

# CONCEPTUAL LINK 1

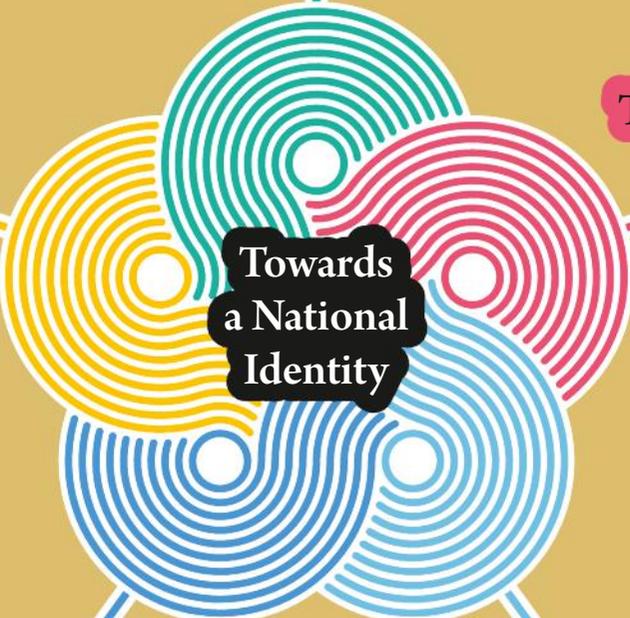
## Towards a National Identity

700 BC-1066 AD

Defining boundaries  
1.3 Borders and walls

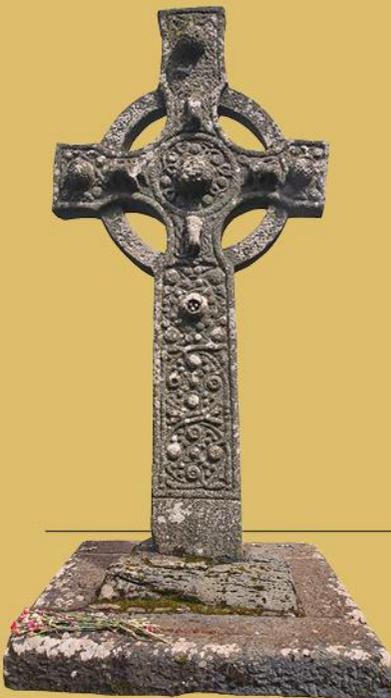
The great invasions  
1.1 The Celts  
1.2 The Romans  
1.4 The Anglo-Saxons  
1.6 The Vikings

The creation of the state  
1.5 From the Heptarchy to the Norman Conquest



Heroes  
T1 The fight  
1.10 *Beowulf* on screen  
1.11 Does the world need heroes?

A national epic  
1.7 Anglo-Saxon literature  
1.8 The epic poem  
1.9 All about *Beowulf*



  
Interactive  
Timeline

**700 BC**  
The Celts begin to arrive in Britain from northwest Germany

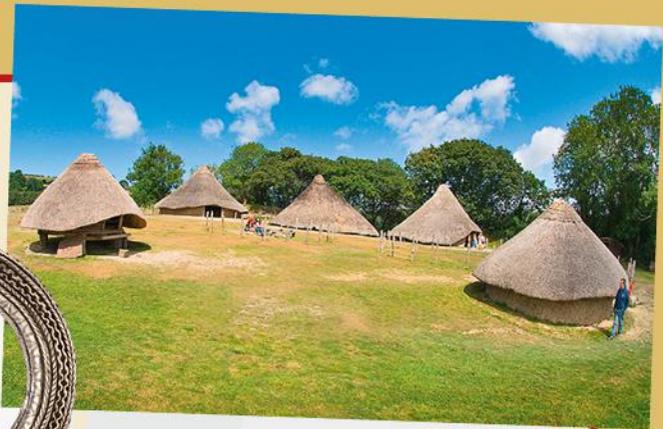
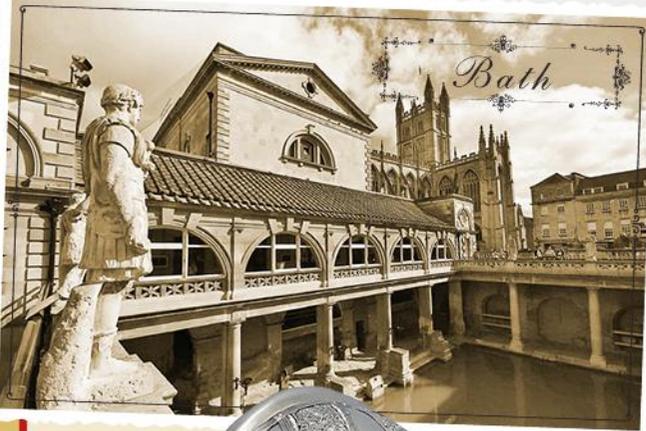
**43–47 AD**  
The Romans conquer Britain under Emperor Claudius

**122**  
Emperor Hadrian orders the building of a wall to mark the border between today's England and Scotland

**ca 450**  
Germanic tribes – the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes – begin the conquest and settlement of Britain

**1** LOOK at the mood board about early Britain and, in pairs, talk about what this Conceptual Link is going to be about.

# Notes on



Celtic village

Neck ring - called torque - sign of importance in Celtic society

Some of my favourites



Amazing helmet found in Sutton Hoo ship burial - probably belonged to an Anglo-Saxon king!

## Dates

927 1066



**2** IN PAIRS ask and answer the questions.

- 1 What is a national identity?
- 2 Which of the aspects below do you think are most important in forming a national identity?  
language • history • religion • traditions • symbols
- 3 Can you name places that are important to your national identity?
- 4 Have you ever been to Britain? Did you visit any historical sites or monuments?
- 5 Look at the timeline and the mood board. Which pictures do you find most attractive or most interesting? Why?

**3** IN PAIRS decide which of the concepts below might be relevant to the early history of Britain.

- flags • invasions • brave warriors • raids • national identity • gradual settlement • pagan gods • large-scale migrations • single cultural identity • tribes • cultural continuity



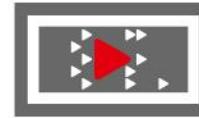
**600-800**  
The Anglo-Saxon Heptarchy and Christianisation of Britain

**793**  
Viking raiders attack the monastery of Lindisfarne

**878**  
King Alfred of Wessex defeats the Vikings

**927**  
Birth of the English state with Anglo-Saxon King Athelstan

**1066**  
Norman invasion and conquest of Britain



# 1.1 The Celts

ca 700 BC–43 AD



1. Maiden Castle, an Iron Age hill fort in Dorchester, Dorset, England.



## THE LANGUAGE OF HISTORY

**1 MATCH** the words to their Italian translation.

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | A adoravano      |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> clan        | B agricoltura    |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> hill forts  | C aratro         |
| 4 <input type="checkbox"/> huts        | D capanne        |
| 5 <input type="checkbox"/> plough      | E famiglia       |
| 6 <input type="checkbox"/> rights      | F fortezze       |
| 7 <input type="checkbox"/> rites       | G diritti        |
| 8 <input type="checkbox"/> settled     | H riti           |
| 9 <input type="checkbox"/> tribes      | I si stabilirono |
| 10 <input type="checkbox"/> worshipped | J tribù          |



2. Reconstructed Celtic village in Castell Henllys, Wales.

**2 READ** the text and complete it with the words from exercise 1.

### CELTIC BRITAIN

The Celts began to arrive from north-western Germany in the late Iron Age, around 700 BC. They were (1) ..... of warriors who shared a similar language, religion and culture. They did not invade Britain but they gradually (2) ..... in the country between 500 and 100 BC. They were hunters, fishermen and metal workers. Iron was used to make weapons, and it affected trade and helped develop local independence because it was quite cheap and easily available. The Celts also practised (3) ..... They are believed to have introduced the iron (4) ....., which made the cultivation of the soil easier.

The Celts mostly lived in small villages or in farming communities. Sometimes they built (5) ..... These were groups of houses built on the top of a hill, surrounded by banks and ditches. The people there lived in (6) ..... made of wood with thatched roofs.

The basic unit of Celtic life was the (7) ....., which was like today's extended family. They were superstitious people. They (8) ..... the natural elements like the sun, the moon and water. They held their religious ceremonies in the woods and near water. These (9) ..... were performed by the Druids, the most influential figures in Celtic society. They were priests, so they did not go to war but they administered justice and were responsible for the education of the young.

Compared to other places in the ancient world, Celtic women may have had more (10) ..... and a more equal status to men. It is believed that they could choose the man they wanted to marry and have their own property.

**3 READ** the text again and answer the questions.

- Who were the Celts?
- When did they settle in Britain?
- What was their economy based on?
- What did they bring to the British Isles?
- What were hill forts?
- What was the basic unit of Celtic life?
- What were their homes like?
- What did they worship?
- What rights did women have?

### DID YOU KNOW?

#### Halloween

The festivity of Halloween on 31<sup>st</sup> October has Celtic origins. The Celts believed that summer ended on 31<sup>st</sup> October. They believed that ghosts and witches returned on that night and that evil spirits entered the body of a person or animal. This is why they used to wear frightening costumes and make big fires to send the spirits away. Later, Christian practices replaced pagan ones. The Roman Catholic Church decided to call 1<sup>st</sup> November 'All Hallows' Day' or 'All Saints' Day' and the evening of 31<sup>st</sup> October became 'All Hallows' Eve', that is, Halloween.





