



Year 6 History

Revision Booklet

Name:

How to Revise

There is a lot of information here so you need to make it more manageable:

- Use a highlighter to highlight important information
- Transfer this information to revision cards
- Test yourself by covering the notes and writing them again
- Test your friends with little quizzes
- Use different colours for different notes
- Make mind maps or bullet point lists
- Use pictures and symbols as well as words
- Stick revision notes next to your bed so that they stay fresh in your memory
- Revise little and often – 15 to 20 minutes for two or three times a week
- Work together and talk about the subject with your friends



Ask your teacher for help if you don't understand

1066

At the start of 1066, England was led by King Edward who was respected and loved by his people. Such was his saint-like lifestyle, that he was known as Edward the Confessor. Edward was a very religious man and he ordered the building of the first Westminster Abbey. However, when he died in January 1066, he left no heir to the throne.

The most powerful nobleman was Harold Godwinson and he was Earl of Wessex. He was not a blood relative of the king but he was heavily supported by other noblemen in the Witan (a council of England's most powerful nobles). He had been the leader of Edward the Confessor's army and he was experienced in government. It was said (by Harold) that Edward named Harold as his successor on his deathbed.

On January 7th 1066, just two days after Edward's death, Harold was crowned king by Archbishop Stigant. When William heard of what Harold had done, it is said that he flew into a terrible rage of anger. Harold defended what he had done by claiming that William had forced him to make the promise and therefore it was done by blackmail and was not valid. William promised to take what he believed was his - the throne of England - by force.

Regardless of who claimed what, William decided that he would have to fight for what he regarded as his - the throne of England.

Throughout July and August, Harold had expected William to attempt an invasion and Harold put his troops near to the Isle of Wight - where he felt William would land. At the start of September, Harold received news that Tostig and Harold Hardraada had landed with an army in the north of England. He marched north with his army to fight Hardraada.



The English army met the Norwegian army at the Battle of Stamford Bridge on September 25th. The battle was bloody and violent. Hadrada needed 300 ships to bring his army over to the north of England. Only 30 ships were needed to take the surviving Norwegians back. Just two days later, on September 27th, Harold heard the news that William had landed at Pevensey Bay in Sussex.

Here are the main events of the battle of Hastings:

Harold's brother, Gyrth, offered to lead the army against William, pointing out that as king he should not risk the chance of being killed. Harold rejected the advice and after five days Harold decided to head for the south coast without his northern troops.

When Harold realised he was unable to take William by surprise he positioned himself at Senlac Hill near Hastings. Harold selected a spot that was protected on each flank by marshy land. At his rear was a group of trees. The English Housecarls provided a shield wall at the front of Harold's army. They carried large battle-axes and were considered to be the toughest fighters in Europe.

The Fyrd were placed behind the Housecarls. The leaders of the Fyrd, the thegns had swords and javelins but the rest of the men were inexperienced fighters and carried weapons such as iron-studded clubs, scythes, slings, reaping-hooks and hay-forks.

Historians have estimated that William had 5,000 infantry and 3,000 knights while Harold had about 2,500 Housecarls and over 6,000 members of the Fyrd.

Stage 1: At nine in the morning the Norman archers walked up the hill and when they were about a 100 yards away from Harold's army they fired their first batch of arrows. Using their shields, the Housecarls were able to block most of this attack. The Norman infantry then charged up the hill.

Stage 2: The English held firm and the Normans were forced to retreat. Members of the Fyrd broke ranks and chased after the Bretons. William ordered his cavalry to attack the English who had left their positions on Senlac Hill. English losses were heavy and very few managed to return to their place at the top of the hill.

Stage 3: At about twelve, noon, there was a break in the fighting for an hour. This gave both sides a chance to remove the dead and wounded from the battlefield. William, who had originally planned to use his cavalry when the English retreated, decided to change his tactics. At about one in the afternoon he ordered his archers forward.

This time he told them to fire higher in the air. The change of direction of the arrows caught the English by surprise. The arrow attack was immediately followed by a cavalry charge. Casualties on both sides were heavy. Those killed included Harold's two brothers, Gyrth and Leofwine. However, the English line held and the Normans were eventually forced to retreat. The Fyrd, this time chased the Flemings down the hill. William of Normandy ordered his knights to turn and attack the men who had left the line. Once again the English suffered many casualties.

Stage 4: William decided to take another rest. He had lost a quarter of his cavalry. Many horses had been killed and the ones left alive were exhausted. William decided that the knights should dismount and attack on foot. This time all the Normans went into battle together. The archers fired their arrows and at the same time the knights and infantry charged up the hill.

