3 The Norman Conquest, 1065–1087

Page 57: Eliminate irrelevance

In 1065, England had only been a single kingdom for about 100 years. In the tenth century, the leaders of Wessex, one of the kingdoms, had led wars to end Viking rule. By AD954, the last Viking ruler had been defeated. Unlike France, where local lords ran their regions like small kingdoms, England’s king had strong central control. The country was divided into shires, which made collecting tax easier. Most shires had fortified towns called burhs that kept the community safe and acted as trading centres. They also had mints making high-quality coins. This combination of control and trade made the English kings powerful and gave them a source of income.

The king was advised by the Witan, which was a mix of earls and leading bishops. The Witan was very influential and could even choose the next king when the old king died. Unfortunately, King Edward was not very interested in anything except the Church, so left running the country to the earls. The earls had lots of land and were very rich and powerful. Sometimes they competed for power, which made the country unstable. Below the earls were the thegns, who ran the local courts and collected taxes. They did not have castles like knights in France.

Most people were ceorls, who farmed the land. They sometimes owned their own land but usually paid rent to a lord. They were expected to serve in the king’s ‘fyrd’ (army) – unlike Normandy, England did not have many dedicated fighting men.

Page 57: Test yourself

1 1065
2 Reliable coinage, strong central control, and a system of shires and hundreds that made it easy to collect tax
3 A cash value put on someone’s life according to their rank.

Page 59: Test yourself

1 The Roman Catholic Church and Irish missionaries
2 Rebuilding churches, founding monasteries, and improving the education of monks and priests
3 Robert of Jumièges

Page 59: Structure the detail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• As Archbishop of Canterbury, Dunstan worked hard to eradicate corruption from the Church.</td>
<td>• In the tenth century, St Dunstan had reformed the English Church, rebuilding churches, starting monasteries and improving the education of monks and priests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Edward the Confessor was a very pious man, and wanted to improve standards in the English Church.</td>
<td>• King Edward appointed a Norman, Robert of Jumièges, as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1051. Robert wanted to reform the Church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Pope was unhappy with the English Church and saw it as backwards.</td>
<td>• Harold Godwinson persuaded Edward to replace Robert as Archbishop of Canterbury and appoint an Englishman called Stigand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The English Church had an independent identity.</td>
<td>• The Pope insisted that the Church should use Latin, but the Anglo-Saxon Church used English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The English Church had been influenced by Roman Christianity and Celtic Christianity.</td>
<td>• English people worshipped local saints.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Viking invasion in 1011 ended the reform of the Church begun by Dunstan.</td>
<td>• Pagan beliefs were still common in England.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Page 60: Test yourself
1 Many were stolen or destroyed by the Vikings, the Normans, or during the dissolution of the monasteries in the sixteenth century.
2 Beowulf
3 To protect people from Viking attacks.

Page 61: Spot the mistakes
Most Anglo-Saxon buildings were made from wood, which means that they no longer survive. This means that we have to rely on written descriptions to find out what they looked like. [1]

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is a history of England starting with the Roman invasion. Copies were sent to monasteries throughout England and the monks continued writing it until the twelfth century. It’s very biased, which means that it isn’t a reliable source. [2]

The Alfred Jewel (probably made in 990 on the orders of Alfred the Great) is probably the finest example of Anglo-Saxon art we have. [3]

Many of the works of art we have from the Anglo-Saxon period are engravings and fine metalwork. Records from the period show that England was renowned for its high-quality craftsmanship. This is why the Anglo-Saxon period was a ‘golden age’. [4]

One of the best-known Anglo-Saxon stories is Beowulf. It is set in Scandinavia and is the story of a hero, Beowulf, who kills the monster Grendel, and Grendel’s mother. [5]

[1] Problem: This is not accurate – we also know about Anglo-Saxon buildings from archaeology.
Improved answer: Most Anglo-Saxon buildings were made from wood, which means that they no longer survive. However, archaeology tells us about the size and layout of the buildings and written descriptions tell us about their decoration

[2] Problem: Bias does not mean that a source isn’t reliable – just that we have to think about the bias when we use it.
Improved answer: The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is a history of England starting with the Roman invasion. Copies were sent to monasteries throughout England and the monks continued writing it until the twelfth century. It’s very biased, which means that historians have to be careful when deciding whether it is reliable.

[3] Problem: Inaccuracy – the incorrect date is given.
Improved answer: The Alfred Jewel (probably made in 890 on the orders of Alfred the Great) is probably the finest example of Anglo-Saxon art we have.

[4] Problem: This is a misunderstanding of the term ‘golden age’ which referred to more than just art and culture. The existence of a golden age is also debated, not fact.
Improved answer: Leave out the last sentence or say ‘this is part of the reason why the Anglo-Saxon period is sometimes considered to be a ‘golden age’.