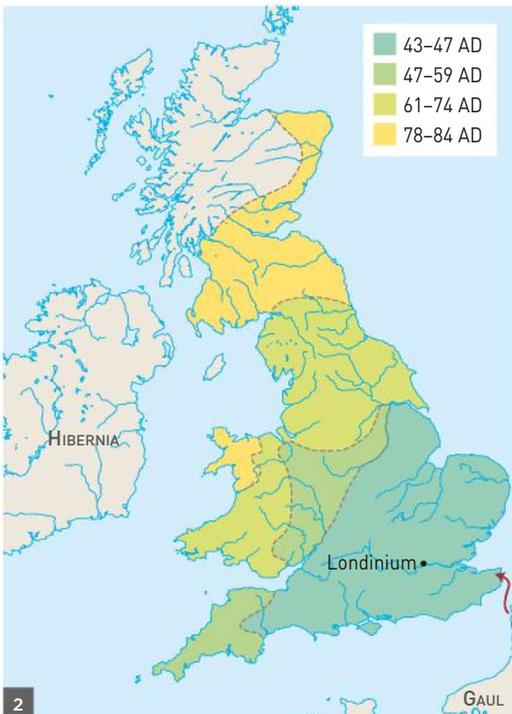
1. The remains of Hadrian's Wall.

# 1.2 The Romans

## 43–409

### WARM-UP

**1** LOOK at the map. When did the Romans invade Britain? Did they conquer the whole of the British Isles?



2. The stages of the Roman conquest of Britain.

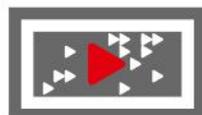
**3** READ the text again and use the prompts below to report orally on Roman Britain.

- 1 real conquest
- 2 towns
- 3 origins of London
- 4 Hadrian's Wall
- 5 withdrawal of soldiers

### DID YOU KNOW?

#### British place names

The names of many towns founded by the Romans, like Doncaster, Gloucester and Manchester, end in *-caster*, *-cester* or *-chester*. These suffixes come from *castrum*, the Latin word for a fortified military camp.



**VIDEO**  
Hadrian's Wall

### FIRST Reading and Use of English – Part 1

**2** MULTIPLE-CHOICE CLOZE. For questions 1–8, read the text below and decide which answer (A, B, C or D) best fits each gap.

#### ROMAN BRITAIN

In 55 and 54 BC Julius Caesar (ca 65–44 BC) invaded Britain, but the real (1) ..... of the country began in the years 43–47 AD under Emperor Claudius (41–54 AD). The Romans encouraged the growth of towns near their army bases. Towns had (2) ..... baths, which were open to everyone, and were centres of vibrant commercial activity. The Romans also built over 9,600 km of paved roads in Britain, which remained in use for centuries.

The origins of London can be (3) ..... to the Roman invasion. The Romans built the first 'London Bridge' on the River Thames, which became the central point for the new (4) ..... of roads. They called their (5) ..... on the north side of the bridge *Londinium*. It soon turned into an important trading centre.

The most important monument built by the Romans in Britain was Hadrian's Wall, constructed as a defensive (6) ..... and customs barrier. It ran from the east coast to the west coast between today's England and Scotland.

In 409 AD, Emperor Honorius (393–423) (7) ..... his soldiers to defend Rome against Barbarian raiders. The Romanised Celts were left alone to fight (8) ..... the Anglo-Saxon peoples from Germany and Scandinavia, who invaded the island in the 5<sup>th</sup> century and destroyed the Roman British towns.

- |   |                 |               |               |              |
|---|-----------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1 | A conquest      | B immigration | C achievement | D victory    |
| 2 | A occasional    | B private     | C public      | D sacred     |
| 3 | A said          | B traced      | C placed      | D identified |
| 4 | A cross         | B network     | C lane        | D quality    |
| 5 | A system        | B standing    | C arrangement | D settlement |
| 6 | A fortification | B preparation | C access      | D crossing   |
| 7 | A retired       | B left        | C backed      | D withdrew   |
| 8 | A for           | B to          | C against     | D before     |

**4** WATCH the video about Hadrian's Wall and explain what Hadrian's Wall meant for the Romans and for the tribes north of the wall.

**5** WATCH the video again and say what these numbers refer to.

- 117.5
- 4.4
- 11
- 15,000

# 1.3 Borders and walls

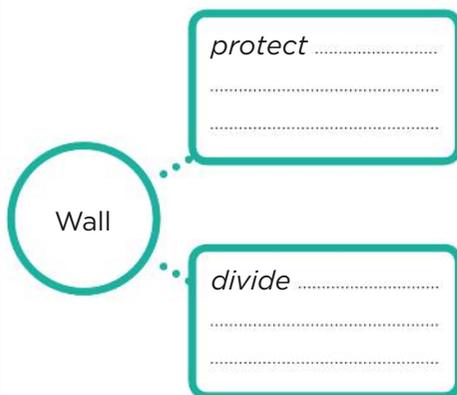
 KC  
CITIZENSHIP  
COMPETENCE

## WARM-UP

**1 DISCUSS.** Hadrian's Wall was built to protect Roman Britain from northern invaders.

- 1 Do you know of any other walls from history with a similar function?
- 2 Do you recognise the walls in the pictures? Where are they?

**2 COMPLETE** the mind map with reasons why walls are built.



**3 READ** the article about border walls quickly. Does the author think that walls protect or divide?

## FIRST Reading and Use of English – Part 6

**4 GAPPED TEXT.** Read the article again. Six sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences A-G the one which fits each gap (1-6). There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

## Border walls: symbolism and reality

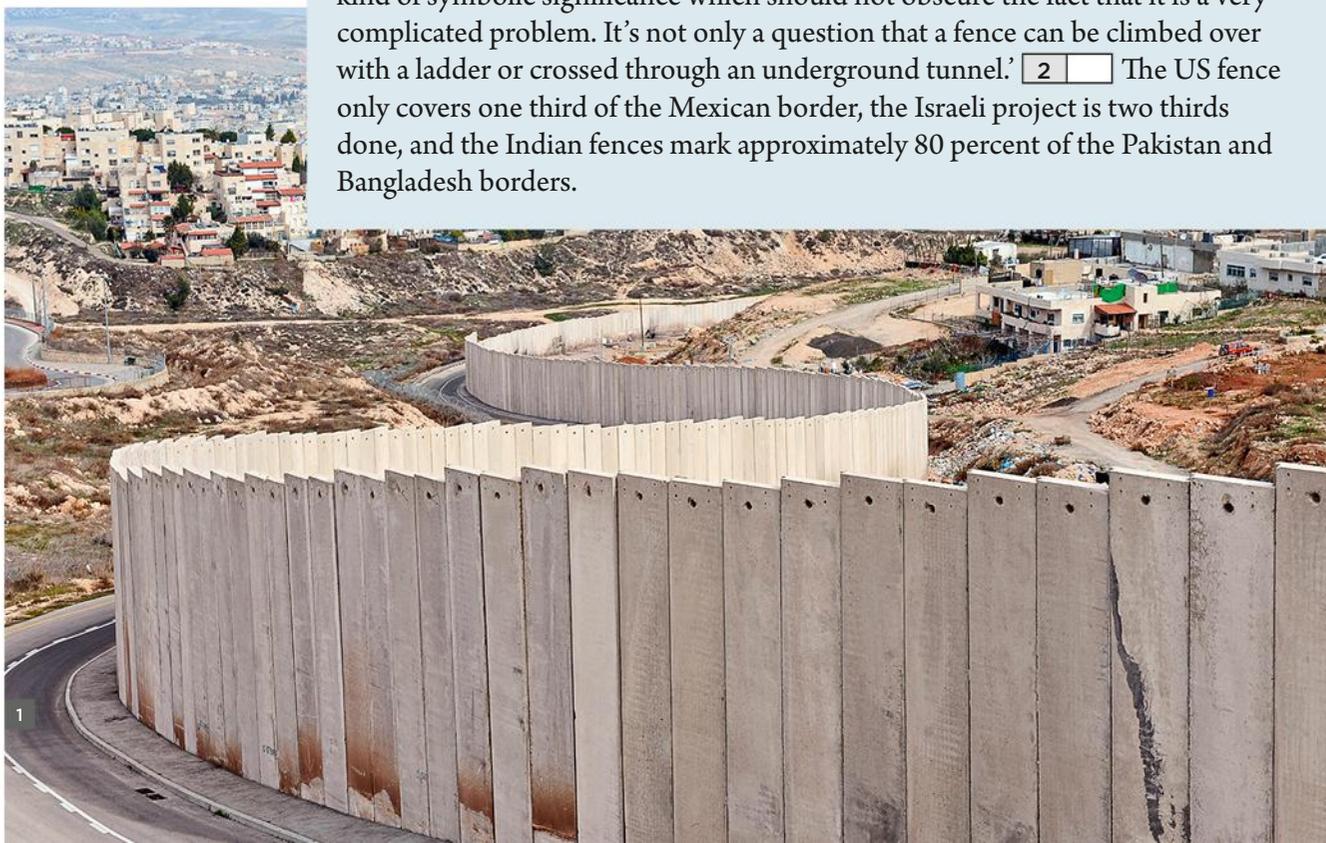
In his poem 'Mending Wall', the American poet Robert Frost challenges the cliché that 'Good fences make good neighbours'. Over the past decade, some of the world's leading democracies have built walls and fences on their borders. The United States, India and Israel – often respectively described as the world's oldest democracy, the world's largest democracy, and the most stable democracy in the Middle East – built 3,500 miles of walls and fences. All three countries declare that they are walling out terrorists.  1  In congressional debates about the US Secure Fence Act of 2006, supporters repeatedly linked the fence to terrorism.

