

CE

History



ISEB

Independent Schools
Examinations Board

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**GALORE
PARK**



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Introduction

This book, *Common Entrance 13+ History for ISEB CE and KS3*, is for pupils in Key Stage 3. You may be learning about history at a preparatory school where you will be sitting the ISEB Common Entrance examination at the end of Year 8, or you may be learning about history in a mainstream secondary school. Whatever sort of school you attend, this book is for you.

This book is available as an eBook on our new online learning platform, Boost.

What is history and why is it important?

History is far more than a string of dates and facts about the past. It is about how people lived in the past, their hopes and fears, ambitions and disappointments and what drove them to make the decisions they did. It is about bravery and loyalty, discoveries and inventions, treachery and betrayal. What people did in the past, for good or for ill, has shaped the world and the country we live in today.

We can't (yet!) time travel and change what happened. We can't make the Saxons win the battle of Hastings or un-invent the steam engine, but we can interpret the past. In order to interpret the past, historians use **evidence**. Every age leaves evidence behind. This may be huge, like castles and cathedrals, or tiny, like coins and rings. Burials and buildings, paintings and photographs, letters and diaries all tell us something about the past and the people who lived there. Historians use the evidence that the past has generated to try to understand what it was like. They build their own **interpretations**. Historians' interpretations differ because of the different pieces of evidence they choose to use and which evidence they think most important.

Nothing in history stands still, and new pieces of evidence coming to light can make us change our minds. For example, most people believe that King Richard III killed the princes in the Tower. But what if a historian, sorting through dusty manuscripts, suddenly came across a letter from one of them that was proved to be genuine and was dated long after King Richard's death? We

would have to shift our ideas pretty quickly! That is what makes history so exciting.

In this book you won't just be learning about what happened in the past. You will be developing your skills of **analysis** as you **evaluate** different pieces of evidence to create your own interpretations. Sometimes there is no immediate right answer to the questions we ask about the past, and that is what makes history so interesting.

How is this book organised?

This book is organised into three parts, and each part has three sections:

- Part 1: Medieval Realms: Britain 1066–1485
 - Section 1: Leaders, the weak and the powerful
 - Section 2: Religion in the Middle Ages
 - Section 3: How did ordinary people live?
- Part 2: The Making of the United Kingdom: 1485–1750
 - Section 1: The Tudors: power and religion
 - Section 2: The Stuarts: religion, civil war and the Commonwealth
 - Section 3: Settling the Kingdom
- Part 3: Britain and Empire: 1750–1914
 - Section 1: Trade and empire
 - Section 2: Politics and change
 - Section 3: Changing lives

How do I use this book?

There are three main ways in which you could use this book.

- 1 Work through chronologically, from beginning to end.
- 2 Keep the parts in the same order but take the sections within each part in a different order.
- 3 Use the book thematically. You could, for example, work through all the section 3s, which look at the way people lived, and then go back and tackle all the section 1s which deal with leaders.

Notes on features in this book

Key words are shown in **blue bold** and are defined in the boxes in the margin.

Source

As you use the book you will see that there are a lot of sources for you to use as evidence. All the sources are numbered to make them easy to find.

? Some sources are accompanied by short questions (with a red question mark) to make you think about how to interpret them.

Did you know? Who? What? How?

There are also boxes labelled 'Did you know?', 'Who?', 'What?' and 'How?'. These provide interesting background information, as well as describing important people and concepts.

Tasks

You will find plenty of tasks. Some are fun ones, like designing a poster or planning an attack; some will ask you to use your skills of analysis and evaluation on different pieces of evidence; others will ask you to describe and explain events.

1 Some of the questions are marked with a blue circle, like this. These questions have been written in the style of those in a typical ISEB Common Entrance examination, so if you are going to take that exam it would be a good idea to practise answering some of them. Even if you are not taking the exam, try them anyway.

Now it's your turn. As you work through this book, remember that you, too, are making interpretations as you come up with your own ideas. Always back your ideas with evidence and, who knows, maybe you will come up with something no one else has thought of!

