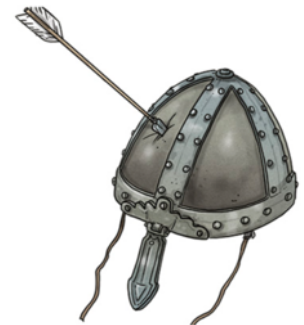


Why was 1066 such a dramatic year?

Heir: the next in line to succeed to the throne (in Medieval times a boy was favoured)

Witan: A council of the most powerful earls and bishops in England who made key decisions

Earls: the holders of most land, after the king, and important military leaders



Reading Task:

One of the most important skills a historian needs is the ability to read, and read around, a subject and use that Information to come to judgements or argue against what another historian has said.



Setting the scene:

Dawn's light on 15th October 1066 revealed a bloody sight. Thousands of men lay dead upon an English battlefield only a few miles from the sea. Among the dead were a great number of the most powerful men in England. One body was that of King Harold Godwinson of England, but he was so badly cut up as to be almost unrecognisable. Moving among the dead were Norman soldiers looking for armour and weapons, and English families looking for their men. From the sea had come an invader who had staked everything on a quick and successful battle, and had succeeded against the odds. But who was this invader? And why had he come?

Background:

Some months before, on 5 January 1066, Edward the Confessor, King of England, died with no children to succeed him (no heir). This posed a major problem from the witan, the council of important men in England, which included the earls, the greatest holders of land under the king, and the most important churchmen, the bishops. Edward's nearest male relative, Edgar the Atheling, was thought too young to be king at just 14, and it was the job of the witan to find a successor and have him crowned king as quickly as possible before England fell into anarchy.

Who should become king?:

In the days and months that followed Edward's death, three men claimed that the throne should pass to them.

Harold Godwinson claimed that Edward had whispered on his deathbed that he, the most powerful earl of England and a proven warrior, should be the next to wear the crown of England. This was portrayed in the Bayeux tapestry, a 70m long cloth embroidered in the 1070s on the orders of Bishop Odo of Bayeux, half-brother of William the Conqueror. Harold is shown talking to Edward on his deathbed, perhaps about who should be the next king.

William, Duke of Normandy felt he had been robbed of his inheritance however, for he was a distant cousin of Edward the Confessor and claimed that Edward had promised, in 1052, that he should succeed him. Furthermore, in 1064, Harold Godwinson had been shipwrecked off the coast of France, captured by the local ruler Count Guy and then rescued by William. William claimed that before leaving, Harold had sworn an oath over the Norman's holiest relics (objects with religious significance) that he would support William's claim to the English throne. These relics were thought to be the bones of saints. The Duke of Normandy felt that Harold had betrayed this promise and the scene is prominently depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry, for all to see.

Finally, Harald Hardrada, King of Norway laid his claim. Harald was known for his ability as a warrior, and was nicknamed 'The Last of the Vikings'. He had the support of Tostig, Harold Godwinson's brother, who had lost his lands in England and was out for revenge. Since Viking kings had ruled England before, Hardrada began to raise forces to invade England from the north-east while Tostig took his forces and raided the English coast.

History, Medieval Realms: Britain 1066-1485, Bob Pace 2007

We'll read through the text together with you taking it in turns. I will explain any words you might struggle with, let me know.



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You will need x3 highlighters / colours for this 1st task

Write the following key in your book

☐

Information describing the Battle of Hastings

☐

Information that shows how we know about 1066

☐

Information that shows each contender's claim

When you have finished highlighting the above, stick your text into your books carefully on the next clean page. It has been cut to fit nicely in the middle of the page...

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You now need to answer the following questions in **full sentences**. All information is in the text...

1. When did the Battle of Hastings take place?
2. Who was Edward the Confessor's nearest relative?
3. What happened to Harold Godwinson?
4. When did Edward the Confessor die?
5. What source gives us knowledge of 1066?
6. Who decided to make Harold Godwinson king?
7. Which 3 men laid claim to Edward's throne?
8. Who ordered the creation of the Tapestry?
9. What was William's claim to the throne?
10. What happened in 1064 and why was it important?
11. Who supported Harald Hardrada and why was this surprising?
12. What was Harold Godwinson's claim to the throne?
13. What was Harald Hardrada's claim to the throne?

Put the question number next to the text that helped you answer it...



What sources do we have from the time to help us work out each contender's claim?