Whether these walls and fences are effective at preventing terrorism may be debated. First, as Michael Chertoff, then the secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, stated in 2007, 'I think the fence has assumed a certain kind of symbolic significance which should not obscure the fact that it is a very complicated problem. It's not only a question that a fence can be climbed over with a ladder or crossed through an underground tunnel.'  2  The US fence only covers one third of the Mexican border, the Israeli project is two thirds done, and the Indian fences mark approximately 80 percent of the Pakistan and Bangladesh borders.

1. The wall separating the Israeli settlement of Pisgat Zeev and the Shuafat refugee camp, on the outskirts of **Jerusalem**, in 2011.

2. The wall separating the **United States and Mexico** on the Tijuana beach.

3. Indian soldiers from the Border Security Force patrol the wall separating **India and Pakistan**.



Finally, there is always legitimate cross-border traffic. **3** In Israel, there are tens of thousands of settlers who live on the Palestinian side of the wall but demand easy access back to Israel through checkpoints. India built hundreds of gates in their fence on the Bangladesh border to allow farmers access to lands on the other side. **4** Indeed, all of the September 11<sup>th</sup> hijackers entered the US with valid visas through airports.

What, then, is the long-term impact of these expensive and apparently ineffective border walls? The answer lies in Frost's concern about whom the wall might offend. For those on the Palestinian side, the massive wall, double the height of the Berlin Wall, symbolises the violence of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. **5** For Latinos in the United States, the fence in the desert symbolises America's discriminatory immigration laws. The walls have become emblematic of America's, India's and Israel's exclusionary policies rather than their ideals of freedom and democracy.

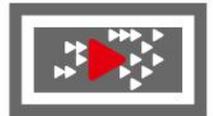
**6** Maybe we should take a different line from Frost's poem: 'There where it is, we do not need the wall.'

(Adapted from www.nytimes.com, 2012)



- A All of these legitimate cross-border movements provide cover for others who want to immigrate, smuggle contraband, or carry out an attack.
- B Second, none of these three border security projects completely enclose the border.
- C For the large Muslim minority in India, the barbed wire symbolises partition and marginalisation.
- D There are at least 77 walls or fences around the world.
- E The Israeli government officially calls their wall the 'anti-terrorist fence.'
- F Good fences make good neighbours?
- G The US-Mexico border is the most crossed in the world.

**5** READ the poem and answer the questions next to it.



## Mending Wall

Robert Frost

(1914)

🔊 1.1

*This poem by the American poet Robert Frost was first published in 1914. It is about two neighbours who live in the countryside. One day they meet and walk along the wall that separates their land, repairing it where necessary.*

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,  
That sends the frozen-ground-swell<sup>1</sup> under it,  
And spills the upper boulders<sup>2</sup> in the sun,  
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast<sup>3</sup>.  
5 The work of hunters is another thing:  
I have come after them and made repair  
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,  
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,  
To please the yelping dogs<sup>4</sup>. The gaps I mean,  
10 No one has seen them made or heard them made,  
But at spring mending-time we find them there.  
I let my neighbour know beyond the hill;  
And on a day we meet to walk the line<sup>5</sup>  
And set the wall between us once again.  
15 We keep the wall between us as we go.  
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.  
And some are loaves<sup>6</sup> and some so nearly balls  
We have to use a spell to make them balance<sup>7</sup>:  
'Stay where you are until our backs are turned!'  
20 We wear our fingers rough<sup>8</sup> with handling them.

**1** What is it that doesn't like a wall?

**2** Do the two men walk side by side?

- 1 sends ... swell. Fa gonfiare il terreno gelato.
- 2 spills ... boulders. Rovescia i massi più in alto.
- 3 abreast. Affiancati.
- 4 To please the yelping dogs. Per accontentare i cani che guaiscono.
- 5 line. Confine.
- 6 loaves. Pagnotte.
- 7 a spell ... balance. Una magia per farli stare in equilibrio, cioè per tenerli insieme.
- 8 rough. Ruvide, rozze.

Oh, just another kind of outdoor game,  
 One on a side. It comes to little more<sup>9</sup>:  
 There where it is we do not need the wall:  
 He is all pine and I am apple orchard.  
 25 My apple trees will never get across  
 And eat the cones<sup>10</sup> under his pines, I tell him.  
 He only says, 'Good fences<sup>11</sup> make good neighbours.'  
 Spring is the mischief in me<sup>12</sup>, and I wonder  
 If I could put a notion in his head:  
 30 'Why do they make good neighbours? Isn't it  
 Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.  
 Before I built a wall I'd ask to know  
 What I was walling in or walling out,  
 And to whom I was like to give offense.  
 35 Something there is that doesn't love a wall,  
 That wants it down.' I could say 'Elves<sup>13</sup>' to him,  
 But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather  
 He said it for himself. I see him there  
 Bringing a stone grasped firmly<sup>14</sup> by the top  
 40 In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed<sup>15</sup>.  
 He moves in darkness as it seems to me,  
 Not of woods only and the shade of trees.  
 He will not go behind his father's saying,  
 And he likes having thought of it so well  
 45 He says again, 'Good fences make good neighbours.'

3 Who thinks they don't need a wall? Why? Who disagrees?

4 What should someone ask before building a wall?

5 Why does the neighbour suddenly seem aggressive? What does 'darkness' imply?

6 Does the wall finally get mended?

- 9 It comes to little more. Si gareggia per poco.  
 10 cones. Pigne.  
 11 fences. Steccati.  
 12 Spring is the mischief in me. Un salto è un danno per me.  
 13 Elves. Elfi.  
 14 grasped firmly. Afferrata saldamente.  
 15 an old-stone savage armed. Un primitivo armato.

## 6 IN PAIRS ask and answer the questions.

- 1 What is the poet's opinion of walls? Do you agree?
- 2 Do you think countries should have borders? If so, what should they do to protect or maintain them?
- 3 What do you think about border walls? What effect do you think they have? How would you feel if there was a border wall in your country?

## LINK TO CITIZENSHIP

### 7 READ about Sustainable Development Goal 10 and do the following activities.

- 1 A wall is often used in literature as a symbol against inclusiveness. Read the quotes below and explain what they mean in your own words.
- 2 Divide the class into two groups: each agreeing with a quote. Each group should come up with three points to support their opinion.

Se alzi un muro, pensa a ciò  
 che resta fuori – Italo Calvino,  
*Il barone rampante* (1957)

Good fences make good  
 neighbours – Robert Frost,  
*Mending Wall* (1914)

## 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



Reduce inequalities within and among countries, including those related to representation, migration and development.

### 8 WRITE a 300-word essay. For some, walls are a symbol of divisiveness and a way to reinforce inequality. For others, walls are a form of protection and a way to enforce rules. Discuss the quote, giving reasons for your answer.

'Before I built a wall I'd ask to know what I was walling in or walling out.'



# 1.4 The Anglo-Saxons

## 410–1066



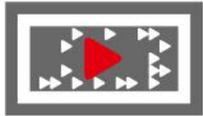
### WARM-UP

**1 IN PAIRS** do the quiz to test your knowledge of the Anglo-Saxons. Then read the text to check your answers.

- 1 They were French tribes.  T  F
- 2 This era saw the development of the English language.  T  F
- 3 They were pagans.  T  F
- 4 Much of what we know about them comes from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.  T  F
- 5 The word 'England' comes from the name 'Angle-Land'.  T  F

**3 WRITE** down the key words from the text for each topic.

- |            |            |
|------------|------------|
| 1 alphabet | 5 clans    |
| 2 jobs     | 6 values   |
| 3 houses   | 7 language |
| 4 halls    | 8 religion |



### DICTIONARY 1.2

**4 LISTEN** to the paragraph about Old English and write it down.



2. Miniature believed to be of the monk Venerable Bede, 12<sup>th</sup> century. London, British Museum.

**2 READ** the text again and complete it with the words and phrases below.

alphabet • dialects • drinking • family groups • farmers • long records • loyalty • monasteries • monk • wooden houses

### ANGLO-SAXON BRITAIN

The Angles, Saxons and Jutes – known collectively as the Anglo-Saxons – were Germanic tribes who arrived over the course of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. These invaders were warlike and mostly illiterate. They used only the runic (1) ....., which was composed of a series of mysterious characters. They used it for carving inscriptions on stone or metals, not for writing (2) .....