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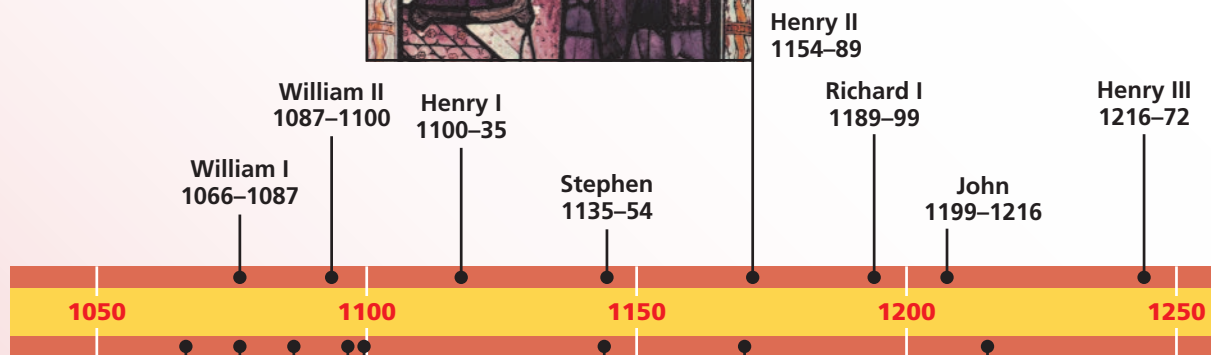
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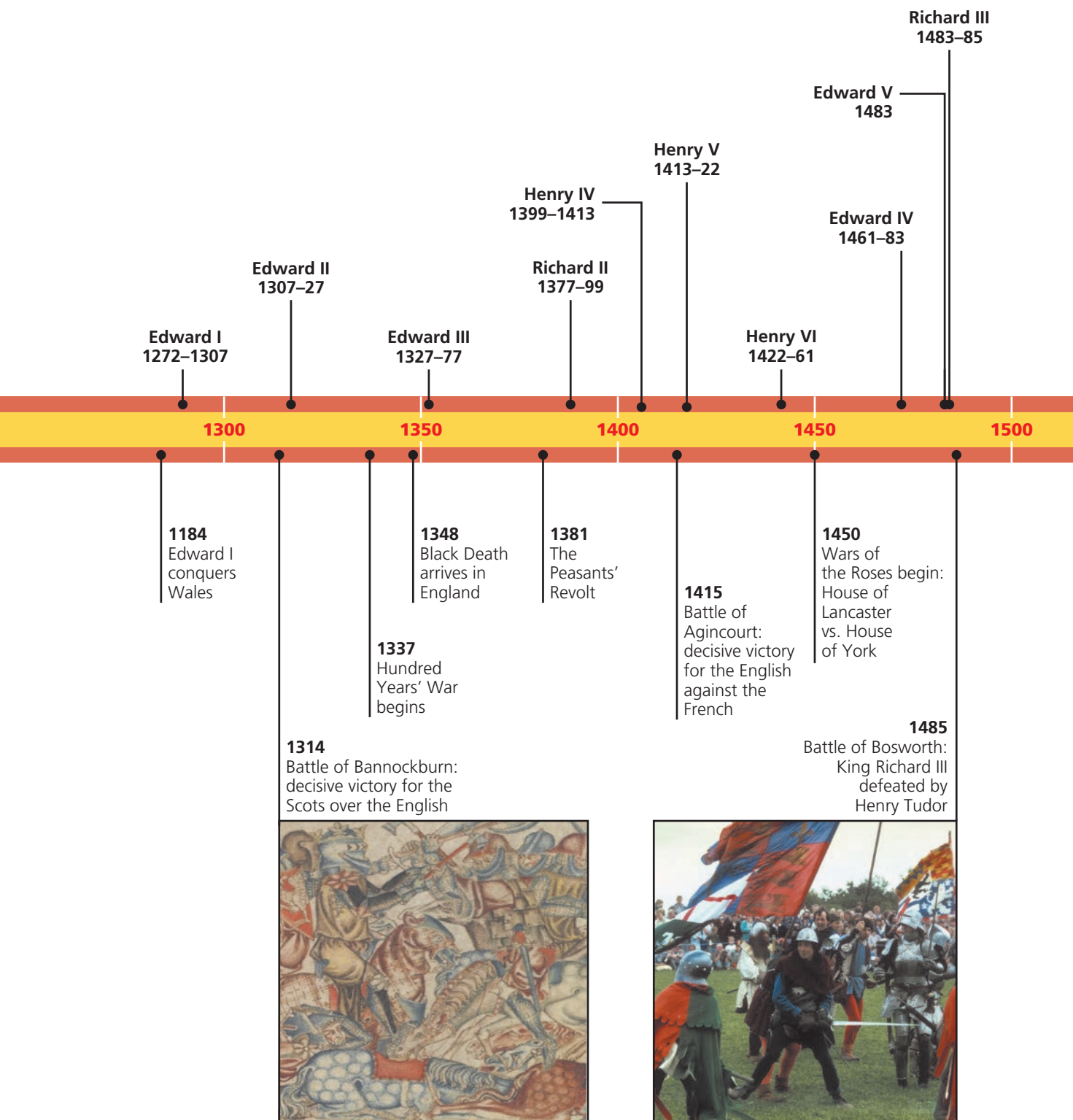
Medieval Realms: Britain 1066–1485



