

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR ALL GRADES

For many years, historians called the first part of the Middle Ages (from the fall of Rome in about 476 to the time of the First Crusade in 1095) the “Dark Ages.” The name arose because, except for the deeds of a few heroic men, most of life in Europe during those years was filled with trouble, uncertainty, and death. Relatively speaking, Charlemagne’s reign of wide-ranging peace and order was a brief, shining moment in the midst of centuries of general strife. As we saw last week, his successors soon wrangled with one another over how to divide Charlemagne’s empire, and then—much as the Romans had fought their ancestors—the relatively civilized Carolingians had to defend their spark of civilized culture from a new barbarian menace: the Vikings. No sooner would a community make progress towards order and prosperity than fierce Norsemen would appear in the night to kill, destroy, and steal what little wealth the parish church had collected, or what few crops had been stored up in barns. In the struggle just to survive, many previous advances of civilization were lost to western Europe. Except in monasteries, study all but ceased and towns that had no defenses disappeared altogether. Skilled men who had enjoyed the safety and order of the Roman Empire and had worked to create beautiful paintings, buildings, jewelry, and churches now had to work hard every day just to feed themselves and their families. Craftsmen ceased making beautiful things and turned to tilling the ground, or were forced to fight in petty battles as feudal lords fought one another for mastery over small patches of land.

If we limit our view to political structures of this age, the centuries between 500 and 1000 do look pretty dark, even despite Charlemagne’s significant reign. But, as modern scholarship has demonstrated, much was going on during these years in Europe. God was busily at work forging the foundations of a new way of life—one that would eventually take European society to greater heights of godliness, quality of life, craftsmanship, and scholarship than did the Roman Empire. However, during these darker centuries, the Viking raiders posed a real, terrifying, and recurring threat—so much so that the years between 793 (when Norsemen suddenly raided an important island monastery called Lindisfarne) and 1066 (when William the Conqueror invaded England and quelled all Viking challengers) have been called the Viking Age.

Who were the Vikings, and what caused them to leave their northern lands to wreak havoc on their weak southern neighbors? Why did they eventually stop raiding? What were the purposes of God in allowing this long-term violence and destruction? We will seek to answer these questions this week as we focus our studies on the Viking peoples of Scandinavia, the British Isles, and the lands now known as Denmark, Sweden, northern Germany, and Russia. We will seek to understand how they organized themselves when at home and why they took to raiding. As we study, we will joyfully see that, though many a priest and missionary were martyred by the Viking raiders, in the end the gospel of Jesus Christ tamed the savage Vikings, bringing peace to European shores.

Making Models with Polymer Clays

Fimo™ or Sculpy™ are both wonderful polymer clays that come in white or all colors. You can easily create new colors by kneading basic colors together.

You can model anything out of polymer clay just as you would with any typical modeling substance. But, unlike other clays, you can then bake your creation in a warm oven for 15 minutes to make it permanently hard. After baking your creation, you can paint it, saw it, sand it, and glue it. You can find entire books devoted to making miniatures using polymer clays at your local library or bookstore.

We highly recommend using polymer clays for any models you choose to make this week or in the future.

LOWER GRAMMAR LEVEL

FINE ARTS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Look at a picture of a typical Viking village or longhouse in your history book. Then make a model of one this week.
 - ☐ Before you make your model, gather the following:
 - ☐ A large cardboard box lid or a solid piece of board or cardboard to act as a base
 - ☐ Sand (enough to fill the box lid up to about a half-inch from the top) if you plan to create a barnyard
 - ☐ Sticks of various thicknesses from your backyard, or craft sticks from the store
 - ☐ Polymer clay (like Fimo™ or Sculpy™) or Model Magic™ to make animals, food, furniture, etc.
 - ☐ Cloth to make clothes for model people
 - ☐ Raffia (or straw) to simulate thatched roofs and straw for mangers
 - ☐ Boxes or cardboard to make house frames
 - ☐ Directions for the model village:
 - ☐ Make a palisade fence from sticks around the perimeter of your village.
 - ☐ Make small houses with A-frame roofs: use boxes to form the basic structures and then cover walls and roofs with raffia or straw.
 - ☐ Add details by making people, animals, and gardens from cardboard and/or polymer clay.
 - ☐ Directions for the longhouse model:
 - ☐ Make walls from cardboard or boxes, and then glue sticks to walls and raffia “thatch” to roofs.
 - ☐ You can make your model open on one side to show the smoky hearth, furniture, and stalls for the cows on the inside.
 - ☐ Write an explanation of your model or place small labels on the model itself.
 - ☐ Be sure to take a photo of your work for your portfolio!