They were (3) ..... and deep-sea fishermen who hunted seals and whales in the ocean. They lived in (4) ..... which they built near streams or rivers. They built great halls in the centre of their villages, which they decorated with carvings and paintings both inside and outside. The Anglo-Saxons had a great sense of beauty, made fine ornaments and enjoyed feasting and (5) ..... They were organised into (6) ....., or clans. The most important social bond was (7) ..... to the other members and to the lord of the tribe. They exalted physical courage and personal freedom.

The (8) ..... spoken by the different tribes evolved over time and together became known as Old English. This language provided the basis for Modern English, especially words relating to everyday life and activities.

At first, the Anglo-Saxons worshipped several gods. This is why the Christianity introduced by the Romans disappeared until the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Then Pope Gregory I the Great (590–604) sent a (9) ....., Augustine, to bring Christianity back to England. Augustine went first to Canterbury and became the first Archbishop of Canterbury. Christianity spread across the kingdoms. Several (10) ..... were built and became important centres of communal life and culture. Much of what we know about the Anglo-Saxons is based on *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, written by the monk Venerable Bede (ca 673–735). He was the first to use the word 'Angle-Land' (the root name for England).

### DID YOU KNOW?

#### Anglo-Saxon words

The influence of the Anglo-Saxon culture is still evident today. The names of the days of the week come from the names of the major gods: Tiw (Tuesday), Woden (Wednesday), Thunor (Thursday). Friday commemorates Frige, the bride of Woden. It is also evident in place names. The ending *-ing* meant 'folk', or 'family', so Reading is the place of the family of 'Rada'. *Ham* meant 'farm' and *-ton* meant 'settlement', so Birmingham or Southampton are place names that come from the Anglo-Saxon times.

Birmingham  
A 441



# 1.5 From the Heptarchy to the Norman Conquest 600–1066

## WARM-UP

**1 DISCUSS** when a country can be called a 'state'. What qualities does a state have? Use the ideas below to help you.

- a flag
- people sharing the same culture
- a territory with defined boundaries
- a system of laws
- legitimate authority
- its own currency
- a part of a country
- sovereignty over a territory and its people

**2 READ** the text and match the pictures (1-5) to the paragraphs (A-E).

### A The Heptarchy

After the Anglo-Saxon invasion, Britain was divided into several local kingdoms, each with its own king. By the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, seven main kingdoms developed which incorporated the smaller ones. These were called the Heptarchy, and some of them still mark counties or regional names to this day: East Anglia (from East Angles), Essex (East Saxons), Kent, Mercia, Northumbria, Sussex (South Saxons) and Wessex (West Saxons). The three largest kingdoms, Northumbria, Mercia and Wessex, had become the most powerful by the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

### B The Vikings

Between the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, new enemies arrived from overseas: the Vikings, who came from Norway, Sweden and Denmark. They attacked the monastery of Lindisfarne in 793 and gradually settled in the country.

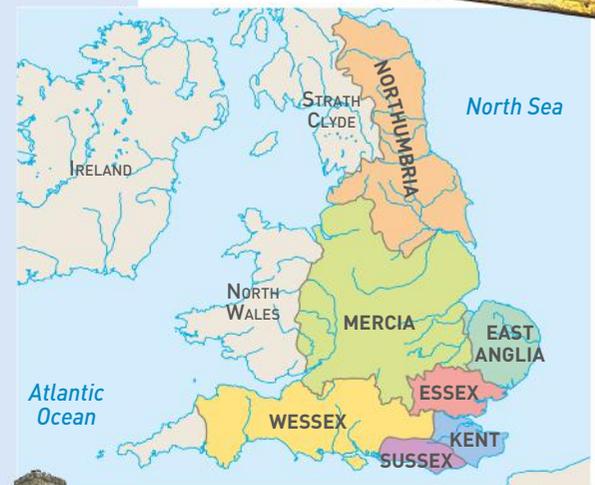
### C From Alfred the Great to Athelstan

King Alfred the Great of Wessex (871–899) united the Anglo-Saxons against the Vikings. He won back the occupied territories, reorganised the army, built a fleet and established fortified towns. He also gave importance to religion and encouraged the writing of a history of England, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

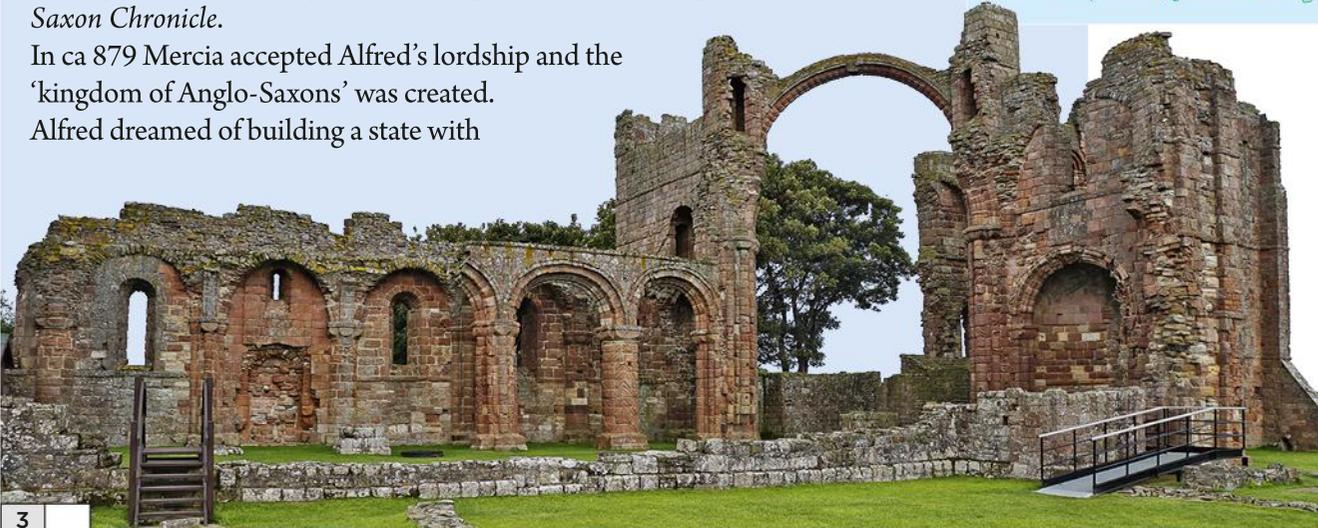
In ca 879 Mercia accepted Alfred's lordship and the 'kingdom of Anglo-Saxons' was created. Alfred dreamed of building a state with



1



2



3

1. King Edward's Chair (1296), a wooden throne used for coronation ceremonies in England. London, Westminster Abbey.
2. The Anglo-Saxon Heptarchy.
3. The ruins of Lindisfarne Priory, a monastery on Holy Island, off the coast of England.

local organisation, the construction of towns, the issuing of coinage, the making of English law and the promotion of learning and literacy. Alfred's son Edward (899–924) was a great war leader who extended his power into the Midlands and East Anglia. Finally Northumbria, the last unconquered kingdom, was conquered by Edward's son Athelstan in 927. Athelstan can be described as the father of the English state, because he created a kingdom of all England by establishing the idea of royal authority, law and coinage.

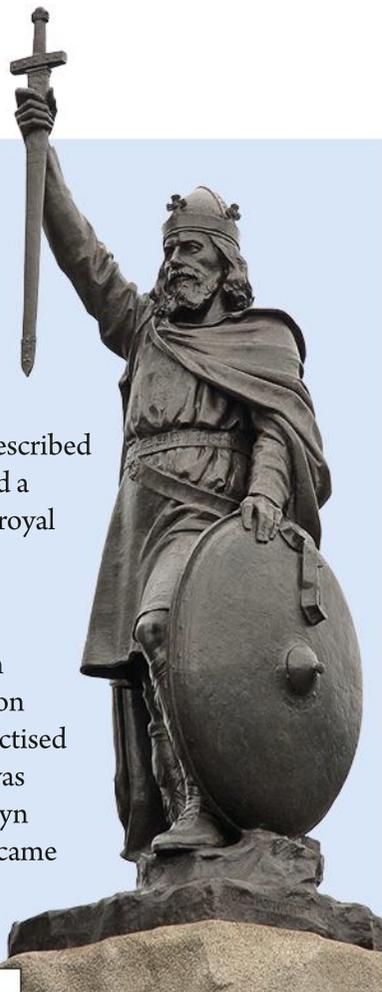
### D Viking kings

Large-scale Viking violence returned to England in the 990s, and the policy of the *Danegeld* – protection money paid in return for being left alone – was practised regularly. In 1012 the Archbishop of Canterbury was murdered, and within one year a Danish king, Sweyn Forkbeard, was on the throne. His son, Canute, became ruler of a North Sea empire that included Denmark, Norway and all of England, bringing an end to the Viking attacks. King Canute (1016–1032) also became King of England. 4

He was succeeded by Edward the Confessor (1042–1066), who devoted himself to religion, including the building and consecration of Westminster Abbey (1065), where his throne can still be seen. He died childless in 1066. His brother-in-law, Harold II of Wessex, had himself crowned on the day of Edward's burial. He was the last Anglo-Saxon king.

### E The Norman Conquest

The Normans were Vikings who had settled in northern France. They were led by William, Duke of Normandy. He was more distantly related to Edward than Harold II, but he claimed that Edward had promised him the throne. In 1066 William invaded Britain and defeated Harold II at Hastings. His Conquest was depicted in the famous Bayeux Tapestry. He was crowned William I (1066–1087) in Westminster Abbey on Christmas day of the same year. Since then, nearly all English monarchs have been crowned in the Abbey and several are buried there.



