



VIKINGS

JOURNEY TO NEW WORLDS



About the Film

Vikings goes beyond the classic images of ruthless warriors who terrorized Europe in the early Middle Ages. It shows that Vikings were also sailors and explorers, traders and farmers, and that they had developed a rich and complex culture.

After presenting the event that gave the Vikings their reputation – the raid on the English monastery at Lindisfarne, in 793 A.D. – the film gives an overview of the Norse people’s expansion throughout Europe. This cinematic adventure through the Viking world then focuses on the greatest Viking achievement of all: the exploration of North America, 500 years before Columbus.

Vikings tells how this great adventure began with the settlement of Iceland, followed by Erik the Red’s exploration and settlement of Greenland around 985 A.D. and, 15 years later, by the expedition led by Erik’s son Leif to Vinland – the eastern coast of North America.

The presentation of these daring achievements features an overview of the historical evidence drawn from medieval texts called the Icelandic Sagas and from the discovery of a Norse archeological site at L’Anse-aux-Meadows, in the Canadian province of Newfoundland.

About this Guide

This Educator’s Guide provides teachers with classroom tools to complement the knowledge imparted on their students through the film experience.

The students can first supplement their understanding of the Viking Age with the information presented in the overview of this striking period in human history. This provides context both for the film and for the classroom activities that follow.

The activities are designed to create a hands-on and interactive learning experience for the students. The topics covered and methods employed are varied to provide a broad learning platform from which to work.

A grid detailing standard topics covered by each activity is provided on the last page of this guide. There you will also find information on accessing more detailed standards as well as learning tools available on the film’s official website.

Finally, the Guide provides information about the production of the film and suggestions for further reading and web links.



VIKINGS

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THE VIKING AGE: AN OVERVIEW

When a band of raiders from Scandinavia attacked the monastery at Lindisfarne, England, in 793 AD, the terror they caused was so great that news of it quickly spread throughout Europe. The fact that they had attacked a house of God made the men from the North seem like particularly ruthless warriors. This reputation still dominates our vision of the Vikings today. Their raids and conquests in the areas known today as Scotland, Ireland, England, France, Spain, and even into the Mediterranean strongly contributed to this persistent image.



The church and Norman abbey ruins at Lindisfarne, England, site of the first recorded Viking raid in Europe.

The Vikings, however, were much more than seafaring pirates looking to attack defenseless

monks and villagers. Even as warriors, they were hardly more ruthless than other peoples of their time. For instance, their raids on monasteries may seem particularly horrible, but since Vikings were not Christian at the time, they felt no sacrilege in attacking these wealthy places.

Viking Society

The Norse people were, for the most part, peaceful farmers. They were attached to the land and particularly good at raising livestock, which they often traded to their neighbors. Throughout the Viking Age, even as the raids and wars of conquest continued, peaceful trading existed between Scandinavia and the surrounding countries.

Social organization at the time was dominated by the power of local chieftains. These leaders came together at regional assemblies called *Things*. These assemblies existed to resolve disputes and to establish and enforce law. A national assembly of chieftains called the Althing was established in Iceland in the year 930. This institution is now considered the oldest continuously running parliament in the world.

Although free men enjoyed many privileges and rights, Norse society was by no means egalitarian. Slavery was common in the Viking world, and raids often served to bring slaves home. Simple farmers often had to submit to the authority of the chieftains.

Women had no official role in public life. However, they would often manage their husband's affairs when they were away or assume control when they died. The Icelandic sagas often describe strong female characters, such as Aud the Wise, a clan leader who played a central role in the settlement of western Iceland.

Norse or Vikings?

Although we generally refer to medieval Scandinavians as Vikings, people in their time called them the Norse, Danes, Rus or simply, the Northmen. The word Viking largely emerged in the last 200 years, even though it has its roots in the old Norse word vik ("bay"), or in the expression "i viking" which meant to go raiding. To better represent the importance of farmers, traders or craftsmen in the "Viking" world, it is more precise to use the word "Norse," which emphasizes the common Nordic culture of these peoples who settled everywhere from Russia to Greenland.



Scandinavian societies changed considerably during the Viking Age. Norway, Sweden and Denmark increasingly organized into kingdoms. At the same time, the Norse lands had, for the most part, converted to Christianity by the beginning of the 11th Century. Trade, raids and conquests brought new riches. This encouraged population growth and expansion beyond Scandinavia.

The Vikings in Europe

Although relations between the Vikings and Western Europe began with seasonal raids, they soon became much more constant. In England, France, Ireland and Scotland, the Norse gradually turned from pillaging to settling and becoming rulers of the areas they attacked. In Northeast England, they established a Viking capital in the city of York, known as Jorvik from 866 to 954 AD. In addition, Vikings regularly controlled large areas of England (especially an area known as the Danelaw) until the middle of the 11th Century.

