

# Anglo-Saxon and Scots Invaders

By around 410AD, the last of the Romans had left Britain to go back to Rome and England was left to look after itself for the first time in about 400 years. Emperor Honorius told the people to fight the Picts, Scots and Saxons who were attacking them, but the Brits were not good fighters.

The Scots, who came from Ireland, invaded and took land in Scotland. The Scots split Scotland into 4 separate places that were named Dal Riata, Pictland, Strathclyde and Bernicia. The Picts (the people already living in Scotland) and the Scots were always trying to get into England. It was hard for the people in England to fight them off without help from the Romans. The Picts and Scots are said to have jumped over Hadrian's Wall, killing everyone in their way.



The British king found it hard to get his men to stop the Picts and Scots. He was worried they would take over in England because they were excellent fighters. Then he had an idea how he could keep the Picts and Scots out. He asked two brothers called Hengest and Horsa from Jutland to come and fight for him and keep England safe from the Picts and Scots.

Hengest and Horsa did help to keep the Picts and Scots out, but they liked England and they wanted to stay. They knew that the people in England were not strong fighters so they would be easy to beat. Hengest and Horsa brought more men to fight for England and over time they won.



However, men from other countries also wanted to take over in Britain and they attacked too. These invaders are called the Anglo-Saxons because the two biggest groups were called the Angles and the Saxons. Other invaders were the Jutes, Franks and Frisians. They came from Germany, Holland and Denmark.

The Anglo-Saxons ruled in England until the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD. In 1066AD, William the Conqueror from Normandy beat King Harold II at the Battle of Hastings. This was the end of Anglo-Saxon England and the start of Norman rule.

# Questions

1. By what time had the last of the Romans left Britain?  
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2. What groups of people were attacking England at this time?  
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3. Where did the Scots come from?  
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4. One historian described the Scots as 'foul'. What does this mean?  
Use a dictionary to help you.  
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5. What did the Scots and the Picts do as they jumped over Hadrian's Wall?  
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6. Who did the British king ask for help?  
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7. Which two groups of people are the Anglo-Saxons named after?  
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8. Until when did the Anglo-Saxons rule in England?  
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# Answers

1. By what time had the last of the Romans left Britain?  
**The last of the Romans had left Britain by around 410AD.**
2. What groups of people were attacking England at this time?  
**The Picts, Scots and Saxons were attacking England at this time.**
3. Where did the Scots come from?  
**The Scots came from Ireland.**
4. One historian described the Scots as 'foul'. What does this mean?  
Use a dictionary to help you.  
**'Foul' means revolting, wicked, immoral or unpleasant.**
5. What did the Scots and the Picts do as they jumped over Hadrian's Wall?  
**The Scots and the Picts killed everyone in their way as they jumped over Hadrian's Wall.**
6. Who did the British king ask for help?  
**The British king asked two brothers, Hengest and Horsa for help.**
7. Which two groups of people are the Anglo-Saxons named after?  
**The Anglo-Saxons are named after the two biggest groups called the Angles and the Saxons.**
8. Until when did the Anglo-Saxons rule in England?  
**The Anglo-Saxons ruled in England until the 11th century AD.**

# Anglo-Saxon and Scots Invaders

By around 410AD, the last of the Romans had left Britain to go and defend their own country as invaders who wanted to take over their land were attacking them. This meant England was left to look after itself for the first time in about 400 years even though it was still under constant attack from the Picts, Scots and Saxons. Emperor Honorius told the people to defend themselves, but after being protected by Roman soldiers for so long they were not prepared for fighting!



The Scotti, who came from Ireland, were descendants of the Picts, who had earlier invaded Ireland around 200AD. Historians believe that these Irish Scots invaded and took land in Scotland in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Scots divided the land in Scotland into 4 separate kingdoms, which were named Dal Riata, Pictland, Strathclyde and Bernicia. The Picts and the Scots were always trying to get into England and take more land for themselves and it was hard for the people in England to fight them off without help from the Romans. The Picts and Scots were described as 'foul' and with 'a lust for blood' by an historian from the time, called Gildas. They are said to have jumped over Hadrian's Wall, killing everyone in their way.

