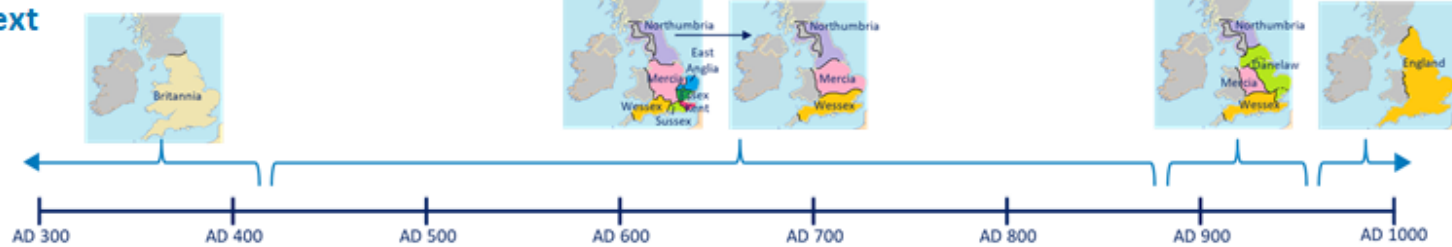


## Chronological context



## Core Vocabulary

- **Excavation:** the extracting of material from the ground by digging
- **Genetic:** relating to the study of genes, or the characteristics that we inherit from ancestors
- **Interpret:** to understand that a piece of writing, performance or behaviour as having a particular meaning
- **Literate:** able to read and write
- **Raid:** a surprise attack by an enemy, often to steal
- **Settling:** making a permanent home somewhere
- **Scandinavia:** a group of countries in northern Europe that includes Denmark, Norway and Sweden
- **Anglo-Saxon Chronicle:** a collection of writings from the Anglo-Saxon period, first created during the reign of Alfred the Great
- **Archaeology:** the study of human history through the excavation of sites and analysis of physical remains
- **Danelaw:** the part of England that was controlled by the Vikings, from 878 to 954
- **Longships:** Viking ships that were not only long, but slender and so easy to turn. They had sails and oars
- **Thing:** a Viking assembly that was the system of administration and justice

## Vikings in Britain:

Vikings first raided England in AD 793

Eventually the Anglo-Saxons agreed to let Vikings have some lands in England. This area was called **Danelaw**.

The Anglo-Saxons killed the last Viking leader in England in AD 954

## Geographical context

The Vikings came from Scandinavia (modern-day Norway, Sweden and Denmark) but traded and settled in places across Europe and beyond.





The Vikings have a violent reputation partly because of some of the actions they took in the **short term**, but also because of the way that writers and artists have chosen to portray them in the **longer term**. For example, Anglo-Saxons presented the Vikings as much more violent than they were because it made the Anglo-Saxons' victories against them even more powerful.

**Some of the evidence of the Vikings that we have agrees with this violent reputation; some of it does not.**

### Archaeological evidence tells us that:

- The Viking armies were not as large as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle suggested.
- Men as well as women could be celebrated Viking warriors.
- The Anglo-Saxons could be equally violent, as a mass grave contains the bodies of Vikings who had been tied up and executed.
- The Vikings were actually skilled craftsmen and could make jewellery and other items out of metals and animal bones.
- The Vikings traded peacefully with many of the places they travelled to, and made coins that were similar to those being used in the area.
- The Vikings participated in the trade of people, particularly women.
- The Vikings could be democratic, with local, regional and even national things taking place so that different groups could come together and agree important decisions.

### Other evidence tells us that:

- The Vikings settled in places in Britain and contributed to the culture (e.g. place names from Old Norse words)
- The Vikings settled in England mixed with the Anglo-Saxons (the UK population today is up to 6% Viking).

*These facts can be placed on a spectrum to help you decide whether the Vikings deserved their violent reputation!*

The Vikings were not violent at all

The Vikings were extremely violent, as some written sources suggest