In the Northwest of France, the Vikings were constantly present throughout the 9th Century. They eventually settled and ruled Normandy, the land of the Northmen, after their leader Rollo signed a peace treaty with King Charles the Simple in the year 911 AD.

The high point of Viking presence in Europe came under the reign of King Cnut the Great, which lasted from 1016 to 1035 AD. Cnut managed to become King of Denmark, Norway and England, as well as overlord of Sweden. This empire was short-lived, however, and by the time his son Harthacnut died in 1042, it had fallen apart once again.

The Eastern Route

In Sweden, Norse traders and adventurers preferred to make their way east. They used trading routes that put them in contact with the riches of the Muslim world and the Orient. In

so doing, these people, known as the Rus to the Slav populations they met along the way, also imposed their rule on cities like Kiev and Novgorod. Their new kingdom came to be known as Russia.

Thanks to this growing power base and the riches they accumulated, the Rus even mounted expeditions against Constantinople (today's Istanbul). Their attacks on the capital of the Byzantine Empire – which they called Mikligard, “the great city” – were always pushed back. Still, these warriors from the North so impressed the byzantine emperors that they decided to hire



Throughout the North Atlantic, the Norse lived in houses made of sod, a readily available material which provided good insulation against cold winters.

some of them as their personal guard, known as the Varangian Guard.

The North Atlantic Sagas

In many ways, the most exceptional feat of the Norse people was their expansion into the North Atlantic. They settled the Faeroe Islands in the early 800s, and Iceland starting in the 870s. Later, Erik the Red settled Greenland around 986 A. D., while Erik's son Leif explored Vinland around the year 1000 A.D. These voyages expanded the European world well beyond its known limits. The news of these



discoveries soon made its way to Europe, and although attempts to settle Vinland were short-lived due to conflict with native populations, there is growing evidence that Norse travels to the North American coast continued well after the voyages of Leif Eriksson and his relatives.

In the year 1347, the Annals of Iceland report that a group of Greenlanders came ashore in Iceland, after having been blown off course from an expedition to gather lumber in Markland – today’s Labrador. The fact that the author

The Christian Viking descendants in Normandy, in the British Isles and in Russia had largely assimilated into the local populations. Even the kingdoms in Sweden, Denmark and Norway had become much like other European kingdoms. When Norman warriors took over the Kingdom of Sicily in the late 11th Century, they did so as European noblemen, not as the Viking raiders who had attacked the Mediterranean coasts two centuries earlier.

In the North Atlantic, however, the situation was somewhat different. Although they had also become Christians, Norse populations in the Faeroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland remained very independent and certainly as headstrong as the people who had originally settled these new lands. In the late 1200s, Iceland and Greenland had to fully recognize Norwegian authority over them. But even then, a daring spirit remained, as illustrated by the yearly summer expeditions mounted by Greenlanders in the far north. There, they hunted walrus and gathered birds of prey, among other things, for trade with Europe.

Even the Viking spirit, however, could not overcome the effects of a cooling climate and of declining trade with Europe. By the year 1500, the Norse colony in Greenland was abandoned, and Iceland faced a period of poverty marked by recurrent famine, epidemics and volcanic eruptions that would last until the early 19th Century. The fact that Iceland survived, and now shows considerable dynamism and prosperity (the country has one of the highest standards of living in the world) is in many ways a modern testimony to the spirit of the Norse people.



The Viking memorial, in Reykjavik, Iceland, is a stylish testimony to the spirit of the Norse navigators who sailed all the way to America.

of the annals feels no need to explain what Markland is – or why Greenlanders would travel there for lumber – seems to confirm that such expeditions were fairly normal events.

The End of the Viking Age

Most scholars place the end of the Viking Age in Europe around the year 1066. A Viking descendant, duke William of Normandy, conquered England just after a Viking army led by Norwegian king Harald Hardrada had been defeated by the Anglo-Saxon army. By that date, Viking raids had essentially ceased in Europe.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

ACTIVITIES

SOMETHING SOMETHINGSSON?

In the Viking age, people were known by their first name and the first name of their father. Leif, son of Erik the Red, for instance, was known as Leif Eriksson – the son of Erik, while Erik was known as Erik Thorvaldsson – the son of Thorvald. If a man called Olaf had a daughter called Gudrid, she would become known as Gudrid Olafsdottir – the daughter of Olaf. This naming system is still in use today in Iceland. Perhaps because this produced many similar names, people were also known by a nickname that said something funny or terrifying about them: Erik the Red, Leif the Lucky, Aud the Wise, Ivar the Boneless or Eric Bloodaxe. Write up your proper Viking name, and think of a nickname that would be appropriate for you.

My Viking name is:

My nickname is:

QUESTIONS

1. Do you know of any Viking words or names used in your region? Have you ever seen Viking names used on products or to name a place or company?
2. Which way of naming do you prefer: the one used for your name or the Viking way? Why?
3. Do you know words or names that are used in English today, but actually come from other languages? Can you name some examples?

