

Anglo-Saxon Kings

The kings of Anglo-Saxon Britain each ruled their own kingdom and the people in it. They also controlled their own army.

When the Anglo-Saxons first settled in Britain, there were seven other kingdoms. However, by AD 878, there was only one kingdom left; Wessex. The other kingdoms had been overrun by Vikings who established their own kingdoms.

King Alfred the Great

One of the most famous Anglo-Saxon kings is Alfred the Great.

Alfred became king in AD 871 and was the first Anglo-Saxon king to defeat the Vikings in battle and bring some peace to the English people. In AD 878 the Vikings invaded Wessex. King Alfred and his followers defeated the Vikings at the Battle of Edington and the Viking surrendered.

King Alfred knew that although he had been able to defeat those Vikings, he would never be able to control them in the rest of England. So, in AD 886, he signed a treaty which gave the Vikings control over northern and eastern England, an area known as 'Danelaw'. The treaty allowed King Alfred to keep control over Wessex as well as West Mercia and Kent and meant peace was kept between the Anglo-Saxons and Vikings.



King Athelstan

Athelstan was the grandson of Alfred and became king after his father, King Edward, died in AD 924.

During his reign, he drove the Vikings back further from Anglo-Saxon lands and was able to claim control over a greater area. In AD 927, Athelstan won back the kingdom of York from the Vikings. He also gained control over the northern kings in Scotland.

Athelstan is remembered for being able to form good relationships with other countries and for building churches.



Edward the Confessor

Edward became king in AD 1042. He was given the nickname 'the confessor' as he was a religious man. Much of his reign was peaceful and the country thrived.

Following his death, a war raged between his heir, Harold, William of Normandy and Harald Hardrada, who all felt they had a claim to the throne. William won in AD 1066 and was crowned the next king.



Questions

1. What was the name of the only Anglo-Saxon kingdom left by AD 878?

2. What was the name of the battle where Alfred defeated the Vikings? Tick one.

- ☐ The Battle of Britain
- ☐ The Battle of Edington
- ☐ The Battle of Wessex
- ☐ The Battle of Danelaw

3. What was the land given to the Vikings in Britain known as? Tick one.

- ☐ Wessex
- ☐ Kent
- ☐ Danelaw
- ☐ West Mercia

4. Match the year to the king that was crowned.

AD 871	•
AD 924	•
AD 1042	•
AD 1066	•

•	Athelstan
•	Alfred
•	William
•	Edward

5. Which kingdom did Athelstan win back from the Vikings? Tick one.

- ☐ Wessex
- ☐ Scotland
- ☐ Kent
- ☐ York

6. Name the two people who fought Harold for the crown after the death of Edward the Confessor

1. _____

2. _____

7. Do you think King Athelstan was religious? Give reasons for your answer.

Answers

1. What was the name of the only Anglo-Saxon kingdom left by AD 878?

Wessex

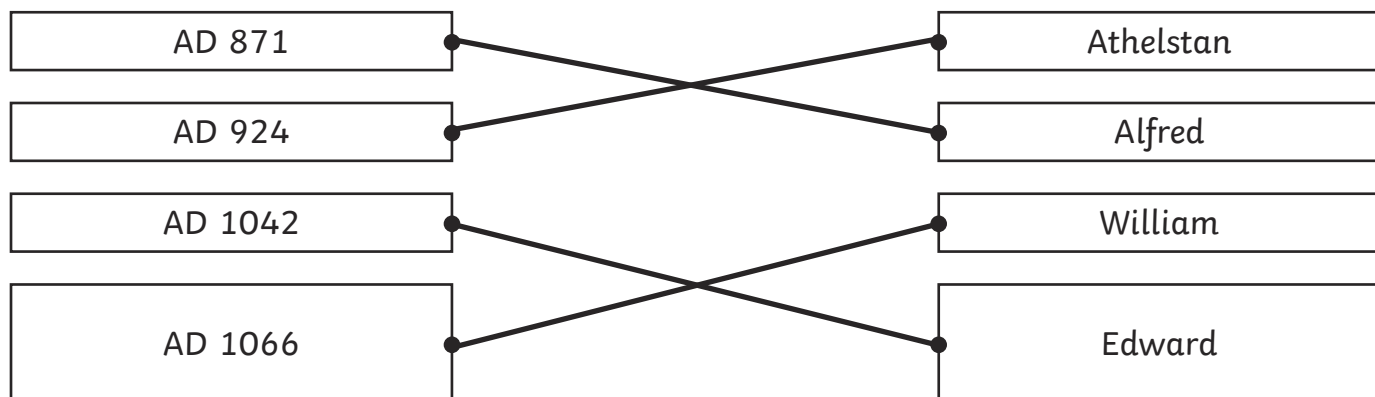
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- ☒ **The Battle of Edington**
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5. Which kingdom did Athelstan win back from the Vikings? Tick one.

- ☐ Wessex
- ☐ Scotland
- ☐ Kent
- ☒ **York**

6. Name the two people who fought Harold for the crown after the death of Edward the Confessor

1. **William of Normandy**

2. **Harald Hardraada**

7. Do you think King Athelstan was religious? Give reasons for your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Yes, I think King Athelstan was religious because in the text it says that he is remembered for building churches, showing that he thought they were important.