



What Vikings Did When They Raided Britain

KS2 HISTORY

MEDIEVAL BRITAIN

Ages 9-12 ⌚ 3 min read

Who Were the Vikings?

The **Vikings** were seafaring warriors from **Scandinavia** (modern-day Norway, Sweden, and Denmark). Starting around **793 AD**, they began exploring and raiding across Europe. They were excellent sailors with fast, lightweight ships called **longships** that could travel up rivers and across oceans.

What Did They Steal?

When Vikings raided **Britain**, they were looking for treasure and valuable goods. They attacked **monasteries** (religious communities) because these places held precious items like gold cups, jewelled crosses, and expensive manuscripts. They also raided towns and villages to steal silver, livestock, weapons, and anything else valuable they could carry.

Think of it like a burglar targeting a house they know has valuable things inside — Vikings learned that monasteries were treasure stores, so they raided them repeatedly.

Capturing People

Vikings didn't just steal objects. They captured people and took them as **slaves**. These enslaved people were forced to work on Viking farms or were sold to other traders for profit. This was one of the most frightening parts of a Viking raid for people living in Britain.

Why Did They Come Back?

After their first successful raids, Vikings kept returning because Britain seemed like an easy target. Eventually, some Vikings decided to stay and settle in **northeastern England**, an area that became known as the **Danelaw**. Over time, Vikings and Anglo-Saxons mixed together, sharing customs, languages, and beliefs.

Think of it like finding a really good spot to camp — once Vikings discovered Britain had treasures and wasn't too hard to attack, they kept coming back, and eventually some decided to stay permanently.

How Did People React?

British people were terrified of Viking raids. Villages would watch for Viking ships and ring alarm bells to warn everyone to hide or run away. Monasteries built defensive towers called **round towers** to protect their treasures. Slowly, the kingdoms of Britain built stronger armies and made peace treaties with Viking leaders to stop the raids.