YOUR NAME IN RUNES

In the Viking age, people wrote in runes, using a different alphabet than the one now in use in the western world. The main runic alphabet is known as the « futhork » alphabet, after its first six letters.

Use the grid below to write your real name, as well as your Viking name, in runic letters.

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z	th	ei	ng
F	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	TH	EI	NG

My real name is:

My Viking name is:

TIME AND PLACE

The Viking Age was a time of great expansion for the people in the Norse homelands of Norway, Sweden and Denmark. In less than three centuries, Viking warriors, merchants, explorers and settlers expanded the limit of the world known to Europeans of the time. They traveled to every part of Europe, reached Asia to the East, touched Northern Africa to the South, and reached America, to the West.

Looking at a world map quickly reveals that the Norse were exceptional travelers. They dared to take small ships across thousands of miles of open sea. They rapidly settled lands that were thousands of nautical miles from home, and their settlements thrived. Norse traders established regular maritime traffic across the ocean, five hundred years before Columbus, Cartier, Cabot and Hudson opened the way to European settlement in the Americas.

Of the many Norse settlements, only those in Iceland and the Faeroe Islands became permanent and kept their identity to this day. But in places like France, England, Ireland, Russia and even America, the Viking Age left a heritage that is still remembered and admired.

VIKING AGE TIMELINE

793 – Viking raid on the English monastery at Lindisfarne.

Early 800s – Raids multiply in England, France, Germany and Ireland. Viking settlers move to the Orkneys, the Shetlands and the Faeroe Islands.

856 – Siege of Paris by a large Viking fleet.

865 – A Viking great army conquers much of England.

866 – The Vikings establish their capital at Jorvik (today's York).

872 – The settlement of Iceland begins.

Early 900s – Vikings attack Constantinople twice: the Byzantine emperors, impressed by the Viking armies, recruit Viking warriors as a personal guard, the Varangian Guard.

930 – The Althing, the world's longest running national assembly, is founded in Iceland.

982 – Erik the Red is exiled from Iceland: he spends the next three years exploring Greenland.

986 – The settlement of Greenland begins.

1000 – Iceland converts to Christianity. Leif Eiriksson sails to Vinland.

1016-1035 – Reign of Cnut the Great, who creates a short-lived Viking empire covering Norway, Sweden, Denmark and England.

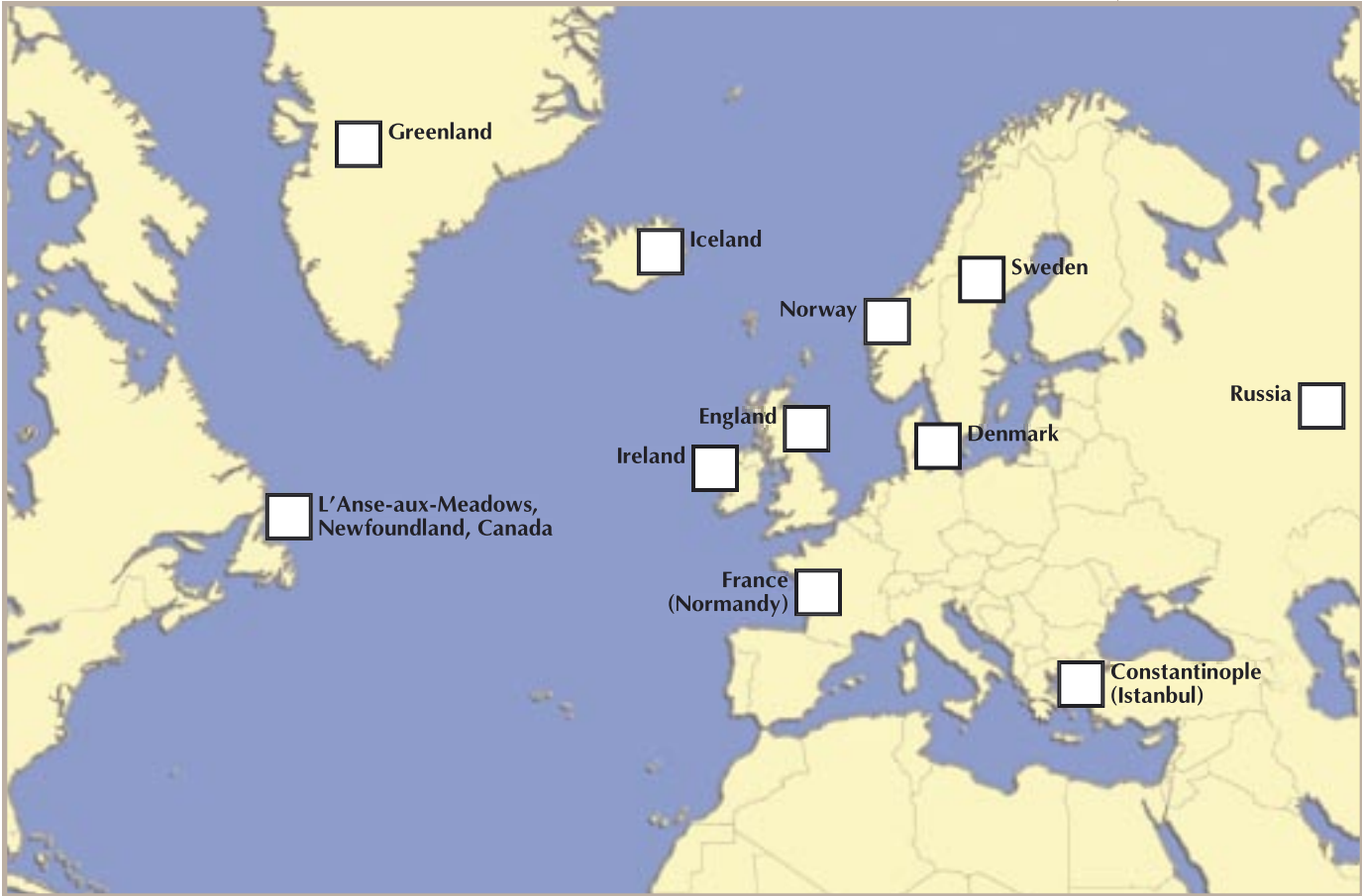
1066 – Norwegian King Harald Hardrada's attempt to conquer England fails at the battle of Stamford Bridge. William the Conqueror, duke of Normandy, then defeats English King Harold at the battle of Hastings.