4

### KEY DATE

#### 1066: the Battle of Hastings

The Battle of Hastings, in which Harold II of England was defeated by William, Duke of Normandy, represents the last successful foreign invasion of Britain. It is probably the most famous date in British history. The Normans fought using archers and mounted warriors, whereas Harold's men were mainly foot soldiers. Harold was killed when he was hit in the eye with an arrow. His death was a crucial moment; after this, the English were overcome. The Norman Conquest unified the country under a powerful monarchy and provided it with the foundations of the medieval state.



### 3 READ the text again and report on the prompts below.

- 1 the meaning of 'Heptarchy'
- 2 the Viking invasion
- 3 Alfred the Great
- 4 Athelstan and the year 927
- 5 the policy of *Danegeld*
- 6 William and the year 1066

4. Bronze statue of **Alfred the Great** by Sir Hamo Thornycroft in Winchester, England.

5. Detail from the **Bayeux Tapestry**, second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Bayeux, Musée de la Tapisserie.



5

### TEEN FORUM

Could you have survived in ancient times in Britain? Write your comment.

.....

.....

.....

.....



# 1.6 The Vikings

KC  
LITERACY  
COMPETENCE

## WARM-UP

**1 DISCUSS.** What do you know about the Vikings? Have you ever seen a film or TV programme about them? Have you ever visited a museum with Viking artefacts? If so, where was it? What did you see?

## READING

**2 MULTIPLE CHOICE.** Read the article about the Vikings, then choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D) for questions 1–7. Only one answer is correct. The first one (O) has been done for you.



1. Stereotypical image of a Viking warrior.

## 5 VIKING MYTHS BUSTED!

*Bearded, violent and singularly successful at suppressing everyone around them. This, says historian Janina Ramirez, is the popular – yet questionable – image of Vikings. But how violent were they really, and did they actually wear horned helmets? Let's look at some myths surrounding the Vikings.*

### MYTH 1: THEY WORE HORNED HELMETS

There is no evidence that the Vikings wore horned helmets, and nothing like this has ever been discovered in any archaeological dig. They certainly wore helmets but they would have been simple skullcaps, designed to protect the head from impact. The helmet plaques from Sutton Hoo and Vendel suggest that god-like warriors wore helmets with protruding 'horns' (although these are actually birds), but the Viking raiders and traders did not.

### MYTH 2: THEY WERE EXTREMELY VIOLENT

The Vikings earned a place in history due to their protracted raids on often vulnerable monastic sites. Populated by literate scribes, these were the worst places to attack if you wanted a good record in

Christian historical documents. There is certainly evidence of the violent means Vikings used to suppress people, particularly in Britain. However, while some Vikings clearly deserved their reputation as 'wolves of war', others lived peaceful existences – farming, trading and integrating across the four continents that they settled.

### MYTH 3: THEY TOOK WHAT THEY WANTED AND LEFT

Findings from Scandinavia do indicate that many Vikings pillaged the places they reached, bringing back coins from across the known world to be buried in hoards back in their homelands.

However, many chose to remain in the lands they encountered, establishing lasting and important settlements. One of the earliest and most extensive Viking settlements was Dublin,

Ireland, established by 841 AD. Dublin grew into an industrially strong city with a thriving port and a mint where the first Irish coins were made. It wasn't just Dublin that changed and developed under the Vikings. In northern England, an Anglo-Saxon city was relocated further towards the mouth of the river and settled by Vikings as a new and vibrant town – Jorvik, now York. Iceland owes its settlement almost entirely to Vikings, under Ingólfr Arnarson in 874 AD.

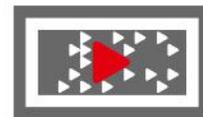
### MYTH 4: THEY WERE IGNORANT AND TREATED THEIR WOMEN BADLY

Far from illiterate barbarians, the Vikings were some of the greatest naval engineers and travellers the world had seen. It was a largely military society in which strength at arms was prized, yet wise and learned men and women could also wield power. Women played an important role in Viking society. They were guardians of the keys to both property and wealth, particularly when their men were abroad. There is evidence that some were trained to be military leaders too, with shield-maidens described throughout the mythology. Women were held in high esteem, with two buried within the famous Oseberg ship.

### MYTH 5: THEY WERE UNKEMPT

Far from unkempt barbarians, Viking men and women were quite vain. Many finds like combs and razors have been discovered, and it seems they went to great pains to maintain their appearance. They also didn't live in dark, dirty huts, but often in large and luxurious halls, like the magnificent 'Heorot' recorded in the epic poem *Beowulf*, which was the setting for lavish feasts, gifts of gold and display of skills at arms.

(Adapted from BBC, [www.historyextra.com](http://www.historyextra.com), 2015)



**0** The writer, Janina Ramirez, thinks the common ideas about the Vikings are

- A  undoubtedly true.
- B  open to question.
- C  usually false.
- D  very popular.

**Q1** According to evidence from archaeological digs, Viking raiders and traders

- A  wore the same horned helmets as god-like warriors.
- B  didn't wear any kind of helmet to protect their head.
- C  wore helmets that looked like birds.
- D  wore simple helmets or skullcaps without horns.

**Q2** The historical documents describing the Viking raids were

- A  written by Christian scribes living in monasteries.
- B  often destroyed in the raids on monasteries.
- C  objective evidence of the extreme violence used.
- D  written by Vikings to earn a place in history.

**Q3** Archaeological finds in Scandinavia show that

- A  all Vikings were warriors.
- B  most Vikings didn't return home.
- C  some Vikings brought back coins from their foreign raids.
- D  Vikings normally came home empty-handed.

**Q4** The examples of Viking settlements given in the article are in

- A  Scotland, Wales and Iceland.
- B  Ireland, England and Iceland.
- C  England, Scotland and Iceland.
- D  Ireland, Wales and Iceland.

**Q5** Seeing the Vikings as illiterate barbarians is

- A  not an accepted interpretation of their complex role as travellers.
- B  wrong because they had a sophisticated society with learned men and women.
- C  an easy way of dismissing their achievements in the arts.
- D  an accurate way to view their military society.

**Q6** The role of women in Viking society was important because

- A  they took care of the family and issues of local importance.
- B  they trained to take over as military leaders in times of war.
- C  although they didn't have positions of power, they dealt with the day-to-day running of the home.
- D  they looked after property and money while the men were away and some may have even become military leaders.

**Q7** According to the article, the Vikings

- A  lived in a range of dwellings from dark dirty huts to luxurious halls.
- B  had nothing comparable to the magnificent hall in *Beowulf*.
- C  were proud people who often lived in elaborate halls and feasted in luxury.
- D  cared little about appearance and lived in uncomfortable houses.

## LISTENING 1.3

**3 SHORT OPEN ANSWERS.** Listen to an interview with a history teacher talking about Viking museums. While listening, answer the questions (1-7) using a maximum of 4 words. Write your answers in the spaces provided. The first one (0) has been done for you.

### VIKING REMAINS



**0** What does the Oslo museum focus on?  
Ship burials

**Q1** What does the York museum try to show?

**Q2** What kind of ships were used for burials?

**Q3** Who was buried in the Oseberg ship?

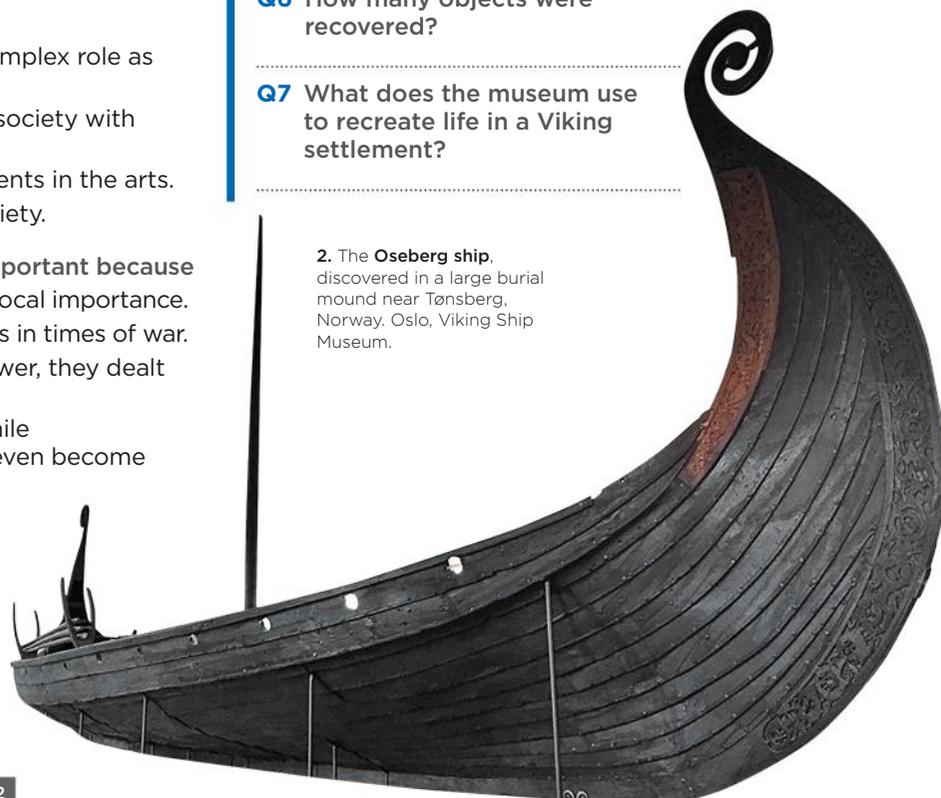
**Q4** Which animals were buried with them?

