

Year 7 History – Medieval Realms

The Story of the Norman Conquest Part One – Who Should Be King?

In 1066 History in England was changed forever. In fact people saw a bright light in the sky that year and they thought it was a sign that something bad was about to happen. The star was actually Haley's Comet, which we can see every 75 years.

Some years before 1066, in 1016 a Danish King called Cnut had taken control over England and added it to his lands in Norway and Denmark. He was also a Viking. His son Harold I became the King in 1035. However his half brother Hardicnut was meant to be the next King but Harold took control of the country when Hardicnut was in Denmark. By 1042 Edward the Confessor had become King of England. Edward had spent much of his childhood in Normandy – which is a part of France. It is rumoured that during his time there he promised William Duke of Normandy to be the next King of England on Edward's death. During his reign Edward devoted much of his time to religion and left much of the day to day work of a King to Godwin Earl of Wessex. Godwin actually helped Edward become King and even married Godwin's daughter Edith. Godwin also had a son called Harold Godwinson – who became Edwards chief minister. Harold Godwinson is Edward's Brother in law. By this time Harold Hardrada had become King of Denmark. Hardrada was keeping a close eye on events in England because he felt that the King of Denmark should be ruler of England because years ago King Cnut's son Hardicnut (who was also King of Denmark) should have become King and not Harold I. In fact he believed Edward was not the rightful King at all.

Unfortunately 1066 saw the death of Edward the Confessor. The problem now was who should be the next King of England? This was the political crisis. Edward and Edith had no children and the closest relative was a boy called Edgar and so at the time Great Leaders step forward to try to make a claim for the title of King of England. The wise men of England were called Witan wanted Harold Godwinson to become king of England.

Harold Godwinson

Harald Hadrada of Norway

William Duke of Normandy

Edgar

Tasks

1. Copy out the passage below using the missing word list to help fill in the blanks.

Harold Godwinson	William	Edward	Norway
Harald Hardrada	1066	Normandy	agree
Viking	Hardicnut	1042	Godwin
religious beliefs	Wtian	Edgar	Crown
Hardicnut	Wessex	Harold I	

Cnut was a V_____ ruler in Denmark and Norway. His son _____ never became king of England. If he had been King by 1066 _____ would have been King and not E_____. However by _____ Edward the Confessor had become King of England. He was known for his strong _____ .

During this time the Earl of _____ carried out the daily work of ruling England for Edward.

On Edwards death the wise men of England, the _____ wanted _____ to become the next King of England. There was one young relative of Edward, a boy called _____ who the Witan felt was too young to be King.

Two other men felt that they should be King of England. The names of these men were _____ Duke of _____ and _____ who was King of _____ .

William argued that he had been promised the _____ by Edward and Harold Godwinson was supposed to have helped him. Harold Hardrada said that England should have been part of Norway and that the Crown of England had been taken away years ago from _____ .

They could not _____ who should be King and so they would have to fight for the Crown.

2. Look at the Lines of Succession to be King of England below. Copy out the squares into your books. See if you can put the right names into them. After this copy the diagram into your books.