Events

- 1066**
Battle of Hastings: decisive victory for the Normans over the Saxons
- 1076**
Harrying of the North: Norman Conquest complete
- 1096**
The First Crusade begins
- 1099**
Jerusalem captured by Crusaders
- 1135–53**
Civil war between Matilda and Stephen
- 1170**
Thomas Becket murdered
- 1215**
Magna Carta signed between King John and his barons
- 1286**
Domesday Book compiled





Section 1

Unit 1

Did you know?

The Anglo-Saxons:

Originally came to England in the fifth century from the area which we now know as Germany. They pushed the Celts out of England and then defended England against the Viking invasions.

The Vikings:

Scandinavian raiders, traders and invaders. They ruled eastern England in the ninth and tenth centuries under the Danelaw. King Cnut, a Viking, was King of Denmark, England and Norway, 1016–35. By the eleventh century, Vikings were usually called Danes.

Who?

Harold Godwinson:

Harold's father Godwin, Earl of Wessex, had been the most important Anglo-Saxon in England apart from the King. When Godwin died in 1053 his son took over his job as Earl of Wessex. You can see how he got his surname!

Pope: The Pope was the leader of the Church. He lived in Rome and was very powerful indeed.

Leaders: the weak and the powerful

How did William and the Normans conquer England?

In 1066, a huge fleet set sail from Normandy, bound for England. The ships carried the soldiers, horses and armour of **William, Duke of Normandy**. He was on his way to England to press his claim to be the rightful king of England.

1.1 How strong was William's claim to the throne?

In January 1066, the King of England, Edward the Confessor, died. He and his wife Edith had failed to produce a child to succeed to the throne. **Anglo-Saxon** customs were not clear about how a successor should be chosen in this situation. The problem of who was to succeed Edward was made worse because, over the years, he had promised the throne to a number of people. Now the struggle to succeed Edward as king of England had come to a head. The two strongest claims for the English throne in 1066 were:

- **Harold Godwinson**, who was the most powerful man in England
- William, Duke of Normandy.

And there was a third contender:

- the **Viking** King, Harald Hardrada of Norway.

Harold Godwinson, 1053–66

The 27-year-old Harold Godwinson was made Earl of Wessex on the death of his father in 1053. For the next twelve years he was to be the most powerful nobleman in England. He was a brave and fearless warrior and brother-in-law to King Edward. In 1063, when the Welsh decided to invade England, the Godwin family led an army that crushed them.

Did Harold swear an oath of loyalty in Bayeux?

In 1064, Harold travelled to France. Why he did so is not known and what happened when he got there has caused considerable debate. It has been suggested that Harold was visiting William as Edward's ambassador. One account suggests that he was captured on his way to see William by the Count of Ponthieu. William then came to Harold's rescue. What happened next is the important part of the story. **The Bayeux Tapestry** clearly shows Harold swearing an oath to William (see Source 1). He is touching the relics of a saint. What the oath was

Who?

William of Normandy:

William's early life had been difficult, even dangerous. He was the illegitimate son of Duke Robert of Normandy and Herlève, the daughter of a tanner. (An illegitimate child is one born to unmarried parents.) Only eight years old when his father died, William twice had to run for his life when attempts were made to murder him. He became a successful but ambitious and ruthless ruler.

Did you know?

