The Vikings – Lesson 1

1. The Vikings, from Scandinavia, were excellent sailors, explorers and warriors.
2. They colonised large parts of Europe between 790 and 1100 CE and were involved in a long and bloody battle with the Anglo-Saxons for control of Britain.
3. Also known as Norsemen (men from the north), the Vikings belonged to many different clans, led by chiefs who ruled over the lands they had conquered.
4. After battles, the Vikings often forced local rulers to pay a tribute called Danegeld (meaning Danish tax) – a large amount of money that had to be paid so that the Vikings would not attack the locals and destroy their land.
5. The Vikings were excellent sailors, traders and explorers who travelled as far as North America in search of lands to colonise and trade with.
6. The famous Viking explorer Leif Eriksson was the first European to set foot in North America, 500 years before Columbus.
7. Scandinavian countries were rich in timber, iron and fur and the Vikings sold these materials across western Europe.
8. The ‘Vikingr' name came from the word 'pirate' in Old Norse and is further evidence of their reputation as fierce warriors who would fight and raid as they explored new lands.
9. 793: Vikings attacked the holy monastery of Lindisfarne
10. 867: Viking invaders named Yorvik (now York) the Viking capital of England
11. 886: England divided into Viking and Anglo-Saxon kingdoms
12. The Vikings worshipped many gods. Each god had different human strengths and weaknesses.
13. Odin, the god of war, death, wisdom and poetry, was the most important.
14. Thor, the god of thunder, was Odin's son.
15. Warriors who fought bravely in battle would be carried to Valhalla – the Viking warrior heaven.

Vocabulary

Scandinavia: Norway, Sweden and Denmark

explorers: people who travel to a new place to discover what is there

colonised: settled in a place

evidence: proof, information showing whether something is true

raid: enter a place to steal something

Activities

Read and understand the vocabulary and definitions.

Read and understand the facts above about the Vikings.

Choose at least 8 of the facts that you found the most interesting and write these up in your own words to create a fact file about the Vikings. You could also illustrate your fact file to make it more interesting.