Knowledge Organiser: Anglo-Saxons and Vikings in Britain

Key Dates and Timeline

Date	Key Event
c. AD 410	Roman soldiers withdraw from Britain. Scots from Ireland invade the north and Anglo-Saxons arrive from Europe.
AD 597	St Augustine arrives in Kent. Christianity spreads across Britain through Canterbury, Iona, and Lindisfarne.
AD 793	Vikings attack the monastery at Lindisfarne. This marks the start of Viking raids across Britain.
AD 871	Alfred the Great becomes King of Wessex. He builds fortified towns (burhs) to resist Viking invasions.
AD 927	King Athelstan unites the separate kingdoms to become the very first King of England.
AD 991	Anglo-Saxon kings begin paying Danegeld (tribute money) to Viking raiders to prevent attacks.
AD 1066	King Edward the Confessor dies without an heir, bringing the Anglo-Saxon era to an end.

Who Settled in Britain?

The Anglo-Saxons

Tribes (Angles, Saxons, and Jutes) from Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands. They set up farming villages and divided England into seven major kingdoms.

The Vikings

Seafarers from Scandinavia (Norway, Sweden, and Denmark). They came to raid coastal monasteries and later settled to farm, craft, and trade in places like Jorvik (York).

The Scots

People who travelled from Ireland to settle in western and northern Britain (now Scotland). They set up monasteries, such as the famous abbey on the island of Iona.

Significant Leaders

Alfred the Great

King of Wessex who defended England from the Vikings, created laws, and encouraged reading and learning.

King Athelstan

Grandson of Alfred who won great battles and became the very first king to unite all of England in AD 927.

Edward the Confessor

The deeply religious Anglo-Saxon king whose death in 1066 without an heir caused a battle for the English throne.

Anglo-Saxon and Viking Daily Life

Villages and Farming: Most people lived in small countryside villages in wooden houses with thatched roofs. They grew wheat, oats, and barley, and kept sheep, pigs, and cattle.

Crafts and Artefacts: Skilled craftspeople made intricate gold jewellery, carved animal patterns into bone, and forged strong iron tools and swords.

Laws and Justice: Communities were responsible for catching lawbreakers. Fines called *wergild* were paid to victims to settle disputes peacefully.

Important Historical Places

Lindisfarne

Holy island monastery in Northumbria raided by Vikings in AD 793.

Jorvik (York)

Major Viking town known for busy markets, craftwork, and international trade.

Canterbury

The main centre for the spread of Christianity throughout southern England.

Key Word	Definition
1. Settlement	A place where people establish a new community and build homes to live permanently.
2. Kingdom	A country or territory ruled by a single king or queen (e.g. Wessex, Mercia, Northumbria).
3. Artefact	An object made or used by humans in the past, such as jewellery, pottery, coins, or weapons.
4. Pagan	A person who believes in many gods and spirits connected to nature rather than one God.
5. Missionary	A religious person sent to travel and teach people about Christianity (e.g. St Augustine).
6. Monastery	A religious community where monks lived, prayed, studied, and hand-copied sacred manuscripts.
7. Longship	A long, narrow wooden warship used by Vikings with oars and a large sail to travel across seas and rivers.
8. Danegeld	A tax of silver and land-tribute paid by Anglo-Saxon rulers to bribe Vikings not to attack.
9. Jorvik	The Viking name for York, which became a thriving centre of trade, metalwork, and leathercraft.
10. Succession	The process that decides who inherits the throne and becomes the next king or queen.