Do projects from *Days of Knights and Damsels*:

2. Make a sundial or an hourglass and try to keep time with it. Compare it to modern timepieces. Which do you think are easier to use?
3. Make candles with parental supervision.

GEOGRAPHY

1. Take time to explore the Scandinavian and Danish peninsulas this week with your teacher's guidance and help.
 - ☐ Learn about the climate in these countries, and think about how the temperature and length of days differs from your climate.
 - ☐ What are fjords?
 - ☐ Looking at their homelands, why do you think the Vikings became good sailors and shipbuilders?
 - ☐ What about their climate might affect their desire to leave or stay in their homelands? What about their land itself would influence their desire to leave or stay?
 - ☐ How did northern climate affect how Viking culture was formed?
 - ☐ What amusements did they have?
 - ☐ What were their clothes like?
 - ☐ What form of stories or literature arose among them, and why?
2. A tribe called the Magyars attacked the lands of Henry the Fowler and then settled in Hungary. Look at a map with your teacher to see where these people settled.

LITERATURE

Worksheet for *The Tomten*, by Astrid Lindgren

Read the following quotations from this book. Write down the words that begin with the same sound.



1. "The stars are shining in the sky tonight..."



2. "...the chickens cluck contentedly when he comes."



3. "Caro, my friend, it is cold tonight? Are you cold in your kennel?"



4. "Summers come and summers go, soon the swallows will be here..."

Who am I? Guess which animal from the story is being described in each phrase below.



1. I sleep on straw in a cold kennel.

2. I trot around in a clover field in the summer.

3. In the hay, I wait for milk.

4. We stay warm even if the night is cold.

5. We dream that it is summer and that we are grazing in the fields.

6. We eat corn and are content.

UPPER GRAMMAR LEVEL

FINE ARTS AND ACTIVITIES

Look for details for these projects in *Knights & Castles: 50 Hands-On Activities to Experience the Middle Ages*:

1. Continue working on your "Four-Alls" project. This week, complete the peasant scene. (Week 2 of 4)
2. Make an hourglass out of salad dressing bottles.
3. Plant an herb garden of parsley, thyme, sage, and rosemary.

Here are some other ideas:

4. Design and paint a shield like the ones the Vikings would have mounted on their boats.
5. Draw a detailed sketch of a Viking village, longhouse, or dragon-head boat.
6. Make one of the models assigned for lower-grammar or dialectic students.

GEOGRAPHY

1. Take time to explore the Scandinavian and Danish peninsulas this week with your teacher's guidance and help. She may ask you to label the homelands of various Viking groups on a paper map.
 - ☐ Learn about the climate of these countries and think about how their temperature and length of days differs from your climate.
 - ☐ What are fjords?
 - ☐ Looking at their homelands, why do you think the Vikings became good sailors and shipbuilders?
 - ☐ What about their climate might have affected their desire to leave or stay in their homelands? What about the land itself would influence their desire to leave or stay?
 - ☐ How did the northern climate affect the way Viking culture was formed?
 - ☐ What amusements did they have?
 - ☐ What were their clothes like?
 - ☐ What form of stories or literature came from them, and why?
2. A tribe called the Magyars attacked the lands of Henry the Fowler and then settled in Hungary. Look at a map with your teacher to see where these people settled. If your teacher so directs, label a paper map of Europe to show where the Hungarian state was located.

LITERATURE

Worksheet for *Leif the Lucky*, by Ingri and Edgar D'Aulaire

Answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper.

1. Who is Leif's father?
2. Why are all of the ships crowded?
3. Why is the dragon head taken off of the ship?
4. In which country do they arrive?
5. Who rules over Erik?
6. Who is the king in Norway?
7. Why are ships scarce in Greenland?
8. Name three gifts that Leif takes to the king.
9. What is the punishment for the man who interrupts the king?
10. What does King Olav tell Leif about?
11. Why does Erik grumble about Leif?
12. Look up the word "hoarfrost" in the dictionary and write down the definition.
13. Who is the first white child born in America?
14. Is this book an autobiography, a biography, a fable, or poetry?
15. A simile is a comparison using "like" or "as." Find a simile at the beginning of your book and copy it.

Sequence the following events in the correct order by writing numbers on the lines below:

- _____ Leif and his men go ashore and build shelter.
- _____ The little fat man is spared from King Olav's anger.
- _____ Erik welcomes Leif home.
- _____ Leif saves the people who are shipwrecked.
- _____ A heavy fog covers the sun and the sea.
- _____ King Olav gives Leif two Scottish thralls.