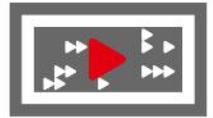
**Q5** When were the Viking remains and artefacts found in York?

**Q6** How many objects were recovered?

**Q7** What does the museum use to recreate life in a Viking settlement?

**2.** The Oseberg ship, discovered in a large burial mound near Tønsberg, Norway, Oslo, Viking Ship Museum.





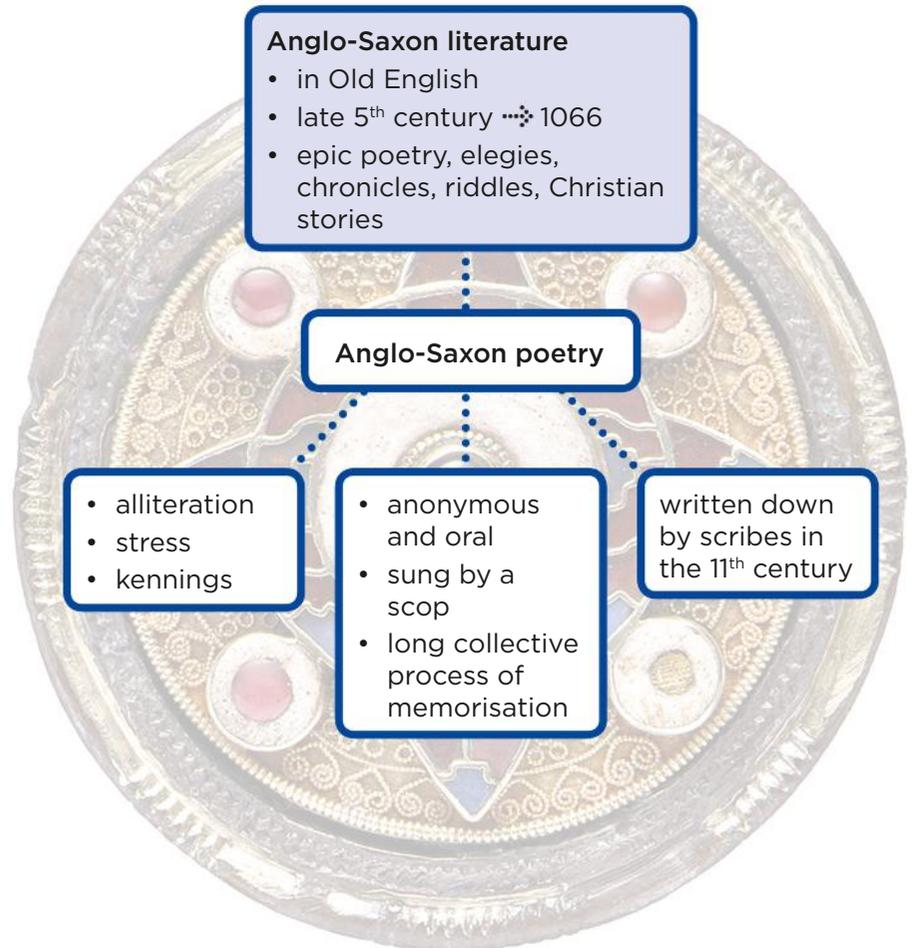
# 1.7 Anglo-Saxon literature

Anglo-Saxon literature, or Old English literature, encompasses works from the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century to the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066. It includes different genres, such as epic poetry, elegies, chronicles, riddles, translations of the Bible from Latin, stories about the lives of saints and sermons.

Anglo-Saxon poetry was anonymous and oral. The poet, called a 'scop', entertained the noblemen in the halls of kings, often accompanied by a harp. The scop's social function was extremely important since he sang epics celebrating cultural values on occasions of great ceremonies and festivities. Anglo-Saxon poetry was formed in a long collective process of memorisation, passed on by word of mouth, from one period to the next until the 11<sup>th</sup> century, when church scribes wrote it down.

The most important formal aspects of Anglo-Saxon poetry were stress and alliteration, that is, the repetition of the same initial consonant sound in consecutive words or words which are close together. Each line was divided into two halves by a break, or caesura, and had four stresses. Here is an example from one of the most important epic poems of this period, *Beowulf* (☞ 1.9):

Then came from the moor, under the mist-hills,  
*Tha cóm of móre únder místhleotum*  
 Grendel stalking; he bore God's anger.  
*Gréndel góngan Gódes ýrre baer.*



Another important feature of this poetry was the kenning, a formulaic metaphorical phrase that is used in place of a name or noun. For example, in *Beowulf* the sea is called 'the whale-road'.

## 1 READ about Anglo-Saxon literature and match the sentence halves.

- 1  Anglo-Saxon literature
- 2  The authors of Old English poetry
- 3  The scop
- 4  The scop's social function
- 5  The transcription of the oral tradition

- A was to celebrate cultural values.
- B sang epics on special occasions.
- C included a variety of genres.
- D was done by scribes.
- E were unknown.

## 2 IDENTIFY the main forms of Anglo-Saxon literature.

## 3 EXPLAIN the main features of Anglo-Saxon poetry.

## 4 CHOOSE the best answer (A, B or C) to complete the sentence.

A kenning is

- A a musical instrument to accompany the poem.
- B the repetition of a formulaic phrase.
- C a metaphorical noun or phrase.



# 1.8 The epic poem

Epic poems derive from ancient oral traditions. In fact, the word ‘epic’ comes from the Greek noun *épos*, which means ‘oral exposition’. The two most famous epic poems in Western literature are the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, attributed to the Greek poet Homer. Later examples of epic poems include Virgil’s *Aeneid* and the Anglo-Saxon *Beowulf* (☞ 1.9).



1. Jean-Baptiste Auguste Leloir, *Homère*, 1841. Paris, Musée du Louvre.

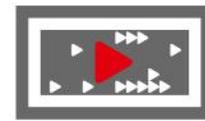
The epic poem is a long narrative dealing with the recollection of a glorious past in the history of a nation. It depicts an aristocratic and military society and recounts the brave deeds and adventures of a hero.

The narrative of the epic poem consists of a series of vivid, pictorial flashes. These are type-scenes, like the banquet, the battle, the voyage and the funeral. Another feature of the epic poem is its objective narration. Neither the poet nor his characters criticise the ideals and the customs of their country.

The main theme is the nature of heroic life and the function of leadership in heroic society. Its aim is to celebrate heroic values: all men should perform actions which lead to glory. The style is elevated and the vocabulary extremely rich and vivid.

## 1 READ about epic poems and answer the questions.

- 1 What is the origin of the word ‘epic’?
- 2 What does the epic poem deal with?
- 3 What kind of society does it depict?
- 4 What are ‘type-scenes’?
- 5 How is the epic poem narrated?
- 6 What is its aim?
- 7 What is its style?



# 1.9 All about *Beowulf*

ca 11<sup>th</sup> century

## PLOT

The poem follows the hero's defeat of three monsters. It opens in Denmark. An evil monster, Grendel, has been terrorising the king's hall for twelve years. Beowulf, prince of the Geats, arrives. He offers to fight Grendel. He succeeds in killing the monster by tearing off its claw.

The next day, as the Danes celebrate, Grendel's mother kills one of the king's men as revenge. Beowulf goes looking for Grendel's mother. He finds her at the bottom of a lake and kills her with a magic sword.

The final part takes place in Geatland. Fifty years have passed, and Beowulf is king. He must fight a dragon that has been attacking his people. He kills the dragon but is fatally wounded. The poem ends with his funeral.



1. Still from the film *Beowulf* (2007) directed by Robert Zemeckis.

## ORIGINS OF THE EPIC

*Beowulf* is the oldest surviving Anglo-Saxon epic poem. The identity of its **author is unknown**. It was probably composed by a single author for a Christian audience in Anglo-Saxon England, between the **8<sup>th</sup> and the 11<sup>th</sup> centuries**. The first recorded written version dates from the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

### 1 READ about *Beowulf* and answer the questions.

- 1 Who wrote this epic poem?
- 2 When was it first written down?
- 3 Where do the opening scenes of the poem take place?
- 4 What are the other settings of the poem?
- 5 How are the various characters presented?
- 6 What kind of society is presented in *Beowulf*?
- 7 What are the main themes?

## SETTINGS

- **Denmark:** land of the Danes, ruled by King Hrothgar.
- **Heorot:** the great mead hall of Hrothgar, a communal meeting place for feasting and drinking.
- **A misty lake:** at the bottom of a cave, where Grendel's mother lives.
- **Geatland:** land of the Geats, in southern Sweden, ruled by Hygelac and later Beowulf.

