



# WORLD BOOK WEB

## The Vikings Scavenger Hunt

Learn about the Vikings, their way of life and cultural achievements that shaped European history.

1. Who were the Vikings?
2. Where were the Vikings from?
3. Where did the Vikings' take their conquests?
4. Why did the Viking Age begin?
5. Where did Vikings live?
6. What was the social structure of Viking communities?
7. Who were the nobles?
8. Who were the freemen?
9. Who were the slaves?
10. Was there any social mobility in Viking communities?
11. What was the *Thing*?
12. What occupation did majority of Vikings engage in?
13. What trades did Vikings work in?
14. In large communities, what did most Vikings make their living as?
15. Who ruled the Viking family?
16. What rights did women have?
17. Who lived in a Viking household?
18. What did family honour mean in Viking society?
19. How were Vikings laid to rest?
20. What type of possessions were buried with a dead Viking?
21. What types of food did Vikings eat?
22. What did Viking men wear?
23. What did Viking women wear?
24. Describe a Viking's house?
25. Who were the most important gods in Viking religion?
26. What role did each of these gods play?
27. What was a popular pastime of Vikings?
28. What recreational activities did Vikings enjoy?
29. Why did the Vikings become a seafaring people?
30. What addition improved the sailing ability of Viking boats?
31. Describe a *knorr*?
32. Describe a *long ship*?
33. How were the ships powered?
34. How did Vikings navigate across the seas?
35. What type of warriors were Vikings?
36. Who was the cruellest and most feared Viking warrior?
37. What strategies and tactics did Vikings employ in their conquests?
38. What were the targets of Vikings?
39. What weapons did Vikings use?
40. What did Vikings use to protect themselves in battle?

**To learn more about the Vikings see the *Related Information* tab located at the top of your screen.**

## ANSWERS - The Vikings Scavenger Hunt

1. Vikings were pirates and warriors who raided parts of Europe from the late 700's to about 1100.
2. The Vikings came from Scandinavia – modern day Sweden, Denmark and Norway.
3. The Vikings conquered or looted parts of England, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Russia, Scotland, and Spain. They settled in Iceland and Greenland. They also reached North America.
4. The Viking Age began during a period of rapid population growth in Scandinavia and the speculated reduction in the amount of available farmland. The shortage of land led many Vikings to seek wealth or a new place to live.
5. The Vikings lived on farms or in villages.
6. A king or chief ruled each Viking community. The people were divided into three social classes – nobles, freemen, and slaves.
7. Nobles included the kings, chiefs, and other people who had wealth or were descendants of honoured ancestors.
8. The freemen included women, farmers, merchants, and others who served the ruler or worked for themselves.
9. Many of the slaves were Scandinavians whose ancestors had been enslaved. Others were Europeans who had been captured in Viking raids and battles.
10. The majority of Vikings stayed in one class for life.
11. Each Viking community had a government council called a *Thing*. The council was made up of the community's nobles and freemen. It made laws, decided whether to go to war, and held trials to judge criminals. Its decisions were more important than rulings of the king or chief.
12. The majority of Vikings were farmers. They grew barley, oats, rye, and fruits and vegetables. They also raised cattle, goats, and sheep.
13. Vikings worked in metalworking, shipbuilding, and woodcarving.
14. In the largest communities, many people made their living as merchants. Viking traders sailed to most parts of the known world. They traded farm products, furs, various other goods, and slaves for such products as gold, silk, and weapons.
15. The husband ruled the Viking family.
16. Any Viking woman could own land or other property. A wife had the right to share in the wealth that her husband gained. Viking law permitted a married woman to get a divorce whenever she wished.
17. Three or more generations of a Viking family lived together.
18. The family was bound together by honour – if one member of the family was disgraced, the entire family was disgraced. The disgrace extended even to the family's ancestors. Conflicts between individuals of different families often turned to feuds between families.
19. Vikings were laid to rest in a boat burial where the body was placed in a rowing or fishing boat that was then buried.
20. Many of the dead person's possessions, including beds, jewellery, and weapons were placed in the ship with the corpse. In some cases, the person's dogs and even slaves were buried alive in the grave.
21. Most of the food, including beef, bread, cheese, and milk, came from their farms. They also hunted and fished for food. Other foods included deer, elk, seals, whales and wild birds. Fish included cod, herring, salmon and trout.

22. Most Viking men wore trousers that reached to the knee or ankle and over the trousers, they wore a long-sleeved pullover shirt that reached below the waist. They also wore leather shoes.
23. Viking women wore loose-fitting dresses that hung almost to the ankles. The dresses were made of linen or wool. They wore leather shoes.
24. Most Viking houses were made of wood or stone with slanted straw, shingles or sod roofs. Houses ranged from one-bedroom to three or more. Each house included a hearth that provided heat and light as well as a place to cook. There were few or no windows.
25. The important gods were Odin, Thor, Frey and Freyja.
26. Odin: the chief god, father of Thor and other gods. Lived in Asgard.  
Thor: ruler of the sky, god of thunder and lightning.  
Frey: god of agriculture and fertility.  
Freyja: god of love and fertility, ensured the success of a harvest and blessed a marriage.
27. Poetry and storytelling were popular among the Vikings. Favourite subjects included the gods and Viking battles.
28. For recreation, the Vikings especially liked rowing, skiing, swimming, and wrestling. They also enjoyed horse races and board games.
29. The sea almost surrounded the Vikings' Scandinavian homelands. As a result, water travel was the main form of transportation in the region.
30. Viking shipbuilders improved the sailing ability of ships by adding a keel – a long, narrow piece of wood that formed the backbone of the ship. The keel reduced a ship's rolling motion and improved the ship's speed. It also made it easier to steer the ship.
31. Knorr were trading ships and were about 15 metres long.
32. Long ships were warships that ranged in length from about 20 to 29 metres and were 5 metres wide. Many had carvings of the head of a dragon or snake on the prow.
33. At sea, the Vikings depended mainly on the wind and the ship's large woollen sail for power. On a river, rowers powered the ship. A warship had from 15 to over 30 pairs of oars.
34. Early navigators depended primarily on sightings of the sun and the stars to determine direction and approximate location at sea. By the late 900's, however, the Vikings had learned how to determine their latitude through a table of figures that showed the sun's midday height for each week of the year. They also relied on landmarks.
35. Vikings were brutal and fearsome. They killed women and children as well as men.
36. The berserker or berserk.
37. Most Viking warfare was waged by small raiding parties which ranged from 2 to 10 ships each with 30 raiders. Large-scale invasions involved hundreds of warships and thousands of fighters. They used surprise attacks and quick retreats so their victims had no time to defend themselves.
38. Small, poorly defended towns and isolated farms were the targets of Viking raids. Churches and monasteries were also favourite targets as they contained much treasure and were largely defenceless.
39. The Vikings fought mainly with axes, bows and arrows, spears, and swords. The broad axe had a long handle, a large flat blade with a curved cutting edge.
40. Vikings had a wooden shield, wore cone-shaped helmets and coats of mail to protect themselves.