The three claimants to the throne all felt they had a strong claim. How do we know whose claim was the strongest? As historians, we have to look at the evidence. A historian has to be very careful when looking at sources of information such as the Bayeux Tapestry. How do we know the source can be trusted? We need to ask, not only **what** the source shows, whether we think the information in the source is important, but also **who** produced the source, **when** it was produced and **why** it was produced. The answers to these three questions will help us decide how reliable and useful the source is.

What are the main considerations of a historian dealing with sources?



The Anglo Saxon Chronicles is possibly our best source of information from the period. The ASC's were written by English monks between **871 continuing into the 13th Century**. It might have been like the newspapers of the day?

How useful do you think the Anglo Saxon Chronicles would be for our investigation into the claims of the 3 men?

Harold Godwinson's claim:



The prudent King [Edward] had settled the kingdom on high-born men, on Harold himself, the noble earl.

Anglo Saxon Chronicles, c.1066

After Edward's burial, the under-king Harold, whom the king had named as his successor, was chosen king by the chief nobles of all England (Witan). He was crowned on the same day...

English Monk, John of Worcester c. 1100

William, Duke of Normandy's claim:



Edward loved William as if he was his brother or his son. He made William his heir and therefore send Harold [Godwinson] to William so that he could confirm this promise with an oath.

Many truthful and honourable people who were there say that Harold swore an oath - of his own free will. He promised that he would do everything in his power to make sure that after the death of Edward, William would become King of England.

William of Poitiers, a Norman soldier who later became William's priest c.1066

Harald Hardrada's claim




*Saga – a story who's main purpose is to entertain

King Harald [Hardrada] thought carefully about the earl's words [Tostig, Harold Godwinson's brother], and saw at once that there was truth in much of what he said; he also had a great desire to gain lands. Then King Harald and the earl talked long and frequently together; and at last he made the decision to go to England in the summer, and conquer the country.

Heimskringla, an anonymous collection of sagas* about the kings of Scandinavia c. 1225

Cut out your sources, don't stick until you've finished the task (asking and answering your (W,W,W,W,W) questions for each person) – You might have more to ask / answer for each one.

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Positives	Negatives

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William of Poitiers, a Norman soldier who later became William's priest c.1066

Useful	Less useful
William Poitiers was with William the whole time including in the battle making it useful because...	William of Poitiers is Norman and close to William so might be less useful because... Poitiers source was written 40 years later so might be less useful because...

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Positives	Negatives

If you have about half a page left on previous page, start your first source on that page

EXAMPLE OF SETTING OUT YOUR IDEAS

Useful	Less useful
William Poitiers was with William the whole time including in the battle making it useful because...	William of Poitiers is Norman and close to William so might be less useful because... Poitiers source was written 40 years later so might be less useful because...

Remember, **EVERY** source has at least **SOME** usefulness

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After Edward's burial, the under-king Harold, whom the king had named as his successor, was chosen king by the chief nobles of all England (Witan). He was crowned on the same day...

English Monk, John of Worcester c. 1100

Thinking about the key questions historians need to ask of sources (Who, What, Where, Why, When), try to ask these 2 sources some key questions and answer them too...

Eg: When were they written? Does this affect its reliability / usefulness?...

Overall, are these sources useful / reliable? Why?

Can you find positives and negatives maybe?

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William of Poitiers, a Norman soldier who later became William's priest c.1073

Again, ask this source as much as you can to evaluate its usefulness...

Eg: What is William of Poitier's relationship with William, Duke of Normandy? How might that affect the source's usefulness?

Overall, are these sources useful / reliable? Why?

Can you find positives and negatives maybe?

Harald Hardrada's claim

*Saga – a story whose main purpose is to entertain



According to Heimskringla, Tostig convinced Hardrada of his claim to the English throne by saying that the King of Norway before Hardrada had an agreement with the King of England before Edward the Confessor. The agreement was that if either died without children, the other would claim his kingdom. As Edward had not had any children, Tostig argued, King Magnus should have then taken over, and then Hardrada after him...

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Again, ask this source as much as you can to evaluate its usefulness...

Eg: Why was it made? Does that make it useful or not?...

Overall, are these sources useful / reliable? Why?

Can you find positives and negatives maybe?

Who has the best claim to the throne of England and why?

Make sure you compare and say why your choice has a better claim than the other 2!

Possible layout: Intro -

General statement: (some background to the question)

Topic statement: (who were the 3 contenders)

Argument statement: (Who has best claim? – maybe rank them in this statement?)

Possible layout: Paragraph -

ATQ (answer the question) sentence:

Reasons why a good claim

Comparing to the claim to the other contenders arguing why stronger

Possible layout: Conclusion-

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