DIALECTIC LEVEL

HISTORY

Accountability Questions

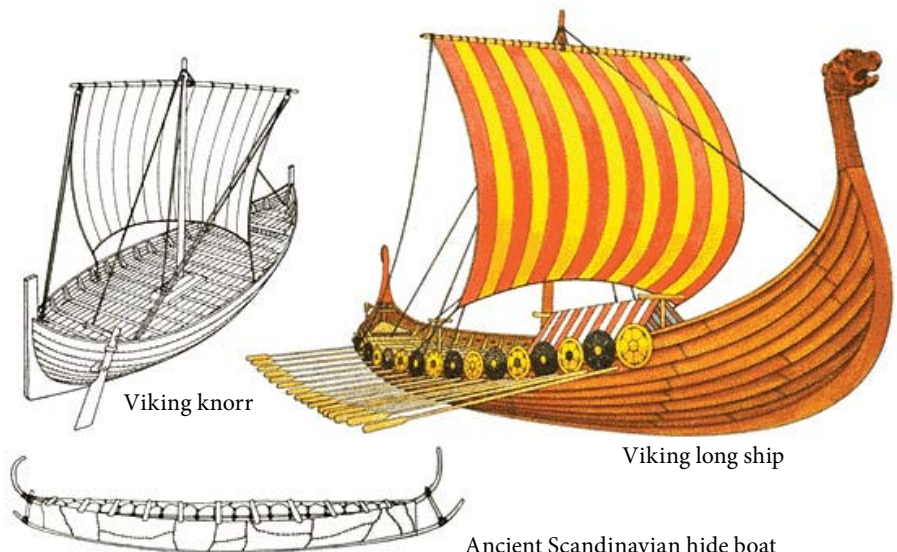
1. Why do historians call the years from 793 to 1066 the "Viking Age"?
2. Summarize unique aspects of Viking culture using the culture chart on page 19.
3. Who was Alfred the Great? Why is he called "the Great"?
4. Outline developments in Saxony under Henry the Fowler. What dynasty did he found? Who were the Magyars, and what nation did they found?
5. Summarize the events that resulted in Viking chiefs becoming lords of Normandy. Include details about Rollo and William the Conqueror.
6. OPTIONAL: You were given major dates from the Viking Age on page 6 of this week-plan, but your reading goes into detail concerning the histories of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Russia. If your teacher so directs, take time to add significant dates from your reading to your time line and/or list the major figures that hail from these places.

Thinking Questions

1. How was European civilization weakened during the Viking Age? Summarize the conditions in which Europeans found themselves from about 500 to 1050. Think through these conditions in comparison with the abundant food supplies, safety, and the strong, central government that are necessary for a civilization to flourish.
2. What is the connection between the Viking Age and the rise of the feudal system in Europe?
3. How far did the Vikings travel into eastern Europe? What far-reaching effects did they have on Slavic cultures?
4. Outline the connections between the Carolingians, the Normans, Normandy, and the line of English kings. Prepare to discuss these in class.
5. What events or changing conditions brought the Viking Age to a close?
6. Generally speaking, what qualities did the Vikings add to the populations with whom they mingled?

FINE ARTS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Reenact Viking government! With your siblings or co-op group, have a meeting of "the Thing." Your teacher will make up situations where your group has to decide what is to be done with the guilty party, or decide which towns to raid next. Take turns being the "criminals" and the "chief." How do you like this form of government?
2. This week, make a model or draw a detailed sketch of a Viking boat. You may want to label interesting features or write a paragraph explaining how Vikings used their versatile boats both on rivers for raiding or trading and in the open ocean for exploring.
3. Look at pictures of dragon figureheads typically found on Viking boats. Draw a detailed sketch of one, try carving one out of wood, or model one out of Model Magic™ or polymer clay.



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GEOGRAPHY

1. Learn about Scandinavia from your resource books or from travel videos that you borrow from the library. Think of how God controls environments and how great He is to have planned not only people groups, but also where they would live and how their environment would affect history. How would living in a Scandinavian environment change the way you live currently?
2. Find (or label on a paper outline map) these major landforms of Scandinavia:

<input type="checkbox"/> Norwegian Sea	<input type="checkbox"/> Bay of Bothnia	<input type="checkbox"/> Skagerrak
<input type="checkbox"/> Barents Sea	<input type="checkbox"/> Gulf of Bothnia	<input type="checkbox"/> Kattegat
<input type="checkbox"/> North Sea	<input type="checkbox"/> Gulf of Finland	<input type="checkbox"/> Kola Peninsula
<input type="checkbox"/> Baltic Sea	<input type="checkbox"/> Ladoga	<input type="checkbox"/> Åland Islands
<input type="checkbox"/> White Sea	<input type="checkbox"/> Onega	<input type="checkbox"/> Gotland Island
3. Complete a world map that shows Viking trading routes and the settlements they established during the Viking Age. The Vikings traveled in their boats all the way to North America in the West and the Black Sea in the East.
4. Note that some prominent Russian tsars had Viking blood in their veins.

