



# The Anglo-Saxons: Invaders Who Became English

KS2 HISTORY

KS3 HISTORY

Ages 10-14 ⌚ 4 min read

## Who Were the Anglo-Saxons?

The **Anglo-Saxons** were a group of people from **Germanic tribes** who sailed across the sea and settled in **Britain** around **450 AD**. They came from what is now **Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands**. These tribes included the **Angles**, the **Saxons**, and the **Jutes**—and their names are actually where "Anglo-Saxon" comes from!

The Anglo-Saxons weren't organized invaders with a master plan like the **Roman Empire** had been. Instead, they were warriors and farmers looking for new land and opportunities. Some came as mercenaries (hired soldiers) to help defend Britain, but many more simply saw it as a place to settle and build new homes.

Think of it like modern people moving to a new country for a better life—except the Anglo-Saxons arrived in boats and eventually stayed!

## Why Did They Come to Britain?

Britain had been ruled by the **Romans** for nearly **400 years**, but by **410 AD**, the Roman army left to defend **Rome** itself. When the Romans packed up and sailed home, Britain was left without its powerful protectors. The land was rich and fertile, perfect for farming, but it was also undefended.

The Anglo-Saxons saw their chance. They weren't the first invaders—**Viking** raiders also attacked Britain—but the Anglo-Saxons were different because they didn't just raid and leave. They came to stay, bringing their families and building settlements.

## How Did They Change Britain?

Over the next few centuries, the Anglo-Saxons transformed Britain completely. They divided the land into **kingdoms** (like **Wessex, Mercia, and Northumbria**), each ruled by a king. They introduced new farming methods, built wooden villages, and

created their own language—**Old English**—which eventually became the English we speak today!

The Anglo-Saxons were pagan at first, but around **597 AD**, Christian missionaries arrived and gradually converted them. This mixing of cultures and beliefs created something entirely new: **Anglo-Saxon civilization**, which was the foundation of what we now call **England**.

Think of it like different families moving into a neighborhood and creating a brand new community with their own rules and culture.

Without the Anglo-Saxons, Britain would have been a completely different place. Their language, their kingdoms, and their way of life shaped the country for centuries to come—so much so that we still speak their language today!