Improved answer: One of the best-known Anglo-Saxon stories is Beowulf. It is set in Scandinavia and is the story of a hero, Beowulf, who kills a monster called Grendel.

Page 62: Test yourself
1 Someone who was given land in return for loyalty.
2 Full-time soldiers and the use of new techniques, e.g. cavalry.
3 Persuaded the King of the Franks to help him crush a rebellion against him.

Page 63: Mind map

Note: the below answers are suggestions, you may have chosen different points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norman society</th>
<th>Norman origins</th>
<th>Norman power</th>
<th>The Norman Church</th>
<th>William</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Based on the feudal system</td>
<td>Began as a Viking colony under Rollo</td>
<td>Adopted new forms of fighting, including cavalry</td>
<td>Viking settlers were pagan but converted to Christianity</td>
<td>William became duke when he was eight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knights swore loyalty to a duke in return for land and the right to charge tax and rents</td>
<td>Expanded rapidly through conquest and alliances</td>
<td>William’s strong leadership made Normandy one of the most stable parts of the Frankish kingdom</td>
<td>Normandy was at the forefront of church reform</td>
<td>There was infighting and rebellion until William was old enough to exert control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knights built castles – a symbol of power and control over their land</td>
<td>Adopted Frankish customs</td>
<td>The private armies that nobles built meant that there were full-time soldiers available if Normandy went to war</td>
<td>Normandy was famous for its beautiful churches and cathedrals</td>
<td>He married Matilda of Flanders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Page 65: Support or challenge?

Note: the below three rows are suggestions, you may have chosen different points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Supports the statement</th>
<th>Challenges the statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Witan supported Harold’s claim</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold was not a blood relative of Edward’s</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold was a powerful man and an experienced warrior</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pope supported William’s claim and gave him a papal banner</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold was crowned by Archbishop Stigand in January 1066</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward’s wife, Queen Edith, was Harold’s sister</td>
<td>This doesn’t support or challenge the statement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William claimed that Edward had promised him the throne in 1051</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Witan ignored William’s claim</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgar Aetheling was Edward’s closest male relative</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 The Norman Conquest, 1065–1087

Page 65: Test yourself

1 A direct relative of the previous king.
2 They rejected it.
3 1051

Page 66: Test yourself

1 He was angry about losing his earldom.
2 To provide food for his army, and to annoy Harold.
3 By using a feigned retreat to trick the English into following him.

Page 67: Unpicking an interpretation

• What the battlefield was like?
  The picture shows the fighting on flat ground, rather than on or near a hill.

• The differences in fighting style between the two sides?
  The English are shown on foot, and the shield wall is in the picture. The Normans are on horseback.

• What weapons each side used?
  Norman soldiers are shown with spears and maces. The English have javelins and axes.

• That lots of men were killed?
  There are lots of bodies on the ground.

• Whether either side was winning at this point in the battle?
  The fighting seems evenly matched in the picture, although the Normans are on the attack.

• The artist has made the Normans look dominant. How has he done this?
  The rearing horse is in the middle of the picture, about to crash down on the English shield wall. The Normans are shown advancing, and the English are standing still.

Page 69: Test yourself

1 As hostages to discourage rebellion.
2 Hereford
3 Besieged the city, and when they surrendered, pardoned the rebels.

Page 69: Spot the second-order concept

William returned to Normandy, leaving William FitzOsbern and Bishop Odo to run England. This shows that he believed that the realm was secure and there were no serious threats. [1] He returned to England at the end of 1067, however, when he heard about a rebellion brewing in Exeter. King Harold’s mother, Gytha, had fled to Exeter after the Battle of Hastings, and began plotting against William. She sent Harold’s sons to Ireland to win support, and contacted the Danish king, hoping he would invade at the same time. At first, William tried to use persuasion, asking Gytha and the citizens of Exeter to swear an oath of loyalty. [2] They refused, and added that he could not enter the city or increase their taxes. William changed tactics, [3] and marched an army to Exeter, besieged the city and forced the
citizens to surrender. William pardoned them, and promised not to punish them or plunder the city. This is important because it shows that punishing people was not William’s main priority at this point. He did not forgive Gytha, however, and seized her lands. He also built a large castle to prevent any further rebellion.

Evidence – the student explains why the point is important and what it shows.
Continuity – this was a continuation of William’s policy of using compromise and negotiation.
Change – describes how things changed.
Significance – the student explains why the point is important.
Empathy – explains what William was feeling.
Causation – shows how one event caused another.

Page 71: Test yourself
1 The Normans did not understand English customs.
2 The people of Bristol drove them away.
3 William destroyed large parts of the north of England to discourage rebellion.