CHURCH HISTORY

The Church in History, by B.K. Kuiper

Your recommended resource, *The Church in History*, has questions for discussion listed in each chapter. After you finish reading chapter 11 (sections 1-4), answer questions 1-3 on page 85. When you have finished, check your answers in the book. Then ask your teacher to look over your work, and discuss with her anything you didn't understand.



LITERATURE

Worksheet for *Stories of Beowulf Told to the Children*, by H.E. Marshall

Answer the following questions from your reading.



Who is the protagonist?



Who is the antagonist?



Give one example of how Beowulf is a hero.



Give an example of alliteration.



Give an example of the theme of generosity.



How does Beowulf deal with anger? Use a scripture reference to describe what the Bible says about anger.



Discuss Beowulf's apparent readiness to face death. How does this compare to what the Bible says about facing death?

VIKINGS						
INVENTIONS/ACHIEVEMENTS	OCCUPATIONS	ARTS AND SCIENCES	WRITTEN WORKS	RELIGIOUS BELIEFS	GOVERNMENT	GEOGRAPHIC SETTING

RHETORIC LEVEL

HISTORY

Accountability Questions

1. Why do historians call the years from 793 to 1066 the “Viking Age”?
2. Summarize the unique aspects of Viking culture using the culture chart on page 19.
3. What were unique and important features of Viking ships?
4. What key factors caused the end of the Viking Age?
5. What improvements in farming caused a substantial increase in crop yields during the Viking Age?

Thinking Questions

1. Summarize the conditions in which Europeans found themselves from about 500 to 1050. Think through these conditions in comparison with the abundant food supplies, safety, and the strong, central government that are necessary for a civilization to flourish.
2. Ponder the general state of European monarchies, making a list of strong kings from the Viking Age. In what ways was Alfred the Great unique among kings in his generation, especially in relation to the Vikings? Would you call him “great”? Why or why not?
3. What results did the menace of Viking raiders have over time in continental Europe in terms of military and social arrangements?
4. What events in northern France connected the course of Viking, French, and English histories?

GEOGRAPHY

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LITERATURE

The subject for recitation or reading aloud this week is *Hrothgar's Wisdom* (lines 1724-1768, pages 70-71 in the *Norton Anthology of English Literature*).

Defining Terms

Continue your index card bank of literary terms this week with cards for whichever of these terms you do not already have. Be sure to write down exactly what you see here. Your teacher may give you a quiz on these terms (or any of your old ones) at any time during the rest of the year, so be sure to review them before classes.

- ☐ Alliteration: The repetition of the initial sound of words in a line or lines of verse (Oliver, *A Poetry Handbook* 29).
- ☐ Elegiac Mode: A mode in which the main element is a purpose and mood of lament and mourning, which usually focuses on praising a loved one who has died.
- ☐ Kenning: A compound of two words in place of another as when *sea* becomes ‘whale-road’ or *body* is called ‘life-house’ (*Norton Anthology of English Literature* 6).

- ☐ Pattern Plot: A kind of plot in which the events are arranged in patterns, which often means that they are repeated or grouped in threefold arrangements.

Beginning Level

1. Underline the repeating initial sounds (alliteration) in the following lines. (The first line has been done for you.) Be prepared to show your marked lines to your teacher and to explain the effect that the technique of sound repetition has on you as a reader.

