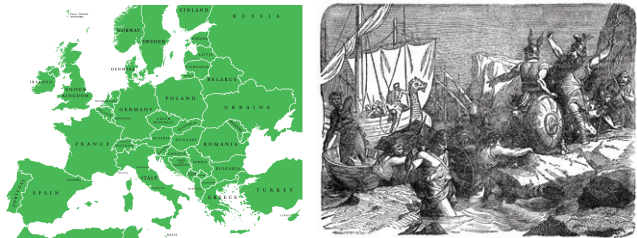




Who were the Anglo-Saxons?

The Anglo-Saxons consisted of the two biggest tribes: the Angles and the Saxons. Other invaders were the Jutes, Franks and Frisians. They came from the modern places of Germany, Netherlands and Denmark. These Germanic tribes all saw the opportunity to invade Britain, and without Roman protection they proved to be a formidable force against the British.



When did the Anglo-Saxons convert to Christianity?

In 597AD, Pope Gregory the Great from Rome sent a Roman monk called Augustine to Britain to tell the Anglo-Saxons all about Christianity, and persuade them to become Christians. Augustine arrived in Kent and set about his work. King Ethelbert, who was the king of Kent at the time, allowed him to preach to the people to teach them all about Christianity. Augustine converted King Ethelbert of Kent to Christianity soon after his arrival. Ethelbert was baptised and became the first Anglo-Saxon Christian king. On Christmas day 597AD, Augustine baptised 10,000 of the king's subjects. The mission proved to be a great success and Augustine was made a saint after his death in recognition of his work.

How was Anglo-Saxon Britain ruled?

Anglo-Saxon Britain wasn't ruled by one person and the Anglo-Saxons were not united. They invaded as many different tribes and each took over different parts of Britain.

Each group of Anglo-Saxon settlers had a leader or war-chief. A strong and successful leader became 'cyning', the Anglo-Saxon word for 'king'. Each king ruled a kingdom and led a small army. From time to time, the strongest king would claim to be 'bretwalda', which meant ruler of all Britain.

Over time, Britain was divided into seven kingdoms run by different groups. The kingdoms were East Anglia, Sussex, Wessex, Essex, Northumbria, Mercia and Kent.



What was Anglo-Saxon society like?





The king was at the top of society and he had many responsibilities. The earls were the most important men in the country after the king and governed large areas of England on the king's behalf. Thanes (also written as thegns) were local lords who lived in large halls and helped the king rule the land. Thanes were in charge of a village and were required to fight for the king. Most Anglo-Saxons were ceorls (also known as churls). These were the common people or peasants. Ceorls had to fight for their thane. In return, the thane gave them protection from invaders. Slaves were at the very bottom of Anglo-Saxon society and had no freedom.



Glossary

1	heptarchy	The name given for the seven kingdoms that were in Britain during Anglo-Saxon times.
2	kingdom	An area of England ruled over by one King, usually a great warrior.
3	fertile	Land which has lots of nutrients, so is easy to grow crops in.
4	tribe	A community of people who live and work together, with a common leader
5	bretwalda	A king who claimed to be in charge of all of England.
6	cyning	The Anglo-Saxon word for King. The war-chief and leader of many tribes.
7	thane	A village chief, leader of the local tribe.
8	ceorl	A poor common person, or peasant, usually a farmer or a craftsman.
9	fyrð	The fyrd army was made up of any free man that the king could call upon.
10	fortification	A defensive wall built to strengthen a place against attack.
11	pagan	A religion other than one of the main world religions, e.g. non-Christian.
12	convert	To change someone's mind, especially about religion.
13	invasion	An unwelcome armed intrusion into another country or region.
14	Danes	Another name for the Viking invaders.
15	Danelaw	The area of land given to the Vikings in the east of England
16	wergild	'Man payment' — Payment given to a family if you injured or killed someone.
17	tithing	Made of 10 men responsible for each others' behaviour.
18	mint	A way to make a coin.
19	'dark ages'	The period of history during which there aren't many written records.
20	archaeologist	A person who digs up artefacts and buildings from the past and studies them.

Significant People and Places

			
Alfred the Great	Saint Augustine	Bede	Woden God of War and Wisdom
King Alfred was known as Alfred the Great because of his social, educational and military achievements.	Saint Augustine was a monk who spread the word and converted the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity.	Bede was a 9 th century historian who is known as the Father of English History because of his influential work.	The Anglo-Saxons were pagans who believed in many Gods.



Significant People and Places

			
Sutton Hoo	7 Kingdoms	Canterbury Cathedral	Lindisfarne Priory
The site of an Anglo-Saxon burial ground which was a major archeological discovery in 1939.	The 7 kingdoms of Anglo-Saxon Britain were Mercia, Northumbria, East Anglia, Wessex, Sussex, Essex and Kent.	Augustine founded Canterbury Cathedral and became the first Archbishop of Canterbury. Today the Archbishop of Canterbury is also the head of the Church of England and Canterbury Cathedral is one of the most important and famous Christian buildings in the world.	Lindisfarne Priory became a very influential place. Using the priory as a base, the monks from Lindisfarne were successfully able to promote the spread of Christianity across the North of England.