The Bayeux Tapestry:

The Bayeux Tapestry was probably made in Winchester. Therefore, it could be called the Winchester Tapestry. It isn't a tapestry, either, but an embroidery. It was stitched together in the 1070s, because William's half-brother, Odo of Bayeux, ordered it to be made. The Tapestry is the best evidence we have of what happened at the Battle of Hastings.

Tasks

- 1 Source 1 is from the Bayeux Tapestry. Do you think that the tapestry is reliable in telling us what actually happened?
- 2 Who had the strongest claim to the throne, William, Harold or Hardrada? Choose one of the three and write a short speech explaining why he should be king.

about, we are not too sure. But if it was an oath of loyalty then it meant that Harold had accepted that William should be king of England when Edward the Confessor died.

Whatever the truth, the claim that Harold had broken a sacred oath was later used by the Normans as the excuse for war. To break such a promise was seen at the time as a terrible crime against the Church and God. William portrayed his invasion of England as a religious crusade to punish Harold. He received the support of **Pope** Alexander II, which was very important.

William's claim, 1051–52

In 1052, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle tells that 'Earl William' of Normandy visited the court of his cousin, King Edward. The Chronicle does not tell us why he made the visit, nor what was said when they met. The Normans later suggested that Edward had sent Robert of Jumièges, Archbishop of Canterbury, to Normandy sometime in 1051 to offer William the throne. Whatever the truth, the Normans claimed that from this moment onwards William was the rightful heir to Edward's throne.

Source 1

A scene from the Bayeux Tapestry, made in the 1070s, showing Harold Godwinson swearing an oath.



A third claimant: Harald Hardrada

It might seem complicated enough to have two claimants to the English throne. But there was a third! He was Harald Hardrada, the Viking King of Norway. Why did he think he should be king of England? For 36 years, from 1016 to 1042, England had been ruled by Vikings. The last one, who was called Harthacnut, had promised that when he died, Magnus, King of Norway, could have England too. But that never happened.

When Harthacnut died, his half-brother Edward (the Confessor) seized the English throne. Now Magnus' son, Harald Hardrada, decided to resurrect his claim. Hardrada's claim to the throne was not strong but his armies most certainly were. He was one of the most feared Viking warriors in Europe. And to add to King Harold's problem, Hardrada was supported by Tostig, Harold's brother.

1.2 Why did William win the Battle of Hastings?

As King Edward lay dying in December 1065, the leading nobles of England gathered to discover who he would nominate as the next king. All of the sources, whether English or Norman, are clear about what happened next. On his deathbed, Edward nominated Harold to be his successor. On 6 January 1066, Edward was buried in his magnificent new Westminster Abbey and Harold was crowned the same day.

An attack from Hardrada

Harold's problem was that he faced two powerful enemies. In September 1066, Hardrada sailed a fleet of 300 ships up the River Humber and landed his army in Northumbria. At the Battle of Fulford Gate, the Vikings defeated an army led by Harold's brothers-in-law – Edwin, Earl of Mercia and Morcar, Earl of Northumbria – and massacred hundreds of experienced troops. In response to this defeat, Harold hurried north with his army, covering 190 miles in four days.

On 25 September, Harold surprised and defeated the Viking army at the Battle of Stamford Bridge.

Hardrada and Tostig were killed. Harold had won an outstanding victory at Stamford Bridge but his forces were tired. He was also in the wrong place, nearly 300 miles away from where the Normans were likely to land. Victory at Stamford Bridge made Harold confident and he decided to march south. Harold's army reached London on 6 October, having marched 190 miles in eight days. His elite troops, the housecarls and nobles (the richest and most powerful men in England) had ridden with him but he had left the rest of his fyrd to follow on foot. This made them even more tired; a factor that was to play its part in what happened next.

An attack from William

On 28 September, with Harold's weary army still marching south, William crossed the English Channel and landed without opposition at Pevensey. His army immediately prepared for battle with Harold. They wanted a quick battle; they had little food and were in enemy territory.

