

## The Battle of Hastings

### Who's who in 1066

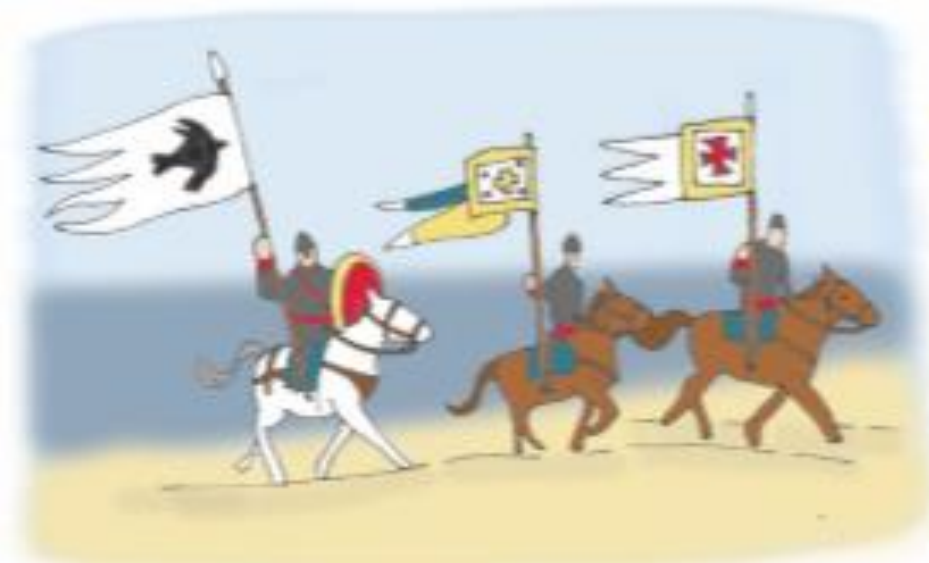
- Serfs – Most people living in England at this time were serfs. They had very little freedom and **owned** no land.
- Anglo Saxons – Name for type of people living in England.
- Edward the Confessor – He built Westminster Abbey and was king of England for 23 years. He died on 5<sup>th</sup> Jan 1066. He had no children and so left no **heir** to the throne.
- Harold Godwinson – A very **wealthy** Saxon Lord who was the **appointed** king by the **council**. He was a very **popular noble** and it was said that it was Edward's dying wish that he should be king (although there is no **evidence** that this is true). He was not of royal birth.
- William, Duke of Normandy – He was Edward's cousin and believed that Edward had promised him the throne. William had done a very **successful** job of ruling Normandy (France) and thought he could do an **equally** good job for England.



## Who should be the next king?

Edward the confessor grew old and died. There were no **firm** rules in Saxon England about who should be come the next king. If you could prove that you were **related** to the king by blood you might be given the throne. Of course, if you and your army fought and won, you could also **claim** the throne.

The Saxon Lords did not want William, Duke of Normandy to become the king of England and so they **supported** Harold Godwinson and made him king. William was **furious**.



William did not have enough knights to **invade** England and so he wrote to the Pope. William explained what had happened and that he had been promised the throne by Edward. The Pope believed him and sent more knights. He also sent a special banner to carry which

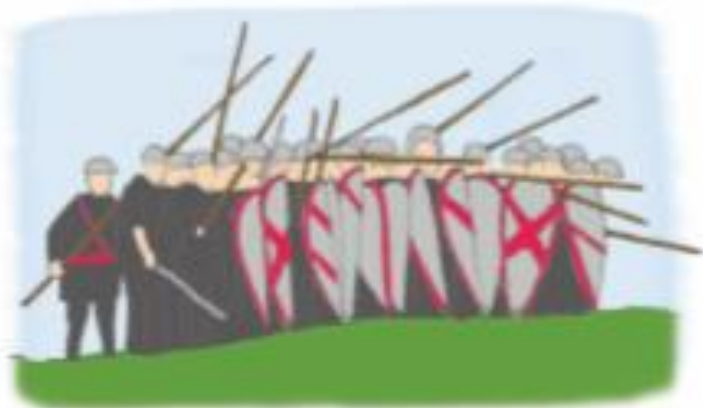
made the invasion a **crusade**.

William now had an army made up from Italian and French knights and soldiers. He and his army sailed across the English Channel and landed in the town of Hastings. Harold and his army rushed to meet them.



## The Battle

The English army lined up on top of Senlac Hill. The Saxon Lords locked their shields together at the front to form a wall. The English army thought that they had chosen a good spot. They would be able to see the Norman army coming.



At the bottom of the hill William's army was smaller but had a few big **advantages**. William's army had **roughly** 2000 full-time, well trained knights on horseback. These knights were the best, toughest, scariest

knights in Europe. William's army also had **archers** who could fire arrows up at the English army. Harold's army could only throw rocks and axes.

The battle **raged** all day from morning until it grew dark. William's army **charged** up the hill again and again. In between attacks, the archers fired arrows over the Saxon shield wall. Near the end of the day, Harold was hit in the eye with an arrow. The Normans had won. William was the new king of England.



- 1) Who did the Saxon Lords make king after Edward died?
- 2) How did William feel about this?
- 3) Who sent more knights to help William invade England?
- 4) Which English town did William's army land in?
- 5) Where did the English army line up and wait for William and his army?
- 6) Which part of his body was Harold hit by with an arrow?
- 7) Which army was the strongest and more likely to win?
- 8) In what three ways was William's army the strongest?
- 9) Why did William believe that he should be king?
- 10) How do you think Saxon soldiers felt when they saw the archers and knights?
- 11) Why has the author included a 'who's who' at the beginning?
- 12) 'William's army charged again and again.' Why has the author used repetition here?
- 13) 'The battle raged.' What does this make you imagine about the battle?
- 14) Who is the hero in this historical event? Why?

**Unscramble the letters to spell the word, using the clues to help.**

dgera (angry)

sacrhre (men with bows and arrows)

veadni (enter by force)

mcali (take as your own)

letaerd (family)

gseataadvn (be in a good position)

**Write the meaning of the words:**

firm

supported

crusade

roughly

charged

furious