Page 71: Practice question
Interpretations B and C both deal with William’s style of kingship, but they draw different conclusions. There are several reasons for this. One reason is that they are aimed at different audiences. B is a popular history book aimed at a general audience, so it is focused on telling a story. C is an article from an academic journal, which is aimed at a specialist audience and intended to examine historical detail.

Interpretation B argues that William was an unusually harsh king, while Interpretation C concludes that he was unusually lenient. The main reason for these different conclusions is that the interpretations look at different things: Peter Ackroyd focuses on the Harrying of the North and notes that the north was destroyed and the impact on the area was lasting. Marc Morris looks at William’s treatment of his enemies, pointing out that compared to a lot of medieval kings, he was not harsh at all. The differing interpretations suggest that William dealt with nobility more leniently than ordinary people, and this fits with other things we know about how William secured the kingdom – ordinary people were regularly treated harshly (e.g. forest law, Murdrum fines, higher taxes and tolls, using forced labour to build castles) whereas William tried very hard to keep the English nobles on his side. It is also important to note that the Harrying of the North was the most extreme example of William’s harshness – he had dealt with earlier rebellions (e.g. in Exeter and Ely) with more lenience. Some chroniclers also say that William regretted the Harrying for the rest of his life.

Overall, the two interpretations are very different, as they examine extreme cases. To get an accurate picture of William’s kingship, you would need to balance these interpretations with other evidence.

Page 72: Test yourself
1 Dealing with rebellions had been expensive.
2 His troops were hungry and tired and he had treasure from Ely and Peterborough cathedrals.
3 He besieged the island and built a causeway to attack it.
3 The Norman Conquest, 1065–1087

Page 73: Getting from A to B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>In 1070, a Danish army attacked the east of England, and captured the town of Ely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Hereward's rebellion had ended – and there were no more major revolts against King William</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Hereward looted Peterborough Abbey, giving the treasure to the Danes and joining forces with them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>William persuaded King Svein to leave. Hereward was alone, and William felt secure enough to return to Normandy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| With William away, Hereward gained support from across England, and from Edwin and Morcar who left William's court |
| By 1071, the rebellion was growing out of control, so William returned and attacked and captured Ely, then punished the rebels |

Page 73: Practice question

If I did further research on Emma Borely’s interpretation, I would look the reasons for Hereward’s rebellion and compare it to other rebellions against the Normans, such as in the north of England and in Exeter. It would be interesting to see if the rebellions were all caused by the same issues or if different areas were angry about different things. I would then go on to examine whether the background of the people had an impact – e.g. East Anglia and the north had historical links to the Danes, whereas the south-west was more Saxon. This would help us understand whether there was a single ‘English’ identity which would have contributed to patriotic rebellion.

Page 74: Test yourself

1. Thegns
2. False
3. An enclosure made of earth that was built around a castle.

Page 75: Unpicking an interpretation

Interpretation E shows a detailed drawing of how Pevensey Castle may have looked in 1066. The artist, Alan Sorrell, has done this by including not only lots of the features of a Norman castle (such as the separation of the fortified area and the outer bailey, the walls and earthworks, and the gatehouse) but also things that we know about Pevensey in particular, such as that it was built on the remains of a Roman fort, and was therefore not a typical motte and bailey castle.

After looking at Alan Sorrell’s drawing of Pevensey Castle, I would compare Pevensey Castle with other Norman castles to find out how typical it was. Pevensey was the first of William’s castles and it would be interesting to see how castle building changed over the Norman period, and whether any features stayed the same. Pevensey was also a defensive castle and by comparing it with other castles, we would be able to find out whether castles were built for different reasons and if so, how this affected how they were built.

Page 77: Test yourself

1. The English had to pay tax to build castles, the Normans often used English forced labour to build castles, and they dominated the landscape and were a symbol of Norman domination.
2. About 35
3. A wooden fence on top of the ramparts.

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Page 77: Unpicking an interpretation

Tim Taylor uses some powerful words and phrases in his description of Norwich Castle in order to argue that it was built to control the local population. For example, he says that it was built to ‘subjugate’ the people and that it was a symbol of their military and political power – this was definitely a feature of Norman castles, which were built to remind the English who was in charge, and allow the Normans to keep an eye on them.

Page 78: Test yourself

1. That castles were often in the middle of a lord’s estate and were used for administration.
2. The Normans had built the mottes for their castles, rather than using Roman or Saxon remains.
3. That castles were built for status and prestige, not military reasons.

Page 79: Suggest a line of enquiry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second-order concept</th>
<th>Possible enquiry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Typicality (Was this the same everywhere?)</td>
<td>Compare Norwich Castle to castles in other areas of the country to see what was the same and what was different.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity (Was it the same for everyone?)</td>
<td>Look at castles belonging to other people who were not as close to William – in what ways do they differ from Norwich, built by a close follower?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronology (Was it the same throughout the period?)</td>
<td>Look at how Norwich Castle developed over time. It was built between 1066 and 1074 – was it a stone castle when it was first built or was there an earlier version? Were any of the features added at a later date?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity and change (What changed? What stayed the same?)</td>
<td>Compare Norwich Castle to other castles built later in the Norman period. What features changed and what stayed the same?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causation (Why did this happen?)</td>
<td>Why did Ralph de Guader choose Norwich for his castle?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance (What was the impact? How is it remembered?)</td>
<td>Look for evidence of how local people felt about the castle and how it affected their lives and their relationships with their Norman rulers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It would be good to explore how Norman castles changed over time because it would tell us how the Normans’ relationship with the English changed during the period. The early castles like Norwich were built while William was establishing his control over England, so they had features that suggested a clear military purpose (e.g. thick stone walls, garrison buildings for soldiers) but later castles did not always have these features – by seeing how castles changed we could trace how the Normans moved from exerting authority over a rebellious population to administering a country that they had under control.

Page 80: Test yourself

1. Seven circuits, each with four commissioners.
2. 1066 and 1086.
3. It was not laid out in a way that would help tax collection.
Page 81: Develop the detail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original sentence</th>
<th>Developed sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In 1085, there was a survey of England</td>
<td>In 1085, King William ordered a survey of all the land and property in England, who owned it, and what it was worth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Domesday Book is actually two books: Great Domesday and Little Domesday</td>
<td>The Domesday book is in two parts – Little Domesday covers Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk, and Great Domesday covered the rest of the kingdom – but there were some areas that were not included, e.g. London and parts of the north that William didn’t control directly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William divided England’s shires into circuits and appointed commissioners to collect information in each circuit.</td>
<td>William divided England’s shires into seven regions called ‘circuits’ and appointed four commissioners to collect information in each circuit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The commissioners asked a lot of questions about each manor in England</td>
<td>The commissioners asked the same questions about each manor in England: about the land, the people, the resources and the value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They collected information for two different dates</td>
<td>They collected information for two different dates – the time of the survey and the day of Edward’s death in 1066.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many historians say the Domesday Book was to help collect taxes, but it might not have been</td>
<td>Many historians say the Domesday Book was to help collect taxes, but others point out that it was not laid out in a way that helped with taxation and argue that it was a way of showing they were in control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Domesday Book showed that the Normans owned the land</td>
<td>The Domesday Book was intended to show that the Normans had a legal right to the land and that the conquest was legitimate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Page 83: Test yourself

1. 5 per cent
2. Spread their land out so they couldn’t build power bases.
3. Some towns grew due to trade, the Normans charged high rents and toils at the markets, and houses and workshops were demolished to make room for castles.

Page 83: Support or challenge?

Note: the below three rows are suggestions, you may have chosen different points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Supports statement</th>
<th>Challenges statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The number of free peasants fell sharply under the Normans</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William used the Anglo-Saxon system for collecting taxes</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade with Normandy meant that some English towns grew</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before and after the Conquest, most people worked on the land  

The number of slaves in England fell after 1066  

The Normans increased rents and tolls at the markets  

William changed the system that allowed the earls to build huge power bases  

Large towns, such as Norwich, York and Oxford, saw their populations fall  

The Normans built castles in the middle of their estates and charged their tenants high rents  

---

**Page 85: Test yourself**

1. If a Norman was killed, the community had to pay a huge fine until the killer was found.
2. Latin
3. Norman bishops replaced English ones, Anglo-Saxon cathedrals were rebuilt, and churches dedicated to Anglo-Saxon saints were changed to honour Norman saints instead.

**Page 85: Spot the second-order concept**

The Norman Conquest had an enormous impact on England. In some ways, the social structure stayed the same – power came from land, and everyone had a lord [1] – but in other ways there were big changes. Norman lords replaced English ones and rents and taxes went up, forcing people into poverty. [2] Although the Normans kept many Saxon laws, such as trial by ordeal, they introduced their own as well. [3] Books such as the ‘Textus Roffensis’ [4] tell us that trial by ordeal was extended to trial by combat, a sword fight between the accused and accuser. Forest Law reserved huge swathes of the forest for the king to hunt in and severely punished anyone hunting there – even collecting firewood was banned. This was hugely unpopular because before the Conquest, many people had depended on the forests as a source of food. [5] Another new law was the Murdrum fine. If a Norman was killed, the local community had to pay an exorbitant fine until the murderer was caught. The fact that this law was necessary shows how unpopular the Normans were [6] – and how vulnerable they must have felt [7], surrounded by hostile subjects.

[1] Continuity  
[2] Change  
[3] Comparison  
[4] Sources  
[5] Consequence  
[6] Significance  
[7] Empathy