, he was innocent. If not, he was guilty.

Fun Facts

In the time of King Alfred, wergild for a thane was 6,000 pennies. The king's was 90,000!
You will be arguing for a certain punishment...

The JURY makes the decision... you have to CONVINCE them...

Anglo-Saxons

Modern
1. I will read the “case”
2. Within each group: discuss the punishment you want... try to come up with as many reasons as you can to convince the jury to vote FOR YOUR PUNISHMENT...
3. Present points to jury (debate...)
4. Jury discusses and decides
A child has stolen a pig. What should we do?
Trial Time!

The Case

A man has killed a local woman because he was angry.
Trial Time!

The Case

Someone tells the court that they have seen a woman doing witchcraft—killing a dog.
A child is acting naughty at the market and upsets his mother.
What do you think about the police force?
Stories and Entertainment
Story-telling

• Anglo-Saxons liked to gather in the lord's great hall, to eat and drink, and to listen to songs and stories.
• They loved tales about brave warriors and their adventures.

A favourite story told how *Beowulf*, a heroic prince, kills the fierce man-eating monster Grendel, and Grendel's equally horrid mother.
The story of Beowulf was first written down in the 8th-9th centuries, but long before that the story was told around the fire. The storyteller played music to accompany the songs and poems, on a small harp or on another stringed instrument called a lyre.
The first lines of Beowulf, the Old English story-poem. It begins: 'So. The Spear Danes in days gone by and the kings who ruled them had courage and greatness.'
Beowulf Prologue in Old English
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-5RqX0Y7rbY
Read short summary version of Beowulf
• The Anglo-Saxons liked to play with words. They amused themselves by telling *riddles*, some of which were written down. Here's one riddle:

*I appear on the ground like a blanket, and melt in the midday sun.*
A wonderful warrior exists on earth.
Two dumb creatures make him grow bright between them.
Enemies use him against one another.
His strength is fierce but a woman can tame him.
He will meekly serve both men and women
If they know the trick of looking after him
And feeding him properly.
He makes people happy.
He makes their lives better.
But if they let him grow proud
This ungrateful friend soon turns against them.

What am I?
When I am alive I do not speak. Anyone who wants to takes me captive and cuts off my head. They bite my bare body. I do no harm to anyone unless they cut me first. Then I soon make them cry.

What am I?
Riddle

- [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/interactive/timelines/language_timeline/index_embed.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/interactive/timelines/language_timeline/index_embed.shtml) (click on Jester)
Early Anglo-Saxons wrote using letters called runes. They believed runes had magical powers.
Task: Riddle/runes

Option A:
Write a sentence in runes.

Option B:
Write an Anglo-Saxon riddle.

When you are done, share your sentence/riddle in a group or with a partner and have the other person translate your runes or guess the riddle.
**Entertainment**

- Horse racing
- Hunting
- Feasting
- Music-making
- Dice and board games

**Fun Facts**

Children frightened one another with stories of monsters. One was the thyrs, a nasty goblin which lived in bogs and ponds.

**Children played with**
- Balls
- Hoops
- Spinning tops
- Carved wooden toys: boats, horses
Hunters brought home food for the family. These bowmen with their dog have been out shooting birds.
A set of 'gaming pieces'. The pieces were used in board and gambling games, just as we use counters and dice.
A drinking horn, made about AD 500-600. The horn belonged to a wild ox or aurochs. This animal died out in Britain before the Saxons arrived. So it is an old horn.
Feasts

• Anglo-Saxon leaders or lords were expected to entertain their followers with feasts in their great hall. A lord gave his men gifts in return for their loyalty - treasure after a victory or a roasted boar after a successful hunt.

• On dark winter days, people gathered in the hall around a log fire. They listened to stories and poems, and sang. They ate roast meats, bread and fruit. They drank ale or mead, a strong drink made from honey. People often drank too much, so feasts were often noisy and sometimes ended in fights!