The British King Vortigern was left in charge after the Roman armies left, but he found it difficult to organise troops to hold back the Picts and Scots. Vortigern was worried that these powerful and excellent fighters would take over in England. Then Vortigern had an idea how he could keep the Picts and Scots out of England. He asked two brothers called Hengest and Horsa from Jutland to come and fight for him and keep England safe from the Picts and Scots.



Hengest and Horsa were glad to help and they fought well to keep the Picts and Scots out. However, the men liked what they found in England and decided that they wanted to stay and take land for themselves. They knew that the people were not strong fighters so they would be easy to control. Hengest and Horsa brought more warriors to England and over time the invaders began to settle and the Brits were pushed farther and farther out!

The brothers and their warriors weren't the only ones who had their sights set on taking over land in England. Other tribes had also been invading for some time, and without Roman protection the Brits could not keep them out. We know these invaders as the Anglo-Saxons because the two biggest invading tribes were called the Angles and the Saxons. Other invaders were the Jutes, Franks and Frisians. They came from the modern places of Germany, Holland and Denmark.

The Anglo-Saxons went on to rule in England until the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD. It was William the Conqueror from Normandy's victory over King Harold II at the Battle of Hastings in 1066AD that marked a dramatic end to Anglo-Saxon rule and saw the beginning of the Norman era.



# Questions

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3. Why were the British people not prepared for fighting?  
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4. Who were the Scotti people? Where did they come from?  
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5. What were the names of the 4 kingdoms the Scots split Scotland into?  
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6. Why was King Vortigern worried about the Scots and the Picts?  
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7. Who did King Vortigern ask for help? Where did these men come from?  
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9. Until when did the Anglo-Saxon rule in England?  
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10. What happened at the Battle of Hastings?  
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# Answers

1. By what time had the last of the Romans left Britain?  
**The last of the Romans had left Britain by around 410AD.**
2. What groups of people were attacking England at this time?  
**The Picts, Scots and Saxons were attacking England at this time.**
3. Why were the British people not prepared for fighting?  
**The British people were not prepared for fighting because they had been protected by Roman soldiers for so long.**
4. Who were the Scotti people? Where did they come from?  
**The Scotti were descendants of the Picts and they came from Ireland.**
5. What were the names of the 4 kingdoms the Scots split Scotland into?  
**The 4 kingdoms were called Dal Riata, Pictland, Strathclyde and Bernicia.**
6. Why was King Vortigern worried about the Scots and the Picts?  
**King Vortigern was worried because the Scots and Picts were excellent fighters and he thought they might try to take over England.**
7. Who did King Vortigern ask for help? Where did these men come from?  
**King Vortigern asked for help from two brothers, Hengest and Horsa. They came from Jutland.**
8. Why are the Anglo-Saxons called the Anglo-Saxons?  
**The Anglo-Saxons are called this because the two biggest invading tribes were called the Angles and the Saxons.**
9. Until when did the Anglo-Saxons rule in England?  
**The Anglo-Saxons ruled in England until the 11th century AD.**
10. What happened at the Battle of Hastings?  
**William the Conqueror defeated King Harold II at the Battle of Hastings, which marked an end to Anglo-Saxon rule and saw the beginning of the Norman era.**

# Anglo-Saxon and Scots Invaders

Despite the increase in attacks on England from the Picts, Scots and Saxons, by around 410AD the last of the Romans had left to go and defend their home territory as they were under increasing threat from external invaders. This meant England was left to its own devices for the first time in about 400 years. Emperor Honorius told the people to defend themselves, but after years of protection under Roman rule they were quite unprepared for fighting!



The Gaelic-speaking Scotti, who came from Ireland, were descendants of the Picts, who had earlier invaded Ireland around 200AD. Historians believe that these Irish Scots invaded and claimed land in Scotland in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Scots divided the land in Scotland into 4 separate kingdoms that were named Dal Riata, Pictland, Strathclyde and Bernicia. The Picts and the Scots were a constant threat to the Britons and it was even harder to fight them off without support from the Romans. They were described as 'foul' and 'with a lust for blood' by an historian from the time, named Gildas. They are said to have streamed over Hadrian's Wall, killing everyone in their way.

