

### At this time ...

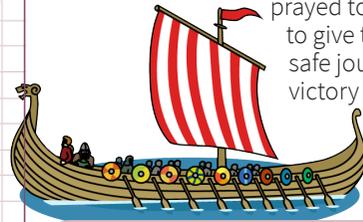
England was ruled by Anglo-Saxon kings, but across the sea, in Scandinavia, Viking tribes wanted to expand their territory. As they improved their sailing and navigation skills, they realised they could reach England. The Anglo-Saxon kings were caught by surprise – they weren't ready for the fierce attacks from Viking ships landing on their eastern beaches.



### FACTS

The Vikings began to organise raids by sea. They travelled in small fleets of wooden ships, each ship carrying about 40 men – if there was no wind, the men would row.

Although they were excellent sailors, any journey at sea was dangerous and Vikings prayed to their gods to give them a safe journey and victory in battle.



Longships were built with overlapping planks to give them strength in stormy seas.

Hi, I'm Hengrid. Being a boat builder is an important role in our community. We live by the sea and we use boats for fishing, as well as for travelling to trade or raid.



It is mountainous here, and good farming land is scarce. We will sail our new ship across the sea to an island where the grass is lush and green – our warriors will take the land we need.



## THE DRAGON SHIP

Hengrid rushed down to the shore. Today, he and his father would finish the dragon head of their new longship. He'd been learning to carve for three years, but this was the first time he had been allowed to work on anything so important.

His father was already at work on the boat, smoothing the dragon's neck with a rough stone. 'Today, Hengrid, you must give our dragon far-seeing eyes, so she can spy out our way over the sea to the new lands in the West.'

Hengrid picked up his tools. He said a prayer to Heimdall,

the god of good beginnings, and began to carve into the block of oak. The dragon's face was in his head: he just needed to make it real with his hammer and chisel ...

Hours later, an exhausted Hengrid stood by his father. The dragon's head looked alive: the mouth open and snarling to scare Viking enemies; the long eyes open to see over the treacherous waves. Hengrid knew he'd used all of his skills well.

'You've done excellent work,' his father praised him. 'When we travel to the new lands across the Western sea, our ship will be the leader of the fleet. We'll call her 'Look-Far' – she will spy out danger and keep us safe as we travel.'



We are here!





Read 'The Dragon Ship' and the facts; then try these tasks:

HISTORY KEY STAGE 2

The Vikings Britain in Viking Times

1b

Exploring and Raiding Viking invaders

Find the answers to these questions:

Why did Vikings pray to their gods before a raiding trip? .....

.....  
.....

Why did Vikings need boats?

.....  
.....

How were their boats powered? .....

.....  
.....

Do you think the Vikings were wrong to want new land in England?

Explain your answer:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Explain the skills that Hengrid and his father used:

.....  
.....  
.....

Explain why a dragon might be a good emblem for a ship:

.....  
.....

Something to talk about!

What other skills might young Vikings have learnt?



Draw a Viking ship at sea or design a figurehead for a viking boat:

