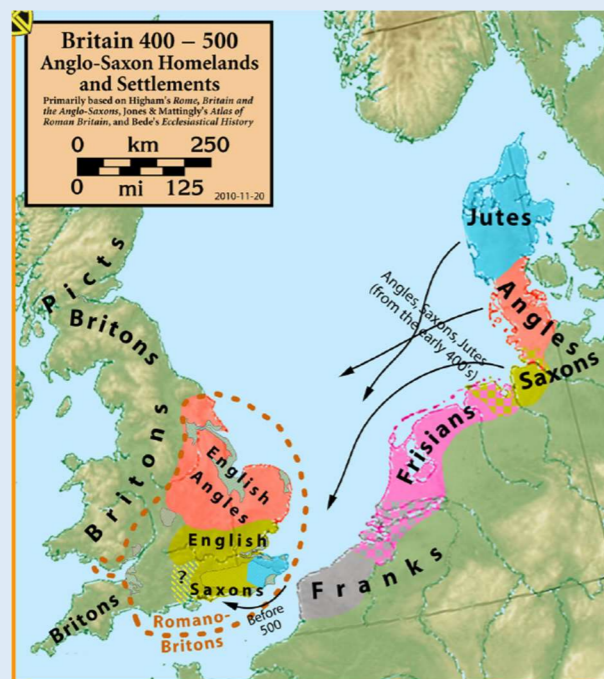


# Anglo-Saxons

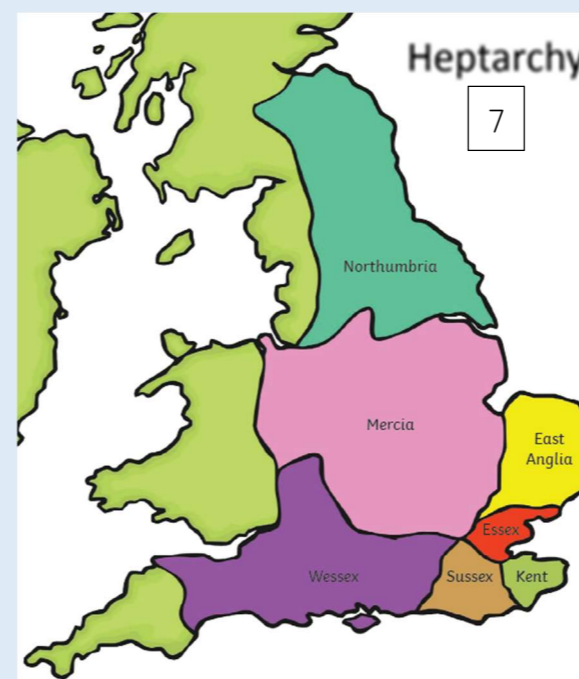
Britain's settlement by Anglo-Saxons and Scots

Where in the world?

What is the Geography?



Jutes, Angles and Saxons from Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands sailed over and settled in England (although it was not called England at the time). The Roman Britons were pushed north or west. Picts and Scots lived in what is now Scotland. The Romans had never managed to conquer the north and these tribes lived as they had always done, often fighting each other or raiding other parts of Britain.



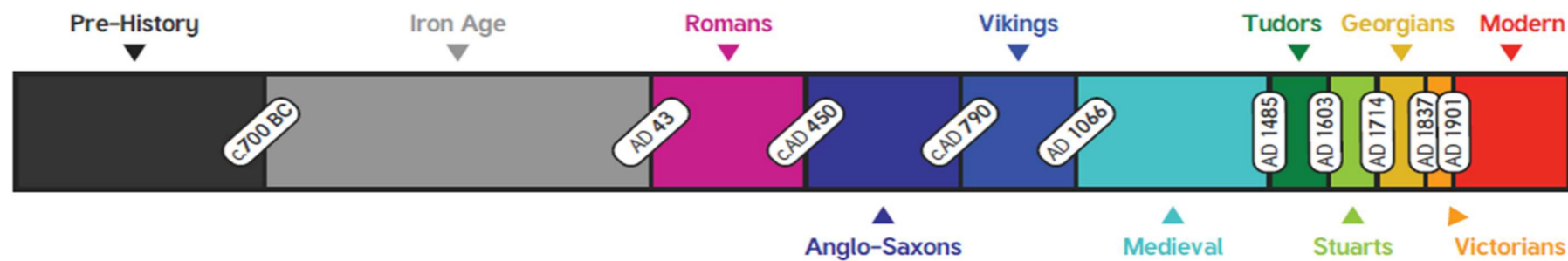
Where did they settle?

The Jutes settled mainly in Kent. However, they did not call themselves 'the Jutes', they called themselves 'the Kentings' because they lived in Kent. The Angles settled in East Anglia. The Saxons settled in areas of Essex (East Saxons), Sussex (South Saxons), Middlesex (Middle Saxons), and Wessex (West Saxons).