1261-1262 – Greenland and Iceland lose their independence and accept the rule of the kings of Norway.

1408 – A marriage is celebrated at Hvalsey Church, in Greenland. It is the last recorded event in the history of the Greenland colony, which is abandoned by the end of the Century.

Answers: 1. Greenland, 2. Iceland, 3. Norway, 4. France (Normandy), 5. Constantinople (Istanbul), 6. L'Anse-aux-Meadows, Newfoundland, Canada, 7. Russia, 8. Denmark, 9. England, 10. Ireland, 11. Sweden.

THE VIKING WORLD



ACTIVITY

FINDING THE RIGHT LAND

Match the clues on the right with one of the locations where the Norse lived or traveled during the Viking Age. Write the number of the appropriate clue in the box found beside each name on the map above.

- 1 It was given a pleasant and colorful name so that people would want to live there.
- 2 It has a cool name, but a lot of hot water just waiting to burst from the ground.
- 3 Erik the Red's father was banned from this country, and most of the settlers to Iceland originally came from there.
- 4 In this country, a region bears the name of the Northmen who took it over 1100 years ago.
- 5 The Vikings who attacked it (and later served as an imperial guard) called it "Mikligard", which means the Great City.
- 6 The location of the only authentic Norse archeological site in North America, discovered by Helge Ingstad and Anne Stine in 1961.
- 7 It was named after the « Rus », the Scandinavian tribe that came to rule its cities.
- 8 This smallest of the Viking homelands saw many of its warriors and kings head for England.
- 9 The Vikings ruled large parts of this country for many years, before Viking descendants from France took it over in 1066.
- 10 The Vikings founded its capital city, Dublin.
- 11 Most of the Vikings in this easternmost Norse homeland headed east towards Russia and the Black Sea.



VIKING SHIPS

There would have been no Viking age without Viking ships. The light, flexible and maneuverable ships created by Norse navigators were by far the best of their age. This allowed the Vikings to become feared raiders in as well as military operations, and always able to quickly go far up river thanks to a very shallow draft. As the Viking expansion continued, ship designs became more specific to the role they were meant to play.



A 53-foot (17-meter) longship was built in studio, for the many seagoing scenes included in the film.

Deeper, wider ships called knarrs were designed to carry cargo, cattle and people across the open sea. This was very important for the Norse settlers who headed towards the Faeroe Islands, Iceland, Greenland and Vinland.

Meanwhile, longships became longer and lighter, reaching as much as 120 feet (36 meters) in length and able to carry as many as 200 warriors. The most famous of these ships, the Ormrinn langi, or “Long Serpent”, built by Norwegian king Olaf Tryggvason, was reputed to be the best longship ever built. It featured a gold-plated prowhead. Archeological digs conducted in

Europe, and to travel across the North Atlantic Ocean.

Most of what we know about these ships comes from archeological discoveries made all over the Viking world. The first such findings were made in the late 19th Century in the Norwegian towns of Gokstad and Öseberg. Rich Norse characters from the 9th Century had been buried with their boats and many other objects, following ancient, pagan rituals. These two remarkably well-preserved ships are displayed today in the Viking Ship Museum in Oslo, Norway.

These discoveries showed that early Viking ships were “all purpose” vessels, used for trade

1997 near another Viking ship museum located in Roskilde, Denmark, confirmed that such huge ships were not the stuff of legends.