## CHARACTERS

**The hero:** Beowulf is praised for his courage, strength and generosity. He seems to have supernatural powers: he is able to kill monsters that can fly, breathe fire or live under water.

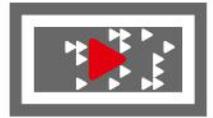
**The monsters:** man-eating **Grendel** is a descendant of Cain. He is a being of the night and moves surrounded by darkness. His physical appearance is left to the reader's imagination.

**Grendel's mother** does not have a name. She looks like a woman but lives in a supernatural lake filled with sea-dragons. The poison in her and Grendel's blood can dissolve swords.

A winged, fire-breathing, serpentine **dragon** is the last monstrous creature faced by an ageing Beowulf.

## STYLE AND THEMES

*Beowulf* has all the typical stylistic features of classical epic poems. It depicts a warrior society, where **fate and destiny** rule man's life. It exalts the **bravery of the hero** who can stand against fate. **Loyalty** to one's lord or neighbour has great importance. Beowulf risks his life to help King Hrothgar, a neighbour in trouble. The poem deals with the eternal conflict between **good and evil**, and shows **Christian values** when Beowulf prays to the Creator of all things. God's will is identical to fate.



# T1 The fight

Anonymous

*Beowulf* (ca 11<sup>th</sup> century)  
Lines 720–727; 738–753;  
814–823



## WARM-UP

**1 DISCUSS.** Do you enjoy bloody or violent action scenes? Who usually wins: the hero or the villain?

## WORDS IN CONTEXT

**2 WRITE** the words from the text in the correct box.

arm • bone • fatal • hand • hurt • pain • shoulder • wound

### Body parts

### Injuries

*This passage depicts the fight between Beowulf and the monster Grendel. Grendel arrives at night. The soldiers are sleeping, but Beowulf lies awake, waiting for the attack.*

Spurned<sup>1</sup> and joyless, he [Grendel] journeyed on ahead and arrived at the bawn<sup>2</sup>. The iron-braced door turned on its hinge<sup>3</sup> when his hands touched it. Then his rage boiled over, he ripped open<sup>4</sup> the mouth of the building, maddening for blood, pacing<sup>5</sup> the length of the patterned floor with his loathsome tread<sup>6</sup>, while a baleful<sup>7</sup> light, flame more than light, flared<sup>8</sup> from his eyes. [...]

Nor did the creature keep him [Beowulf] waiting but struck suddenly and started in<sup>9</sup>; he grabbed and mauled<sup>10</sup> a man on his bench, bit into his bone-lappings<sup>11</sup>, bolted down<sup>12</sup> his blood and gorged on him<sup>13</sup> in lumps, leaving the body utterly<sup>14</sup> lifeless, eaten up hand and foot. Venturing closer<sup>15</sup>, his talon<sup>16</sup> was raised to attack Beowulf where he lay on the bed, he was bearing in with open claw<sup>17</sup> when the alert hero's comeback and armlock forestalled him<sup>18</sup> utterly.

**1** How did the monster get into the fortress?

**2** Who was waiting for Grendel?

**3** Who did Grendel reach? How did he kill him?

**4** Who did he want to attack next?

**5** How did the hero react?

- 1 **Spurned.** Rifiutato.
- 2 **bawn.** Fortificazione.
- 3 **The iron-braced ... hinge.** La porta rinforzata con il ferro ruotò sul suo cardine.
- 4 **ripped open.** Spalancò.
- 5 **pacing.** Camminando avanti e indietro.
- 6 **loathsome tread.** Ripugnante andatura.
- 7 **baleful.** Minacciosa.
- 8 **flared.** Brillava.
- 9 **struck ... in.** Attacò e colpì all'improvviso.
- 10 **grabbed and mauled.** Afferrò e straziò.
- 11 **bone-lappings.** Giunture delle ossa.
- 12 **bolted down.** Trangugiò.
- 13 **gorged ... him.** Si ingozzò della sua carne.
- 14 **utterly.** Completamente.
- 15 **Venturing closer.** Avvicinandosi.
- 16 **talon.** Artiglio.
- 17 **claw.** Artigli.
- 18 **comeback ... him.** Reazione e presa lo anticiparono.



1

1. Kieran Bew as Beowulf in the TV series *Beowulf: Return to the Shieldlands* (2016) directed by Jon East.

20 The captain of evil discovered himself in a handgrip<sup>19</sup> harder than anything he had ever encountered in any man on the face of the earth. Every bone in his body quailed and recoiled<sup>20</sup>, but he could not escape. [...]

25 The monster's whole body was in pain; a tremendous wound appeared on his shoulder. Sinews split<sup>21</sup> and the bone-lappings burst. Beowulf was granted the glory of winning; Grendel was driven under the fen-banks<sup>22</sup>, fatally hurt, to his desolate lair<sup>23</sup>. His days were numbered, the end of his life was coming over him, he knew it for certain; and one bloody clash<sup>24</sup> had fulfilled the dearest wishes of the Danes.

6 What did the monster discover?

7 What happened to Grendel?

8 Where did he go back to?

9 What had Beowulf succeeded in doing?

- 19 **handgrip.** Morsa, stretta.  
 20 **quailed and recoiled.** Si spaventò e indietreggiò.  
 21 **Sinews split.** I tendini si strapparono.  
 22 **fen-banks.** Rive della palude.  
 23 **desolate lair.** Tana solitaria.  
 24 **clash.** Scontro.

### QUICK READ

3 **READ** the text quickly and identify who the winner of the fight is.

### CLOSE READ

4 **READ** the text again and answer the questions next to it.

5 **SUMMARISE** what happens in the text in one sentence, in your own words.

### ANALYSIS

6 **DO** the following activities.

#### LITERARY LANGUAGE

**Alliteration:** the repetition of the same initial consonant sound in consecutive words or words which are close together.

Example: *in this legendary hall, how it lies deserted*

1 Highlight examples of alliteration in the text.

#### LITERARY LANGUAGE

**Kenning:** a formulaic phrase that is used in place of a name or noun.

Example: *ring-giver* = king; *light-of-battle* = sword

2 Find the kenning used to describe Grendel in lines 15–24. Then underline other words and phrases used to describe him. What aspect of his character do they emphasise?

3 In lines 9–15 Grendel kills a sleeping soldier. What verbs are used to describe the killing? What do they have in common? Tick as appropriate.

- They are dramatically heroic.  
 They are visually violent.  
 They are vividly entertaining.

What atmosphere is created?

4 Find the lines where Beowulf's strength is described. What contrast is established between him and Grendel?

### COMMUNICATION

7 **IN PAIRS** ask and answer the questions.

- 1 Why do people enjoy watching the hero beat the villain? Did you find the scene satisfying or predictable?
- 2 Compare the fight to one from a modern video game or action film. Which is more violent?
- 3 What effect would this scene have had on an Anglo-Saxon audience?

### LINK TO TODAY

8 **WRITE** a paragraph about what or who you consider to be today's 'monsters'. How do they threaten our way of life or our environment? How can we defeat them?



2. Still from the film *Beowulf* (2007) directed by Robert Zemeckis.



# 1.10 Beowulf on screen

**Beowulf** Directed by Robert Zemeckis; USA 2007. With Ray Winstone (Beowulf); Anthony Hopkins (Hrothgar); Robin Wright (Hrothgar's wife); Angelina Jolie (Grendel's mother).

The film shows Beowulf's battles with the three demonic creatures of the poem, but it takes some liberties in the telling of those stories. It begins in Denmark in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, where King Hrothgar and his much younger queen are celebrating with their warriors in Heorot. During the party the horrible monster Grendel kills several soldiers. Beowulf, a brave warrior from Geatland, arrives with his men and succeeds in defeating Grendel. Everybody believes that peace has been restored, until Beowulf realises that he must confront Grendel's mighty mother. After a fight with her, the film jumps into the future, where we see an ageing Beowulf, now king, as he prepares to battle with what appears to be a new offspring of Grendel's mother. Beowulf stabs the dragon in the chest but he is mortally wounded. The hero is then given a Norse funeral.

## WATCH

**1 WATCH** the sequence and answer the questions.

- 1 Where and when does the scene take place?
- 2 What does one of Hrothgar's soldiers tell him?
- 3 Does Hrothgar know Beowulf?
- 4 What can you see in front of the king and Beowulf?
- 5 What does Beowulf look like?
- 6 Why has Beowulf come to Hrothgar's kingdom?
- 7 What does the queen tell Beowulf?
- 8 What does Beowulf promise her?
- 9 How does the hero highlight his strength and courage?
- 10 How does Hrothgar show his happiness at the end of the sequence?

**2 COMPLETE** the sentences with the exact words spoken by Beowulf, Hrothgar and the queen.

- 1 I've come to kill .....
- 2 There have been [...] many who have sworn to rid his hall of .....
- 3 The ..... is called .....
- 4 This troll of yours ..... no more.

**3 IDENTIFY** Beowulf's and the queen's feelings. Write B or Q next to the following.

- loyalty
- worry
- courage
- anxiety
- heroism

## ANALYSIS

**4 THE TYPES OF SHOT** used during the dialogue are medium shot, and close-up, that is, a shot showing only the head and shoulders of a character. Match each shot to its function(s) in relation to the scene.



