

Date:

What were the main differences between William and Harold's armies?

**Fyrd:** England's part time soldiers, mostly land workers, would fight when called upon

**Thegn:** Controlled the Fyrd soldiers

**Housecarl:** England's professional, paid and full time soldiers, best equipped and best trained

**Archers:** Would usually start a battle by sending 1000's of arrows towards the enemy shieldwall

**Cavalry:** Soldiers fighting on horseback

**Infantry:** Soldiers fighting on foot





## Let's have a little chronology check up before getting to the Battle of Hastings...

**January 1066** – King Edward dies

**January 1066** – King Harold Godwinson is crowned

**Spring 1066** – William prepares to invade England

**Spring 1066** – Harald Hardrada prepares to invade

**Summer 1066** – earls Edwin and Morcar raise an army up north,  
King Harold raises an army to defend the south

**August 1066** – King Harold's army have been waiting all summer, he is running out of food and his part time soldiers need to go home for the harvest

**September 1066** – William's army is ready but he stuck due to the weather

**20<sup>th</sup> September 1066** – 500 Norwegian ships arrive, Harald Hardrada wins the Battle of Fulford

**25<sup>th</sup> September 1066** – Battle of Stamford Bridge...

**28<sup>th</sup> September 1066** – The Normans land on the south coast they begin burning and ravaging the area

**Early October** – Harold and his men march 300 miles in 8 days to London

**10-13<sup>th</sup> October 1066** – after some rest, they march to Hastings

**14<sup>th</sup> October 1066** – Battle of Hastings...



## King Harold's English Army

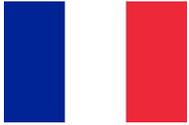
There were several different kinds of soldiers in the English armies. The best trained and equipped men were the housecarls, who were paid for by the king and the most important earls. At the other end of the scale were the fyrd, men who were usually farmers or worked in towns, but would fight when called upon. Some were nearly as well trained and equipped as housecarls, but most would have little armour and a few might not be armed with more than a knife or a club. Harold had about 8000 men (don't forget they had just fought a battle and marched hundreds of miles to and from the north)



Housecarl

Fyrd





## King William's Norman Army

William's army was made up of archers, infantry (armed mainly with spears) and cavalry (armed with spears and swords) giving them an advantage over large areas of land. William was an experienced and very successful warrior and his army was very well trained. William had approximately 8000 men, many were professional mercenaries too, so those figures are estimates!

Norman Archer



Norman Infantry



Cavalry (knights)



## What were the tactics of battle in the Middle Ages?

Armies in the Middle Ages fought using weapons that caused soldiers to fight face to face at very close range. Most armies had archers and slingers who would start the battle, but the decisive fighting would be done with spear, axe and sword. Both sides would form a shield wall, where men would stand close together and a number of ranks deep. Better equipped warriors at the front of the shieldwall would wear chainmail armour, metal helmets with a nasal piece to protect their nose.

Vikings favoured a round shape, Normans a kite shape and the English using a mixture of round and kite shaped shields. Most battles only lasted for a few hours, as the physical demands of combat would eventually sap the strength of even the strongest warrior.



# The Battle of Hastings – the armies

**Housecarls** – full time professional soldiers, well paid and well trained. They had chain mail armour, a shield, a double-edged sword and a battle axe. They wore short chain mail coats and a pointed helmet to deflect arrows.



**Fyrd** – part time, unpaid soldiers who were called up to fight. They had to give the king 2 months service every year. They fought with iron clubs, slings and haymaking forks. They could use the battle to increase their wealth. Had no protection unless they took some from dead soldiers at Stamford Bridge.

**Thegns** – led the fyrd. They had spears, shields and chain mail armour. They were noblemen who mobilised the fyrd.

**King Harold** – led his men and fought off another invasion at Stamford Bridge. Killed during the battle.

## The English army

**Cavalry** – each knight had 3 specially bred horses. The knights used special saddles that kept them in place. They had long spears, swords and shields. Trained to charge at the enemy. They had been promised pieces of England when William won.



**Archers** – fought on foot with short bows which were effective to 50 feet against chain mail. Wore no chain mail so they could move easily.

**Infantry** – wore chain mail armour and had swords, spears and kite shaped shields. They were well trained and well equipped.

**William of Normandy** – “He led his forces with great skill, holding them when they turned to run, giving them courage, sharing their danger.” (1073)



## The Norman army

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## The Saxon army

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## The Norman army

You will be given a copy of this information sheet. Your job is to read it carefully and give each part of the armies a score on your grid.

Scores are up to a maximum of 10 (1 = awful - 10 = unbeatable)

	Speed	Loyalty to their King	Effectiveness in battle	Protection	Weapons
Housecarls					
Fyrd					
Thegns					
King Harold					
Norman Cavalry					
Norman Infantry					
Norman Archers					
William of Normandy					

## Who had the best army and why?

### Possible layout: Intro -

General statement: (some background – Medieval warfare?)

Topic statement: (something about both armies)

Argument statement: (your opinion)

### Possible layout: Paragraph -

ATQ (answer the question) sentence:

Reasons why English army was good

Reasons why English army wasn't good

### Possible layout: Paragraph -

ATQ (answer the question) sentence:

Reasons why Norman army was good

Reasons why Norman army wasn't good

### Possible layout: Conclusion-

All things considered, it is clear that... this is because...

