

Name: _____

Date: _____

Read the Article and Answer the Questions

VIKINGS

Vikings history is as extensive as the people it studies. The seafaring Vikings (in Danish, the *Vikinger*) were a group of people that came from the Scandinavian countries of Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. They made an enduring name for themselves in the 8th through the 11th centuries for being tactical warriors, smart traders, and daring explorers. In fact, they arrived in America 1,000 years before Columbus ever did, and archeologists have found some of their remnants scattered as far east as Russia. This is the true story of Vikings history.

Vikings History: The Viking Age—An Overview **Viking is a Verb, Not a Noun**

When the quiet monks on the Holy Island of Lindisfarne saw the dragon ships approaching, they didn't know what was coming. They were fully unprepared for the ferocity of the warriors, armed with sword, axe and shield. The attack and plunder of Lindisfarne, a rich and unprotected monastery, echoed throughout the next 300 years of European history. The Viking Age had begun.

Historians use the term the Viking Age to describe the turbulent expansion of the Scandinavian people into Europe and Russia. Beginning in A.D. 793 with the Lindisfarne raid, Norwegians, Swedes and Danes set to raiding. Any unprotected community was a target. Vikings attacked places all along the coasts of Scotland, England, Ireland, France, Italy and inland Russia. They terrorized, plundered, traded, explored and finally settled and farmed all over the lands they encountered.

Who Were the Vikings?

The true Vikings history is fascinating. Simply put, the Vikings were Norwegians, Swedes and Danes, men who were usually farmers, traders, blacksmiths, and craftsmen. For various reasons, they took to raiding towns, churches and monasteries. Many of the places they attacked were on the coasts as they were easiest to reach. With their swift and easily landed ships, the Vikings could quickly swarm over the communities, killing and looting, and just as fast

return to their ships and leave. They were gone before any defense or counter-attack could be made.

Strangely enough, for most of the men who went a-viking, it was only part time. When a Viking wasn't busy farming, planting crops, for instance, they left their farms and went raiding. They often returned in time for harvest in the fall. Raiding was very profitable, however, and many farmers became full time pirates and raiders.

The people called Vikings were also fearless explorers who actually reached North America, making them the first Europeans to discover America. They settled Iceland and tried to colonize Greenland. They were also shrewd and competent traders and merchants. They traded all the goods of the north – furs, amber, iron and timber – for all the goods of the south – silver, gold, silks and spices. And all along the trade routes, the Vikings traded in slaves.

Why Scandinavians Left their Homelands

Scholars debate why the Scandinavian people began to go raiding in the late 8th century. Most likely it was a combination of factors that lead to the Vikings setting off in their long boats to raid other communities.

Viking Ships and Navigation



The Vikings' advanced ships and navigation techniques provided the means and skills for sailing not only over open ocean out of the sight of land but also far up inland rivers into the interior of other countries. Viking ship technology made the fearful Viking raids possible.

Special ship construction techniques made the long ships and larger dragon ships versatile enough to sail great distances, carry up to 200 men, withstand rough seas while still being light enough to drag over land or carry through portages.

Impact of the Viking Age

The Scandinavians changed the history of Ireland, England, Russia and other European countries. They established new territories in Iceland, Greenland and temporarily, North America. From A.D. 793 to 1066, Vikings raided, traded, challenged, conquered and settled in

many lands. Popular movies and novels give you a glimpse into their lives, but usually show only a part of the impact these energetic people had on the known world of the time.

Source: <https://www.historyonthenet.com/vikings-history-overview-culture-history-viking-age>

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Where did the vikings come from?
2. How long did the viking age roughly last?
3. What did the vikings do when they weren't raiding?
4. What is something that the vikings traded?
5. How many men could a viking ship carry?
6. What is a main idea of the article?
7. What is a supporting detail of the main idea for number 6?
8. What is a second main idea of the article?

9. What is a supporting detail of the main idea for number 8?

10. What is more interesting: the Ancient Egyptians or the vikings?