- 1 medium shot                      2 close-up

- A to reveal the character's mood
- B to point out that the character becomes part of the setting
- C to underline the character's importance
- D to stress the characters' relationship

**5 FOCUS** on the second part of the sequence, where there is a low-angle shot, that is, when the camera looks at its subject from below. Which function do you think this shot has?

## LINK TO TODAY

**6 DISCUSS.** The director used CGI (computer-generated imaging) and 'performance capture', where actors wear a special suit with sensors that track and record their movements. Why do you think Zemeckis used this technique for the film? Can you give examples of other films, TV series or video games that use CGI?

# 1.11 Does the world need heroes?



1. Swedish climate activist **Greta Thunberg** (2003–).

2. Pakistani activist **Malala Yousafzai** (1997–).

21<sup>ST</sup>-CENTURY SKILLS

## WARM-UP

**1 DISCUSS.** Beowulf is an example of an Anglo-Saxon hero who demonstrates the values of Anglo-Saxon society. Who do you think are today's heroes? How do they represent the values of modern society?

## CLASS DEBATE

**2 READ** the arguments about heroes and organise a class debate.

## Facts

- In the modern world some say the word 'hero' has lost its original meaning and can be referred to anyone who shows particular courage, like a firefighter.
- There have always been heroes who give ordinary people a role model to look up to.
- A hero is someone who gives of himself or herself for the greater good of others even if it means putting their own life in danger.

### YES The world will always need heroes

Although in our modern world we no longer fear terrible beasts and monsters, we still feel the need for fearless heroes. These champions of humanity are no longer warriors but may be soldiers who have shown particular courage in battle, or astronauts who accept the risks of space exploration. Other modern heroes might be scientists or researchers who have found new medical cures. What about those who spend their lives fighting for the underprivileged, the poor or those suffering from discrimination or social injustice?

These heroes are a precious example, a role model embodying the qualities we ourselves would like to possess. The kind of hero who shows self-discipline and who puts himself at risk for the sake of others.

People need heroes because heroes save or improve others' lives and encourage us to aim higher to become heroes ourselves and help others.

- Heroes give us inspiration and belief in humanity.
- They make the world a better place and encourage us to be better people.
- In specific areas they make a real difference.

### NO We don't need heroes, we need cooperation

We don't need heroes in our modern world because we need a world where no individual stands out and people have collective responsibility. We want a world where the level of education and opportunity means that it is society as a whole, with all its components, rather than individuals, who bring about change or solve problems.

A heroic act is normally one that solves an isolated problem for a small number of individuals. What the world needs now is not a Superman rescuing an individual, but groups of responsible people like politicians and leaders who work together to produce lasting results. The problems affecting our planet, like global warming and the economic difficulties of developing nations, cannot be solved by one quick heroic action.

Coordinated action by the many, increased cooperation between international bodies bringing long-lasting solutions – this is what we need, not heroes.

- We don't need individual role models but better leaders.
- Group or community action is more long-lasting.
- The results of heroic action are too isolated.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

### The Class Debate:

'This house believes that heroes are irrelevant in modern life.'

### Organise a debate

- All students make a list of points for and against the topic of the debate (i.e. the motion).

- Three students are chosen as speakers to propose the motion and three to argue against it.
- The chosen students are given time to prepare their speeches.
- The debate is opened and the proposers and opposers speak in turn, starting with the proposers.
- The debate is then open to the class (i.e. the house).

- After a set time, the first proposer and the first opposer are asked to summarise the points made.
- A vote is taken and the motion declared carried or rejected.

**Draw a pie chart demonstrating the results of the class vote.**

# Recap maps

## From the Origins to the Norman Conquest ❖ 700 BC–1066 AD

### Peoples

#### THE CELTS

❖ 700 BC–43 AD

#### Society

- They were organised into **clans**
- They were skilled at **iron-working**
- They practised **agriculture**

#### Cultural features

- They built **hill forts**
- They **worshipped nature**  
❖ Their priests were the **Druids**

#### THE ROMANS

❖ 43 (Emperor Claudius)–409 (withdrawal of soldiers)

#### Cultural features

- They built
- towns, baths and roads
  - **Hadrian's Wall**, a defence and customs barrier

#### THE ANGLO-SAXONS

❖ 5<sup>th</sup> century  
In 927 ❖ Aethelstan made a kingdom of England

#### Society

- They lived in **villages** and were organised in **clans**
- They were **fishermen** and **farmers**

#### Cultural features

- They exalted **physical courage** and **loyalty** to the members of the clan
- They converted to **Christianity** in the 6<sup>th</sup> century

#### Literature 8<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries

The anonymous epic poem *Beowulf* was composed

#### THE VIKINGS

❖ 8<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries  
They frequently attacked the Anglo-Saxons

#### THE NORMANS

They came from France  
In 1066 ❖ They defeated the Anglo-Saxons

## **Beowulf** ❖ A national epic

Author: unknown  
Dates of composition:  
between 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries

### Plot

- **Grendel** attacks Hrothgar's hall, **Heorot**. Beowulf kills Grendel by tearing off his claw
- **Grendel's mother** kills a Dane as revenge. Beowulf kills her at the bottom of a lake
- 50 years later, a **dragon** attacks Geatland. Beowulf kills the dragon but is fatally wounded

### Settings



**Geatland**,  
in southern  
Sweden,  
inhabited by  
the Geats

**Denmark**,  
inhabited by  
the Danes

### Themes

- The conflict between **good and evil**
- **Fate** and destiny
- The **courage** of the hero
- **Loyalty** to one's lord or neighbour
- Celebration of **Christian values**

### Main characters

- The hero, **Beowulf**, Prince and later King of the Geats



- **Hrothgar**, the King of the Danes



- **Three monsters:** Grendel, Grendel's mother and a dragon



# Stop and check

## WORDS TO REMEMBER

1 MATCH the words to their definition.

- 1  plough      3  conquer      5  warrior  
2  kingdom      4  hill fort      6  tribe

- A A social unit consisting of a number of families or clans who share common ancestry and culture.  
B A fortification with a ditch and bank.  
C A farming tool used for cutting or turning over the soil.  
D A person who is engaged in battle.  
E Defeat or take control by force.  
F A state with a king or queen as its head.

## TEST WHAT YOU KNOW

2 CHOOSE the best answer (A, B or C) to complete the sentences.

- 1 The Druids  
A did not go to war.  
B had to pay taxes.  
C wanted to spread their knowledge to the masses.
- 2 Hadrian's Wall was built to  
A create a museum of Roman civilisation.  
B hold possession of farmland.  
C protect Roman Britain from raids from the North.
- 3 A kingdom of England was created in  
A 729.      B 927.      C 793.
- 4 The events of *Beowulf* take place in  
A Northumbria.  
B Scandinavia.  
C Germany.
- 5 In *Beowulf*, Grendel is presented as  
A a fire-breathing dragon.  
B a bit like a woman.  
C a descendant of Cain.

3 COMPLETE the text about the Christianisation of Britain using the words below.

Archbishop • Augustine • Gregory I • pagan • Roman

(1) ..... Britain had been Christian, but the Anglo-Saxons belonged to an older  
(2) ..... religion. At the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, Pope (3) ..... the Great (590–604) sent a monk, (4) ....., to bring Christianity back to England. He first went to Canterbury, and he later became the first (5) ..... of Canterbury.

## CAN YOU DO IT?

4 TRACE the origins of London.

5 LIST the consequences of the spread of Christianity across the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.

6 EXPLAIN the features of epic poetry.

7 READ the passage from *Beowulf* below and complete the table with appropriate lines from the text.

Supernatural element	
Great heroic deeds	
Type-scenes	
Language	
Kenning	

As a first step [Grendel] set his hands on a sleeping soldier, savagely tore at him<sup>1</sup>, gnashed<sup>2</sup> at his bone-joints<sup>3</sup>, bolted huge gobbets<sup>4</sup>, sucked at his veins, and had soon eaten  
5 all of the dead man, even down to his hands and feet.

Forward he stepped,  
stretched out his hands to attack the warrior calmly at rest there, reached out for him with his  
10 unfriendly fingers: but the faster man forestalling<sup>5</sup>, sat up, sent back his arm. The upholder of evils<sup>6</sup> at once knew He had not met, on middle earth's extremest acres<sup>7</sup>, with any man  
15 of harder hand-grip<sup>8</sup>: his heart panicked.

- 1 **tore at him.** Lo dilaniò, straziò.  
2 **gnashed.** Digriò i denti.  
3 **bone-joints.** Giunture delle ossa.  
4 **bolted ... gobbets.** Trangugiò enormi pezzi (di carne).  
5 **forestalling.** Precedendo (il mostro).  
6 **The ... evils.** Il sostenitore dei mali.  
7 **on ... extremest acres.** Negli estremi territori del centro della terra.  
8 **harder hand-grip.** Morsa, stretta.

## ORAL TEST

8 IMAGINE your teacher asks you the following questions in an oral test.

- What kind of economy did the Celts have?
- What is the Roman heritage in Britain?
- What is the Anglo-Saxon heritage in Britain?
- What was the Heptarchy?
- What was the importance of Alfred the Great?
- What was the *Danegeld*?
- What key event happened in 1066?
- Who are the people and what are the places in *Beowulf*?