Over the last century, many Viking ship replicas were built by dedicated reenactors who wanted to see if the ships were up to their reputation. In 1998, a 54-foot (16-meter) knarr called the Snorri, built in Maine the year before, sailed from Greenland to L’Anse-aux-Meadows following the route described in the sagas. The trip proved that such expeditions were possible, but also difficult: the Snorri’s trip took a full three months. When the Norse made their way to North America, they had no choice but to spend winter in Vinland.

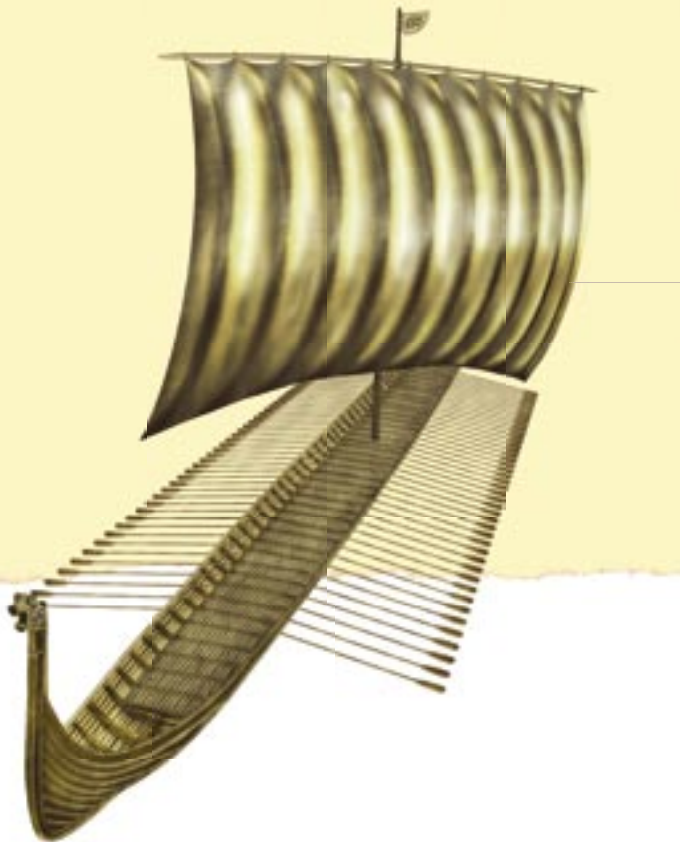


ACTIVITY

ENOUGH ROOM ON THE SHIP?

Viking ships were efficient, reliable sailing vessels, but they were by no means luxury cruisers. There were no cabins, no galleys (onboard kitchens) or any other comforts. If possible, ships would stop ashore at night, but generally, rain or shine, Vikings sailed, worked and slept in open air. The space available to the men and women on board was fairly limited: at most, there was about 12 square feet (1.1 square meter) per person, with all their equipment.

To get a sense of what that space represents, measure the classroom and divide the surface obtained by the number of people in the class. Compare the space available per person with the space on a Viking ship. Also, measure several 12 square feet (1.1 square meter) spaces, marking them on the floor with tape, and place a student with a chair in each of these spaces. Try to get a sense of how crowded these ships were, often for weeks at a time.



Viking craftsmen gained an almost legendary reputation for building huge ships reaching as much as 120 feet (36 meters) in length.

QUESTIONS

1. Why were longships used along coastlines and the knarr on the open sea?
2. Why were the Vikings able to mount surprise attacks so easily?
3. What were the main difficulties that Viking sailors could face on the sea?
4. What are some differences between Viking ships and modern sailboats?
5. Would you cross the Atlantic Ocean on a 50-foot sailboat without a motor?



HEARING ABOUT HISTORY



The beautifully illuminated saga manuscripts kept in Iceland like the Flateyjarbók (above) are very precious and often beautifully illustrated documents.

Much of our knowledge about the Viking age comes from the Icelandic sagas. Beginning in the 12th Century, the sagas (an old Norse word meaning “what was said”) were gradually written down after being passed down from generation to generation for more than 200 years.

It is through these sagas, preserved in manuscripts kept at the Arni Magnusson Institute in Reykjavik, Iceland, that we know

about the colonization of Iceland and Greenland, about the kings of Norway, Denmark and

Sweden, and about the voyages to Vinland.

However, because the sagas were written so long after the fact, interpreting the stories they contain is sometimes difficult. There are often different or even contradictory versions of the same story, as well as magical or fantastic anecdotes. Because of this, when the sagas began to be translated and published about 150 years ago, some scholars thought that events like the discovery of America by Leif Eriksson were just legends.

Confirmation that most of these stories were based on actual facts was obtained through another source: archeological discoveries. For instance, the discovery of Viking longhouses at L’Anse-aux-Meadows, in Newfoundland, confirmed that the Vinland sagas described actual historical events.