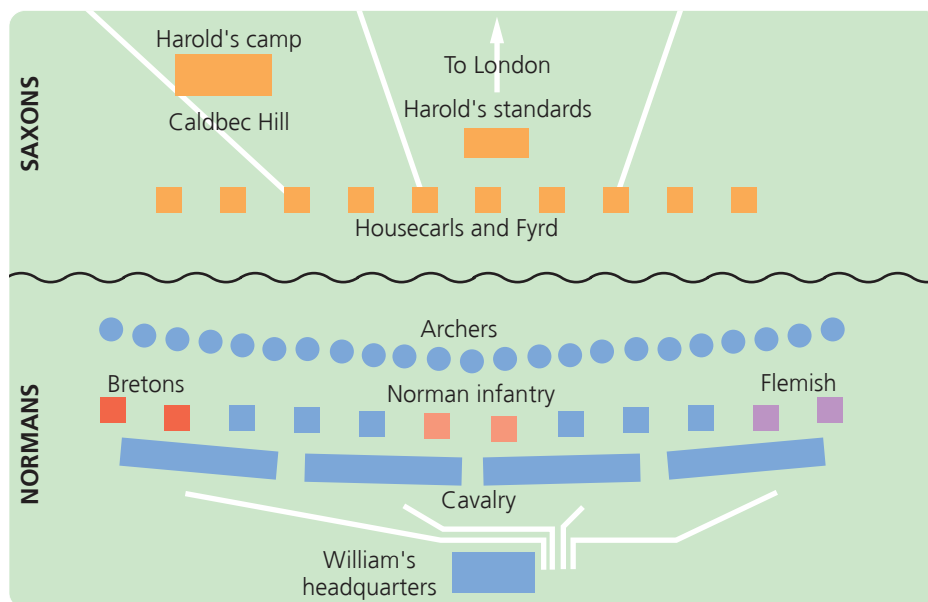
On arrival at the south coast with an army of some 7500 men, Harold decided where and when the battle was to take place. He chose Caldbec Hill on 14 October 1066. As the sun rose on the battlefield, the armies moved into position.

What?

Cavalry: Troops who fight on horseback.

Housecarls: The best troops, they were responsible for forming a shield wall to give protection against the Norman arrows.

Fyrd: These were the foot soldiers. Harold took up his position to the rear. The troops stared at each other across the battlefield.



■ Plan of the Battle of Hastings

The Battle of Hastings

The Normans attack

Suddenly a young man called Taillefer broke from the French ranks. He charged up the hill to the Saxon lines. The Saxon **housecarls** chopped him down. The battle had begun. The Normans fired their arrows into the Saxon ranks but the housecarls used their shields effectively and few were killed. Soon the Normans ran out of arrows and their archers were not equipped to fight hand to hand with the Saxon housecarls. First advantage was with Harold.

The Saxons have the upper hand

The Saxons now attacked. Harold's soldiers threw anything that they could find, including rocks and stones, at the soldiers below. William ordered his **cavalry** to counterattack. The Norman cavalry charged up the hill towards the shield wall. As they neared the Saxon lines, they threw their spears, then turned and returned to their lines. However, they too failed to make much of an impression. Many housecarls used heavy axes with which they cut down the Norman horses and their riders. There was no doubt about it; the Saxons really did have the upper hand.

William is alive!

Things got worse for the Normans. Breton soldiers on the left flank of the Norman army appeared to have lost their appetite for fighting and they began to retreat. In addition, a rumour spread that William had been killed. William had to do something – quickly. He took off his helmet and rode along the Norman lines to prove that he was still alive. This calmed the nerves of many of his troops.

William's plan

The Norman attacks had not succeeded but nor had the Saxons pressed home their advantage. Around 2 p.m. the battle paused. William came up with a

cunning plan to trick the Saxons into thinking that the Normans were running away, thereby drawing them down into battle at the bottom of the hill.

The Norman foot soldiers and cavalry were ordered forward. The cavalry charged up the hill, fought with the Saxons and then turned, pretending that they were running away. The Saxon army fell for the trick; housecarls and **fyrds** broke ranks to chase the Normans down the hill. This happened twice. It is not certain whether Harold gave an order for his soldiers to chase the Normans, or if they acted against his orders. Whether he ordered it or not, Harold now had good reason to be very worried; many of his best soldiers had been killed in these attacks.

Harold dies

The battle was now opening up. The Norman archers were able to pick up a number of their used arrows and began firing into the Saxon lines. With the housecarls engaged in hand-to-hand fighting, the shield wall had gone. The arrows now caused many more casualties. At some point in the afternoon, Harold's brothers Gyrth and Leofwine were killed. The crucial turning point of the battle had been reached. Harold had remained at the top of the hill, surrounded by his housecarl bodyguard. However, even they were unable to prevent their King being killed. News of Harold's death spread quickly among the ranks of the Saxon army.