When in history?

It is believed that the Anglo-Saxon era began around 450 AD. They ruled for approximately 500 years.

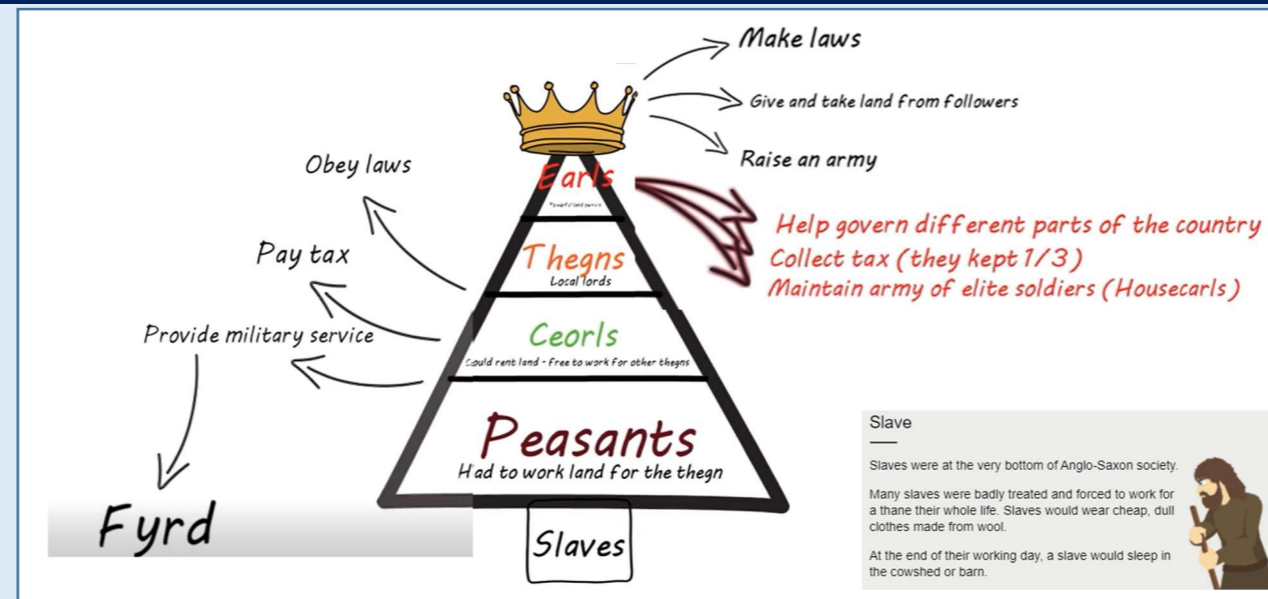


How was society organised?

**Thane**  
—  
After kings, the most powerful Anglo-Saxons were the thanes. Thanes lived in large halls and helped the king rule the land. A thane was in charge of a village. Everyone in the village had to do what he said. If he didn't like someone he could force them to leave his village!



**Ceorl**  
—  
Most Anglo-Saxons were ceorls. These were the common people or peasants. Ceorls were usually poor and lived in small huts. They worked on the land or had a trade, like weaving, metalworking or carpentry. Ceorls had to fight for their thane. In return, the thanes gave them protection from invaders.



**King**  
—  
The king was at the top of society and everyone had to obey his orders. Each group of Anglo-Saxon settlers had a leader, or a war-chief. A strong leader became a cyning, the Anglo-Saxon word for king.



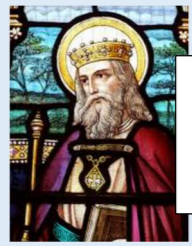
**Women**  
—  
Women weren't a class in Anglo-Saxon society, but they were treated very differently from men. Women were not allowed to eat in the great hall during a feast. A rich man's wife might serve food and drink to the guests, but would eat elsewhere. Anglo-Saxon women stayed at home, cooking, making clothes and looking after the children. Women usually didn't marry men of a higher class than themselves. A slave woman usually married a slave husband.



**Slave**  
—  
Slaves were at the very bottom of Anglo-Saxon society. Many slaves were badly treated and forced to work for a thane their whole life. Slaves would wear cheap, dull clothes made from wool. At the end of their working day, a slave would sleep in the cowshed or barn.



Key people (rulers, inventors etc)



**King Ethelbert**- King of Kent (a pagan). Married, Bertha- a Frankish princess (a Christian). He converted to Christianity and let St Augustine stay in Kent. He created the first code of English law in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century.

**King Offa**- King of Mercia (a warrior tribe) and most of England in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Best remembered for the dyke (a barrier made of earth and mud) he had built to act as a defence against the Welsh and for establishing a new form of coinage bearing the king's name and title.