ACTIVITIES

1. WRITING A SAGA

The teacher tells the class a short story (two to six sentences, depending on the age group) about a particular event. After the story has been repeated three times, students are asked to write it down from memory. Once this is done, the teacher re-reads the story one last time, and finds out how much the students managed to write down.

2. BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU SAY.

The teacher tells a student a sentence, so that others will not hear it. This first student quietly repeats the sentence to a second student, and so on until a predetermined number of students (8 to 10 is usually enough). The last student in this chain is then asked to repeat it out loud, and his version is then compared with the original sentence. Optionally, it is possible to go back up the chain, to find out where and how the sentence changed – as it usually does.

QUESTIONS

1. Can we always rely on memory to know the details of a given event?
2. Judging from this exercise, how much should you trust hearsay?
3. Have you ever experienced a situation where something was wrongly reported about you or someone you know? How did it affect you?
4. Are written sources of information always better than the spoken word?
5. Since Vikings relied strongly on oral tradition, do you think they remembered stories and facts better than we do?



DIGGING UP HISTORY

When Norwegian adventurer Helge Ingstad and his wife Anne Stine found the Norse site at L'Anse-aux-Meadows, in Newfoundland, they finally proved that the Vinland sagas were rooted in actual fact.

Although the sagas were believable, it had been previously impossible to confirm that they were more than legendary tales. When studying history, physical proof is the most reliable form of evidence, and this is what archeology provided in the case of the Vinland voyages.

Archeology has played a central role in our growing knowledge of the Viking Age. Despite all the sagas have to offer, much of Viking history was never recorded, leaving archeological finds as the only source of information. In the case of Norse Greenland, for instance, written facts are few and far between. Beyond its foundation by Erik the Red and its first few years, almost everything we know comes from decades of archeological digs.

Although the process still starts with digging holes in the ground, archeology has also become a highly technical field, where cutting edge technologies are used to interpret the past. Specialists from various disciplines work together to extract all types of information, determining what the ancient Norse ate, what type of flies buzzed about their homes, or where their firestarter stones came from. Modern forensic techniques are even used to determine someone's cause of death, where that person came from, and whether he or she suffered from disease or malnutrition. Plant and animal remains are also analyzed from every angle.

Despite these developments, it is always best to have as many different sources as possible. Without the sagas, hardly anyone would have thought about digging up the ruins in L'Anse-aux-Meadows.



It was only through archeology that many facts about the Viking Age were confirmed, like the location of Eirikstadir, Erik the Red's farm in Western Iceland.

ACTIVITY

HISTORY IN LAYERS

This activity allows teachers to create a miniature archeological site. The materials needed are: a large, relatively shallow container (preferably transparent), at least two types of sand or small gravel, small utensils or tools for digging, and several small objects used as archeological artifacts.

Pour a first layer of one type of sand or gravel in the container. Place some small objects in this first layer. Cover them and pack the layer. Pour a second layer of a different type of sand or gravel, to form a second "archeological" layer, and place another set of "artifacts" in this new layer. Repeat a third and/or fourth time if desired.

Students should dig carefully to avoid making a mess, and so they can tell how many layers are in the site, what each layer contained, and what this tells us about the site. The precise location of objects should be recorded as they are found. For example, a bottom layer containing stone and wood objects, an empty second layer, and a third layer containing iron objects could tell us that, after occupation in the Stone Age, the site was abandoned, before finally being occupied again in the Iron Age. The types of objects and their placement can be varied at will to create the desired story of a particular site.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you know any archeological sites in your area?
2. Have you ever visited an archeological site or a museum featuring archeological exhibits?
3. Have you ever found an old object in the ground? What was your reaction? Did it tell you anything about the place you found it?



MEETING NEW PEOPLE

When the Vikings exploring Vinland met with the Native American people they called the “skraelings”, they hardly knew that they had taken part in a major event in the history of humanity. For the first time since people had started migrating from Africa, toward Asia, Europe and eventually, America, humanity had now come full circle.

The people who had crossed the Bering Straits 20,000 years ago to settle in North America and the tribes who had come to Western Europe from Central Asia in several waves over several thousand years had both been stopped in their expansion by the same natural barrier: the Atlantic Ocean. When the Vikings came ashore in Vinland, they had bridged that very last gap, making the human presence a full circle around the Earth.

This meeting between radically different cultures was far from simple, however. The sagas tell us stories of both trade and conflict. The death of Thorvald, Leif Eriksson’s brother, at the hands of the natives marked a turning point in Norse attempts to settle North America.

Traditional stories told by the Inuit of Greenland and archeological finds made in the Arctic by Canadian and Danish researchers have shown that contact between the Norse of Greenland and the Native people of America continued over the centuries, and may have been fairly extensive. They also tell us that this relation probably alternated between peaceful trade and conflicts.

