



# The Battle of Hastings: When England Changed Forever

**KS2 HISTORY** Ages 9-12 🕒 4 min read

## A Fight for the Throne

In **1066**, **England** had a problem. The old king, **Edward the Confessor**, had died without leaving a clear answer about who should be the next king. Two powerful men both wanted the throne, and neither was willing to give up. So they decided to fight for it. On **October 14th, 1066**, their armies met near the town of **Hastings** on the south coast of **England**, and that battle would completely change the course of **English history**.

## Who Was Fighting?

On one side was **Harold Godwinson**, an English nobleman who believed he should be king. On the other side was **William, Duke of Normandy**, a powerful ruler from **Normandy** (which is in modern-day **France**). **William** claimed that **Edward** had promised him the throne years before. **William** was also called '**William the Conqueror**' because he was so good at winning battles. He led an army of about **7,000** soldiers across the sea to fight for what he wanted.

Think of it like two captains at school both claiming they should be head boy, so they decide to have a big sport competition to settle it.

## How the Battle Went

The armies fought all day long on **Senlac Hill** near **Hastings**. **Harold's** English soldiers stood on the top of the hill with shields linked together like a wall, which made them very hard to attack. **William's** soldiers were on horseback and charged up the hill again and again. For hours, nobody seemed to be winning. But then, late in the day, **Harold** was killed—most historians believe an arrow hit him in the eye. Without their leader, the **English** soldiers lost hope and ran away.

## Why It Changed Everything

**William** won the battle and became **King William I**, also known as **William the Conqueror**. This was **huge** because **William** brought **Norman** customs, language, and ways of doing things to **England**. Many **Norman French** words mixed with the **English** language—this is why we still have French words in **English** today (like 'beef' and 'pork'). **Norman nobles** took over positions of power, and the way **England** was ruled changed forever. The **Battle of Hastings** is one of the most important moments in **British history** because it shows how one day's fighting can shape a whole country for centuries to come.