**St Augustine of Canterbury** was a monk sent from Rome to England in the late 6<sup>th</sup> century to bring Christianity to the Anglo-Saxons. He became the 1<sup>st</sup> Archbishop of Canterbury in 597AD and is considered to be responsible for the widespread adoption of the faith.



**Bede**- a monk from a Northumbrian monastery who wrote a history of the spread of Christianity amongst the Saxon people. 'A History of the English Church and People'. He studied the bible and Latin. He is known as, 'The father of English history'.

What were their beliefs?

- When the Anglo-Saxons first arrived, they were pagans, worshipping many gods and goddesses.
- They believed that these gods ruled over the world and were responsible for what happened in people's lives.
- Woden was the chief of all the gods. He was the god of wisdom, war, learning, magic and poetry.

**Thunor** was the god of thunder. His favourite weapon was a hammer. Thunor travelled around in a chariot that was drawn by goats.

**Tiw** was the god of fighting. He is depicted as having only one hand, as one was bitten off by a great wolf called Fenrir.

**Eostre** was the goddess of the spring. Her name is used to describe the springtime festival which we now call Easter.

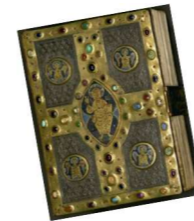
**Frige** was the goddess of the home and love. She was believed to be one of the most powerful goddesses and was thought to be very wise.

**Wayland** was the god of metalwork. Metalwork was extremely important as it was used to make tools and weapons. Therefore, Wayland was an important god.



The arrival of Christianity

In 597AD, the Pope sent a monk named Augustine to Britain. His job was to try to convert the pagan Anglo-Saxons into Christians. He managed to persuade King Ethelbert to become Christian and he gave Augustine permission to build a church in the town of Canterbury. Over the next 100 years, many other Anglo-Saxons converted to Christianity.



Synod of Whitby



A big meeting of churchmen called by King Oswiu to settle the argument about whether Celtic Christianity or Roman Christianity should be used. Roman Christianity was decided.

Key information (Battles, landmarks, inventions- writing & number systems etc)

- 350 CE** Some arrivals from north Europe
- 410 CE** Last Romans leave Britain
- 430 CE** First Christian church in Britain is built in Whithorn, Scotland
- 450 CE** German Saxons settle in Kent
- 516 CE** Battle of Mount Badon
- 570 CE** Heptarchy\* emerges in England
- 597 CE** St Augustine brings Christianity to England from Rome
- 600 CE** First Law Code written in English in Aethelbert's kingdom in Kent
- 613 CE** Northumbrian kings rule over most of England
- 664 CE** Synod of Whitby held
- 731 CE** Bede completes ecclesiastical history
- 757 CE** Offa becomes king of Mercia and arguably first king of all England

Stories, songs and riddles

- A common pastime was the telling and sharing of stories which were often about brave warriors and epic battles.
- Most Anglo-Saxons could not read or write so these were passed on verbally from generation to generation. They were often shared by families huddled around the fire.
- The most famous story from this time was the tale of Beowulf who killed a monster and a dragon before he became king.
- Music played an important part and many stories were set to music. Instruments included harps and pipes carved from wood or animal bones/horns. They also enjoyed telling riddles using words to help the player guess the answer.



There were 2 different types of writing.

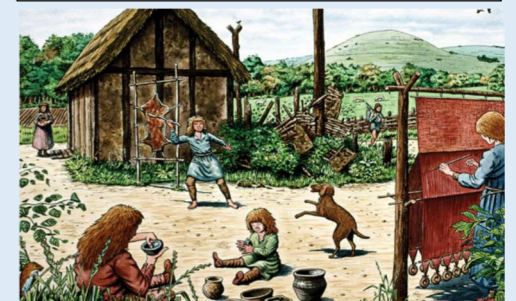
When the Anglo-Saxons first came to Britain, they used letters called runes.



When the Anglo-Saxons became Christian, They began using the Latin alphabet. Monks were usually the only people who could read and write so books were religious works called illuminated manuscripts.



Very few children went to school Most learnt what they needed to know from their parents such as growing food, looking after animals, cooking, building, making clothes, tools and fighting. Monasteries were the only schools. Boys went to live there to train as monks.



Impact on us

- One of the most important legacies of the Anglo-Saxon period, is the language we use. English has its roots in Old English which was spoken during the time of the Saxons. Many words today are based on Saxon original words including the days of the week.



- How England is divided is still very much based on Saxon lines. The modern counties are often based on, or identical to, old Saxon shires.



- Sutton Hoo: the site of the grave of an Anglo-Saxon king in Suffolk.
- Discovered in 1939.
- It is one of the largest and best-preserved archaeological finds of the period in Europe.
- It is very important because it tells a great deal about the wealth and traditions of early Anglo-Saxon kings.
- It also tells about craftsmanship, technological developments and beliefs.