This difficulty in establishing a relationship between cultures was by no means exceptional. History tells us that, everywhere in the world, meetings between people that had never met before had as much chance of turning into conflict as of generating trade and mutual trust.

ACTIVITY

A MEETING BEYOND WORDS

This activity helps students understand the difficulty of communicating with a previously unknown people whose language and culture are radically different from their own. Two students or two groups of students stand face to face. One person or group in this meeting must obtain something from or offer something to the other: water, food, directions, goods, establishing trade, an alliance, etc. No words can be used, or only invented words that do not correspond to the other party’s language. To spice things up, one group can also have a strange custom known only to it (patting the other person on the head or sticking your tongue out to say hello, or offering something as a greeting): it can be decided that the reaction of the other party to this offering (refusing the gift, for instance) can provoke conflict, in order to show that first contact can easily go wrong.

QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever been in a situation where no one could understand your language? If so, how did that make you feel?
2. How would you resolve a situation like the one in the activity?
3. What is most important when trying to establish first contact with another culture?
4. How many languages do you speak?
5. Do you think it’s important to speak other languages? If so, what languages would you want to learn?

VIKINGS IN THE MODERN WORLD

In many ways, the Vikings are still with us today. Of course, they stir up our imagination with their great adventures – enough to inspire countless novels, comic books, documentaries, reenactor societies and... a giant-screen film. But we also regularly use Viking words and names today, for everything from the days of the week to a wireless computer technology called Bluetooth, after Danish king Harald Bluetooth.

Three English weekdays are named after Norse gods: Wednesday after Odin, Thursday after Thor, and Friday after Frey. The word starboard, used for the right side of a ship, comes from

the Norse word “styrabord,” referring to the side of the ship to which the “styri” or rudder was attached.

In France and England, hundreds of towns and villages have names derived from old Norse words. In Normandy, for instance, many town names end with “-bec” (like Orbec), derived from the Norse word for stream (“bekk”). In Northeastern England, there are dozens of place-names ending in “-by” (like Grimsby), the Norse word for farmstead.

The word Viking itself is regularly used in a modern context. Two of the space probes sent to Mars by NASA were called Viking. The professional football team from Minnesota, a state many Scandinavians immigrated to, is named The Vikings. And a quick Internet

search will show up dozens of very different Viking companies: Viking Insurance, Viking Office Products, Viking Sewing Machines, Viking Mortgage, Viking Pumps, as well as Viking Publishing and the Viking brand of home appliances.



Many groups work to make the spirit of the Vikings live again, like the British society Regia Anglorum, seen here at the Jorvik Festival in York, England.

For all your insurance needs, call Leif Eriksson at 555-1212? All this may not be what the first Vikings imagined when they set out for the raid on Lindisfarne or the voyages to Vinland, but it certainly shows how they are still with us as examples of strength, ingenuity and determination.

FILMING THE VIKINGS

Sky High Entertainment has traveled thousands of miles to bring audiences back one thousand years.

Following some of the greatest explorers in human history took a lot of careful research, a bit of imagination, and a large amount of traveling around the North Atlantic Ocean as the production followed in the footsteps of the Vikings.

Work began with several months of research, including visits to and e-mail discussions

This preparation allowed for the filming of Vikings, both on location and in the studio. A 53-foot (17-meter) longship, following the proportions and appearance of actual historical ships found in Norway, was built in a large studio. A Viking sod house and part of the Lindisfarne monastery were built up on the shores of the St Lawrence River in Quebec. Historical reenactments were also filmed at L'Anse-aux-Meadows itself. Dozens of Viking reenactors were also dressed in full Viking gear to recreate a credible feeling for events that took place over a thousand years ago. Experts such as Birgitta Wallace, an archeologist who conducted digs for several years at L'Anse-aux-Meadows, were on hand to ensure that the scenes would be as authentic as possible.

There were, of course, some difficulties... so to speak. When filming in Iceland took place, it was planned that certain shots would involve time-lapse photography, showing the clouds rolling over locations, using the ever changing Icelandic weather to give a sense of the passage of time. The weather, however, remained stubbornly sunny and stable – something which, on the other hand, was all the more useful for filming the aerial shots of the stunning landscapes of Iceland and Greenland.

As the production team for this film visited the locations that were actually explored and settled, one thing was clear to everyone: with such larger than life adventures, the Viking Age certainly belongs on the world's largest film screens.

Vikings is a production of Sky High Entertainment, a film production company based in Quebec City in Canada. You can learn more about the company and about the company's production by visiting the Sky High website at:

<http://www.shemovie.com>



Filming on location at L'Anse-aux-Meadows, Newfoundland.

with experts from Canada, the United States, Iceland, Greenland, Norway and England. The goal was to obtain the most up-to-date research and the most precise information available on various aspects of the Viking Age. Experts consulted included archeologists, scholars of the Icelandic sagas and historians of the Middle Ages. Members of the *Vikings* production team traveled to Iceland, to Lindisfarne and York, in England, and, of course, to L'Anse-aux-Meadows, in Newfoundland, in the months preceding shooting, to get a feeling of the actual locations where this era of human adventure took place.