*“...and the clear song of the skilled poet
telling with mastery of man’s beginnings,
how the Almighty had made the earth
a gleaming plain girdled with waters;
in His splendor He set the sun and the moon
to be earth’s lamplight, lanterns for men...”*

2. Thinking Question: How is the plot of *Beowulf* arranged? What patterns (especially patterns of repeating action) can you find in it?
3. Thinking Questions:
- ☐ Ryken argues that a hero is, almost by definition, the spokesman for his community or culture. The hero is the symbol of his people’s values and beliefs, the embodiment of the way they understand reality. What characteristics of heroes, as Ryken describes them, help to explain why this might be so?
 - ☐ Is Beowulf a hero according to Ryken’s definition (Ryken 107-108)?
 - ☐ Of the four “types” of heroes proposed by Ryken (idealized, tragic, comic, and realistic), which one do you think Beowulf might be?
4. Try to fill in the following outline about the content of *Beowulf*. (Hint: Hrothgar states what is perhaps the central theme of this story in lines 1722-1784, pages 70-71?)
- ☐ Topic:
 - ☐ Theme(s):
 - ☐ Beliefs about Reality:
 - ☐ Beliefs about Morality:
 - ☐ Beliefs about Values:
5. Thinking Question: What do you notice about the worldview of the author? Is his view of reality the same as Beowulf’s? What, do you think, is the author’s attitude towards Beowulf?

Continuing Level

Do all of the above questions, plus the following thinking questions:

6. Compare the style of *Beowulf* to that of Homer, Virgil, and *Chanson de Roland*. To help you start thinking, take the various elements of high style (such as epithets, pleonasm, repeated words and formulas, similes, catalogues, and allusions to historical or literary figures) and compare *Beowulf* to each of the other epics mentioned. For example, Homer and Virgil usually use allusions to show how one thing in the story is like something in history or literature, but in *Beowulf*, we sometimes find allusions used to show how something in the story is *unlike* a thing in history or literature.
7. Compare the thane-and-lord relationship that we find in *Beowulf* with the vassal-and-lord relationship that we saw in *Chanson de Roland*. What are some similarities and differences between the two?

CHURCH HISTORY

There is no Church History assignment for this week.

GOVERNMENT

Alfred was king of the West Saxon tribes in Wessex, in the south of what is now England, from 871-899. During his reign, the east coast of Britain was overrun by Danish Vikings. Shortly after he took the throne, the Danes wiped out his forces, leaving Alfred and a little band of men fighting for their lives in the forests and swamps of Britain.

According to legend, Alfred disguised himself as a minstrel to sneak into the Danish king's camp to learn his plans. Whether the legend is true or not, Alfred certainly did win a decisive victory over the Danes at the Battle of Edington, and the Danish king and twenty-nine of his chief men received baptism and signed a peace treaty with Alfred. The newly Christian Danes ruled the "Danelaw" to the north, and Alfred ruled as King of the Angles and Saxons to the south.

Alfred was an educated man, who did all he could to bring Christ and culture to his people. He translated fifty Psalms into Anglo-Saxon, as well as St. Augustine's *Soliloquies*, Boethius' *The Consolations of Philosophy*, and the Venerable Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of England*. Alfred's most lasting contribution to Western civilization, however, was probably his *Book of Dooms*, which gathered together the customary laws of Kent, Mercia, and Wessex. Alfred relied on the laws of Moses to reconcile the different laws of these three Christian kingdoms.

Alfred's *Dooms* became the customary Saxon law which William the Conqueror enforced in the King's Courts when he took over England in 1066. The law of the King's Courts became the "common law" which colonists spread all over the world from New England to New Zealand.

"Excerpts from the Code of Alfred"

1. Compare Alfred's first ten "dooms" with the Ten Commandments (see Exodus 20 or Deuteronomy 5). Are they identical?
2. Dooms 11 and 12 deal with slaves in a Christian society. How does this compare with slavery in a non-Christian society? How does it compare with race-based slavery in America?
3. Doom 13 addresses the intentional killing of a human being. How does Alfred define a killing that deserves the death penalty?

"The Laws of King Alfred"

4. The Saxons used a number of customary legal terms. Look up the meaning of the words "borh," "bot," "bryce," "burh," "wed," "wer," and "wite."
5. Saxons demanded a financial penalty for killing a man, but the penalties were not the same for all people. Who paid what for killing different kinds of people?
6. Doom 4 in this excerpt deals with "plotting against a lord." How did Alfred punish a person who plotted against his lord but did not kill him?
7. Doom 40 in this excerpt deals with breaking and entering various homes. How do the penalties differ for different victims and different times of the crime?

"The Dooms of Alfred and Guthrum"

8. Alfred the Great defeated the Danish Vikings in battle, baptized their king (Guthrum), and then shared the island of Britain with them. "The Dooms of Alfred and Guthrum" reveal Alfred's remarkable way of dealing with these previously pagan enemies. What evidences of Alfred's faith can you see in this section?
9. Note the recurring pattern of penalties in this section, which spells out both a "wite" and a "lah-slit" for each offense. Why do they do this, and what does it imply about the relations between the Saxons and the Danes?

PHILOSOPHY

There is no Philosophy assignment for this week.