Stage 5: It was now four in the afternoon. Heavy English casualties from previous attacks meant that the front line was shorter. The Normans could now attack from the side. The few Housecarls that were left were forced to form a small circle round the English standard. The Normans attacked again and this time they broke through the shield wall and Harold and most of his Housecarls were killed.

You will **also** need to know:

- **Why** was the battle fought?
- **Why** was William victorious?

William's Skill

- Attacked Wessex villages to draw Harold to battle
- Raising his helmet in the battle to encourage his troops
- Fake retreats to break up the shield wall
- Getting his archers to fire in the air on to the Saxon heads
- Changing his battle plan during the battle

Harold's Mistakes

- Leaving his archers in the north of England
- Ignoring his brothers advice and not resting in London – his army was smaller and more tired
- The fyrd (fighting farmers) were ill-disciplined and did not obey orders
- The Saxons were over-confident after an easy victory at Stamford Bridge

Preparation

- William had a clear battle formation and plan – archers, infantry and the cavalry
- The night before the battle, the Normans were resting and preparing whilst the Saxons were drinking
- Saxons were tired

Luck and Other Reasons

- The wind affected events: Harold was expecting the Normans first but the wind blew the Vikings down. Harold had to march north to defeat them. The wind changed and the Normans arrived, causing Harold to march back south.
- Saxons losing the battle of Fulford Gate; had they won, Harold would never have had to march north.
- Harold getting shot in the eye.

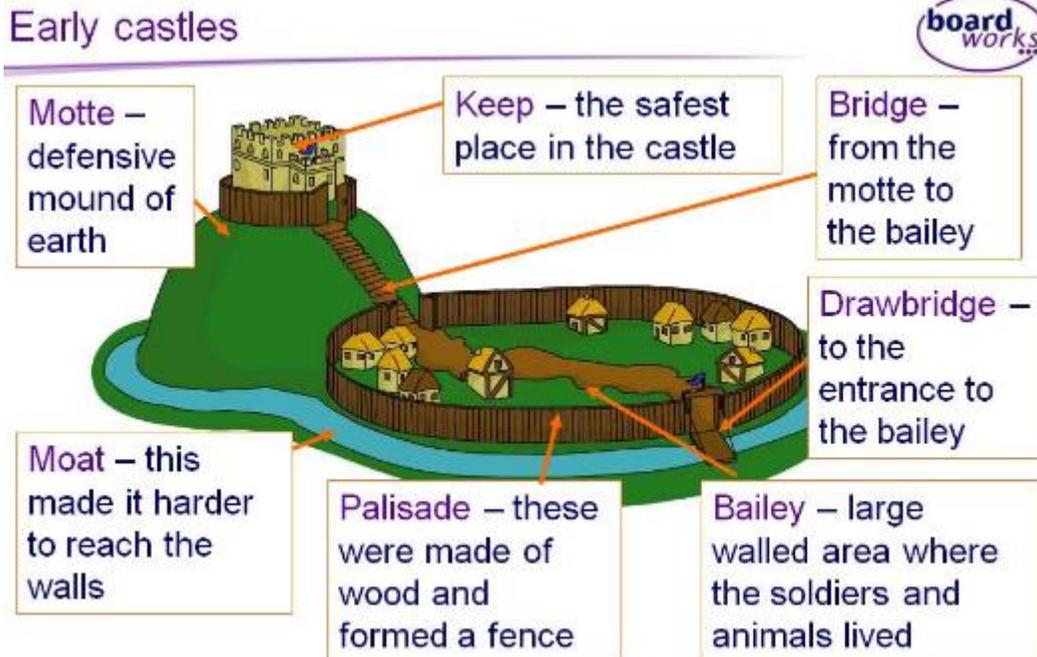
The Norman Conquest

Now William had beaten Harold, he had to control Saxon England. He used four main methods:

- Motte and Bailey Castles
- Crushing rebellions
- Feudal System
- The Domesday Book

Motte and Bailey Castles

These are the main features:



How motte and bailey castles were used:

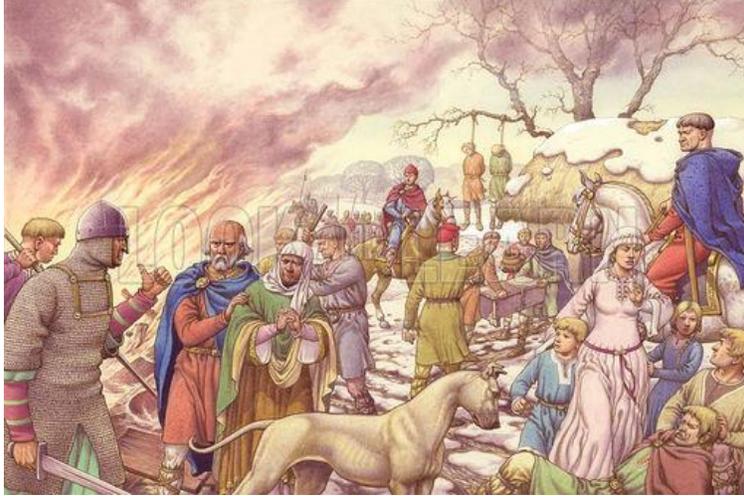
- These castles housed Norman knights on horseback who could control the land
- They were difficult to attack because of their defensive features and steep slopes
- They were made of wood so they were quick and easy to build
- They were high so the Normans could see into the distance
- They were also signs of power and showed the Saxons they had been conquered
- They were built 30 miles apart so the Normans were always one day's ride away
- They were built in important places like crossroads and by a river or town

However, being made of wood meant they could burn and rot. They were eventually replaced by stone castles.

Rebellions

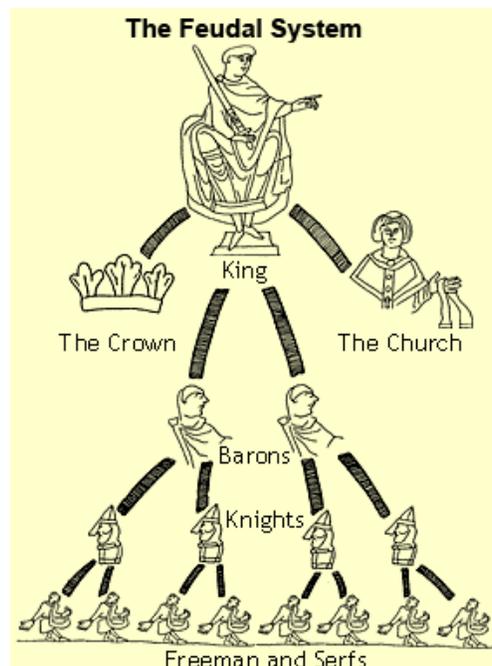
William crushed rebellions ruthlessly. He only had a small invading force so FEAR was a very effective way of controlling 1.5 million Saxons.

The most devastating of these was the HARRYING OF THE NORTH. After defeating a northern rebellion, William decided to teach the English a lesson. Yorkshire was attacked and thousands were attacked and killed. Land and animals were destroyed so any survivors eventually starved.

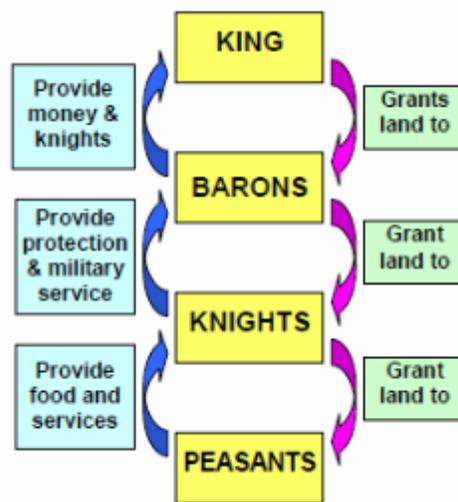


The Feudal System

William claims all the land in England as his own. Some he keeps, some he gives to the church and the rest is given to his barons – his tenants in chief. These are his most loyal supporters. They give their land to the knights who then give land to the peasants.



To receive your land, you had to swear an oath of loyalty and then provide certain services and payments to your lord.



By this system, William divides control but remains at the top of the system. He can raise an army if needed and the land is farmed. Everybody remains loyal as they are all on the king's land.

The Domesday Book

In 1085, William decided that he needed to find out how wealthy his new kingdom was so he could collect the right amount of tax. He sent clerks and soldiers throughout the land to find out:

- Who owned what land
- How many animals there were
- What buildings there were

Priests and village elders were asked and soldiers threatened people if they thought they were lying. Clerks were sent out a second time to check answers. It was known as the Domesday Book because it was like God's final judgment on earth – that is how thorough it was and you couldn't argue with it!

William never saw it completed. In 1087, his horse stumbled and he fell on to the pommel of the saddle. This burst his internal organs and he died of bleeding.