The British King Vortigern was left in charge after the Roman armies left, but he faced great difficulty organising troops to hold back the Picts and Scots who were very powerful and superb fighters. He worried they would take over in England. In a bid to retain control and keep the Picts at bay, it is believed that Vortigern asked two brothers called Hengest and Horsa from Jutland to come and fight for him and keep the Picts and Scots out.



Hengest and Horsa were glad to oblige and the Picts and Scots were successfully held back. However, the men liked what they found in England and decided that they wanted to stay and take the land for themselves, as it was rich and plentiful and the Britons could be easily defeated. They brought more warriors and over time the invaders began to settle around England, pushing the Brits farther and farther out!

The brothers and their warriors weren't the only ones who had their sights set on colonising England. Other Germanic tribes had also been invading for some time, and without Roman protection they proved to be a formidable force against the Brits. We know these invaders as the Anglo-Saxons because the two biggest invading tribes were called the Angles and the Saxons. Other invaders were the Jutes, Franks and Frisians. They came from the modern places of Germany, Holland and Denmark.

The Anglo-Saxons went on to rule in England until the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD. It was William the Conqueror from Normandy's victory over King Harold II at the Battle of Hastings in 1066AD that marked a dramatic end to Anglo-Saxon rule and established the beginning of the Norman era.



# Questions

1. By what time has the last of the Romans left Britain?  

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2. 'England was left to its own devices for the first time in about 400 years.'  
What does this mean?  

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3. Why were the British people not prepared for fighting?  

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4. What did the Scots do with the land in Scotland?  

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5. How did the historian Gildas describe the Scots? Do you think this is fair?  

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6. Why did King Vortigern find it difficult to hold back the Scots and the Picts?  

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7. Do you think it was a mistake to ask Hengest and Horsa for help? Why/why not?  

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8. Why are the Anglo-Saxons called the Anglo-Saxons?  

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9. Until when did the Anglo-Saxons rule over England?  

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10. Why is the Battle of Hastings a significant historical event?  

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# Answers

1. By what time had the last of the Romans left Britain?  
**The last of the Romans had left Britain by around 410AD.**
2. 'England was left to its own devices for the first time in about 400 years.'  
 What does this mean?  
**This means that after being protected for about 400 years, England was left alone to defend itself.**
3. Why were the British people not prepared for fighting?  
**The British people were not prepared for fighting because they had been protected for years under Roman rule.**
4. What did the Scots do with the land in Scotland?  
**The Scots divided the land into four separate kingdoms called Dal Riata, Pictland, Strathclyde and Bernicia.**
5. How did the historian Gildas describe the Scots? Do you think this is fair?  
**The historian Gildas described the Scots as 'foul' and 'with a lust for blood.'**  
**Answers will vary according to whether the children think this is fair or not, but may include reference to the Scots killing everyone in their way when they had crossed Hadrian's Wall.**
6. Why did King Vortigern find it difficult to hold back the Scots and the Picts?  
**King Vortigern found it hard to hold back the Scots and Picts because he faced great difficulty organising troops and because the Scots and Picts were such superb, powerful fighters.**
7. Do you think it was a mistake to ask Hengest and Horsa for help? Why/why not?  
**Answers will vary but may include reference to the brothers deciding take the land for themselves to show it was a mistake, or to the brothers helping to keep the Scots and Picts out of England to show it was not a mistake.**
8. Why are the Anglo-Saxons called the Anglo-Saxons?  
**The Anglo-Saxons are called this because the two biggest invading tribes were called the Angles and the Saxons.**
9. Until when did the Anglo-Saxons rule over England?  
**The Anglo-Saxons ruled over England until the 11th century AD.**
10. Why is the Battle of Hastings a significant historical event?  
**The Battle of Hastings is a significant event because it marks the end of Anglo-Saxon rule and the beginning of the Norman era.**