

At this time ...

Although the Viking and Anglo-Saxon nations had managed to co-exist for Alfred's reign, this wasn't to last. Alfred's grandson, Aethelstan, became King of Wessex in 925 and waged war against the Danes in England. He killed the Viking king, Eric Bloodaxe. All Vikings had to swear allegiance to Aethelstan and live under Saxon rule.



FACTS

Aethelstan was the first king of all England. He killed the Viking king, Eric Bloodaxe and the Viking people had to swear allegiance to Aethelstan. He treated them fairly and, over time, became a popular king.

The Saxons and Vikings learned to live as one people, and their laws, language and customs gradually became the same.



Aethelstan issued coins for all of England with his image on them. Everyone used money – so everyone knew he was their king!

Hello, I'm Eydis. Our family have worked hard since Da died fighting for Eric Bloodaxe in Mercia. My mother and I are tired of the fighting – everyday people like us just want to get on with our lives.



I am Ericsson. I feel very responsible for my mother and my little sister. I want to fight to keep our Viking way of life, but I can't defeat the Saxons on my own!



THE KING IS DEAD

'Eric Bloodaxe is dead!' gasped Eydis, falling through the door of their Jorvik shop. 'Mam, the Saxons are taking the city – they raided at sunrise. What are we to do?'

Her mother tried to control her fear. She didn't want to alarm her children any further. 'I think we should stay. Where would we run to? If soldiers come, stay in the shadows and be polite if you are spoken to. I will deal with them.'

Ericsson, Eydis's brother, took his mother's hand. 'I will defend our family,' he said. 'With my father dead, you can

depend on me. I am the man of the house.'

His mother pulled her hand away. 'Do as you are told, Ericsson, and stay back. You can't fight your way out of this. People say the Saxon king is a good man. Maybe he will make a better king than Bloodaxe and life will be more peaceful for us.'

At that moment, soldiers burst through the door. The children's mother greeted them, 'Welcome, brave men! We have food here. Leave us in peace and tomorrow there will be more.'

As the men grabbed apples and bread, they heard shouts out in the street and rushed out to rejoin the fighting. As quickly as they came, they were gone!



We are here!





Read 'The King Is Dead' and the facts; then try these tasks:

HISTORY
KEY STAGE
2

The Vikings
Britain in Viking Times

6b

Two Nations
The King of the English

Find the answers to these questions:

Who was the king who became the 'first king of England'?

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How did he achieve it?

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Why did the Viking people accept this new king?

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Why you think the king made sure coins were stamped with an image of his head?

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Explain why the children's mother chose to welcome the men:

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List three things that became the same for all people:

1

2

3

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Something to talk about!

Why is it important to have one set of laws for a whole country?



Draw a Viking coin with the head of Aethelstan on it.