TO FIND OUT MORE

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

Else Roesdahl, *The Vikings*, (Penguin)

A concise and up to date history of the Viking era, with chapters on all the main aspects of Norse politics, culture, society and foreign relations.

James Graham-Campbell, ed., *Cultural Atlas of the Viking World* (Andromeda)

A broad look at everything that composed the Viking world, including a solid look at the periods that preceded the Viking age, and illustrated overviews of Norse art, geography, literature, daily life and social organization.

John Haywood, *Historical Atlas of the Viking World* (Penguin)

A geographically-based overview of the Viking world, providing, as the title indicates, numerous maps illustrating the Viking presence from Scandinavia itself to Constantinople in the East and Vinland in the West.

William J. Fitzhugh and Elisabeth I. Ward, eds., *Vikings : The North Atlantic Saga* (Smithsonian Institution Press)

A serious, scientific overview of the current state of our knowledge of the Norse, focusing on their exploration and colonization of the North Atlantic. Often complex, but also remarkably well-illustrated.

The Vinland Sagas (Penguin)

A basic edition of the original text of *The Greenlanders' Saga* and *Erik the Red's Saga* in English translation.

INTERNET RESOURCES



<http://www.mnh.si.edu/vikings/>

The official web site of the major exhibition *Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga* organized by the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History in the year 2000.

http://parkscanada.pch.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/nl/meadows/index_e.asp

The official web site of L'Anse-aux-Meadows, a National Historical Landmark and the only recognized Norse archeological site in North America.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/vikings/>

An extensive web site from the British Broadcasting Corporation, offering much information and interactive activities, as well as a wide-ranging educational section.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/vikings/>

A highly educational web site created as a companion to the documentary series on the Viking Age produced by PBS in the late 1990s.

<http://www.civilization.ca/archeo/helluland/str0001e.html>

The web site for the Canadian Museum of Civilisations' Project Helluland, a scientific research project that has been demonstrating extensive links between Greenland Norse populations and paleo-Inuit populations in the Middle Ages.

<http://www.ukm.uio.no/vikingskipshuset/indexe.shtml>

The web site for the Viking Ship Museum in Oslo, Norway, where the most famous excavated Viking ships of all, the Gokstad and Öseberg ships, are displayed.

<http://www.mindwave.co.uk/vikings/>

A comprehensive list of resources on the Viking Age, including numerous links to other Internet resources on this subject.

<http://viking.no/e/>

A Norwegian-based web site for the Viking Network, with many interesting basic texts on various aspects of the Viking Age and a list of Internet links.

<http://www.regia.org/vikings.htm>

The website of Regia Anglorum, the principal Viking and Anglo-Saxon reenactment society in Great Britain, with information on how to put together a realistic recreation of the Viking Age.

NATIONAL STANDARDS

Vikings explores many aspects of the Viking Age: their contacts with new cultures, their shipbuilding technology and their social and political realities. In so doing, it contributes to learning in many different aspects of the curriculum, for students of all ages.

The following grid provides information about the topics covered in the Educator's Guide, in

connection with the US National Educational Standards.

Detailed descriptions of the National Standards relevant to the Guide, as well as the film, can be found in PDF documents on the Sky High Entertainment web site, at : www.shemovie.com or from your local theater.

	What's in a Name?	Finding the Right Land	Enough Room on the Ship?	Writing a Saga/Be Careful What You Say	History in Layers	A Meeting Beyond Words
Language Arts	Multicultural Understanding (NL-ENG.K-12.9)			Communication Strategies (NL-ENG.K-12.5)		
Foreign Language	Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures (NL-FL.K-12.2)					
Math			Use Mathematical Models (NM-ALG.3-5.3) (NM-ALG.6-8.3)			
			Using Geometric Modeling (NM-GEO.3-5.4) (NM-GEO.6-8.4)			
			Understand Measurable Attributes (NM-MEA.3-5.1) (NM-MEA.6-8.1)			
			Apply Appropriate Techniques (NM-MEA.3-5.2) (NM-MEA.6-8.2)			
Science					Earth and Space Science (NS.K-4.4) (NS.5-8.4)	
					Science as a Human Endeavor (NS.K-4.7) (NS.5-8.7)	
Social Studies	The History of Peoples of Many Cultures Around the World (NSS-USH.K-4.4)	The World in Spatial Terms (NSS-G.K-12.1)			The Uses of Geography (NSS-G.K-12.6)	Other Nations and World Affairs (NSS-C.K-4.4) (NSS-C.5-8.4) (NSS-C.9-12.4)
		Places and Regions (NSS-G.K-12.2)				Places and Regions (NSS-G.K-12.2)
		Human Systems (NSS-G.K-12.4)				