William wins

Sensing victory, William ordered his foot soldiers forward. Many Saxon soldiers bravely fought on but some began to flee into the forests that surrounded the battlefield. The housecarls fought to the end but were killed to the last man. A Norman knight rode up to Harold's body and drove his sword into his heart. Harold had been killed. His banner showing a red dragon was in William's possession. The Normans had won.

Tasks

- 1 Using all the information on these two pages, copy and complete a diagram like the one on the right. Add at least one point to each arm.
- 2 'William won the Battle of Hastings because of his clever tactics.' How far do you agree with this statement?

William's army
was well prepared

William was lucky

**WHY DID
WILLIAM WIN?**

William was a
skilful leader

Harold made
mistakes

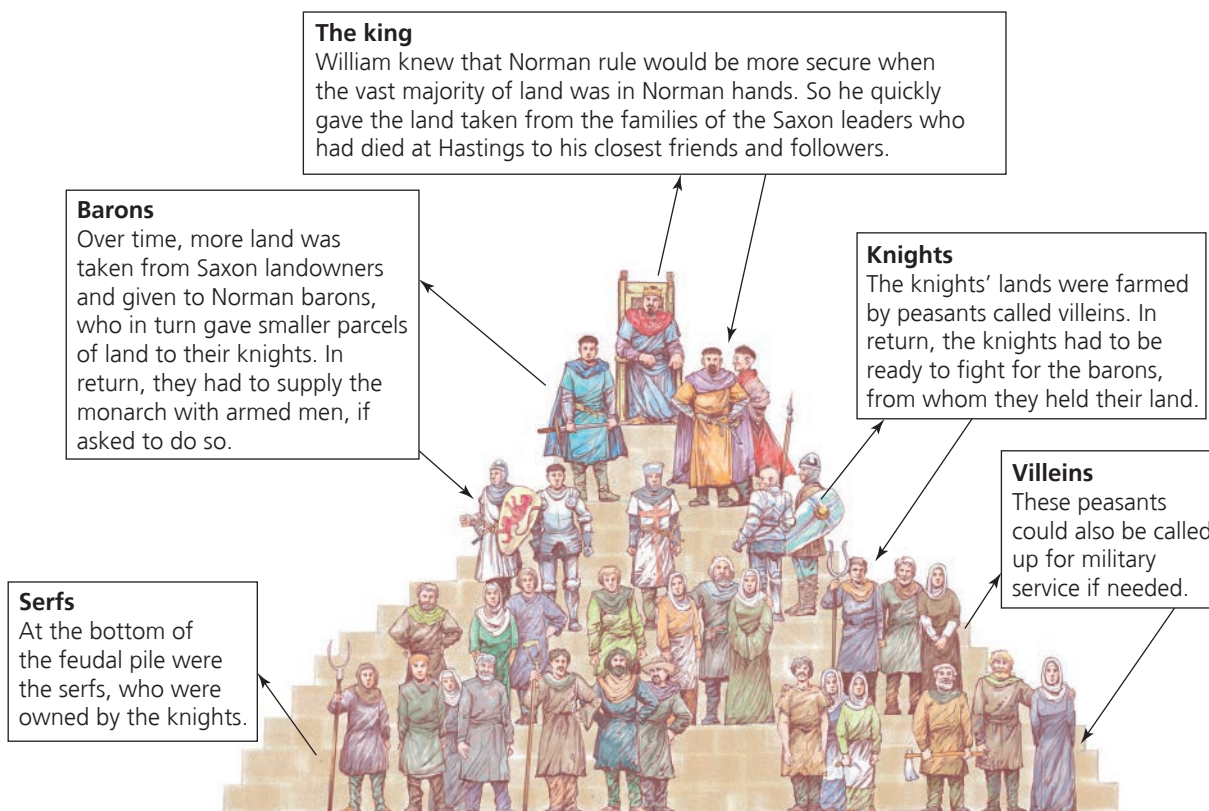
1.3 How did William gain control of England, 1066–87?

William was crowned King of England on Christmas Day 1066, in Westminster Abbey. London and the south east of England had surrendered to the new King, but much of the rest of England lay outside of his control. Here are some of ways William managed, over the course of his reign, to establish Norman control of England.

1 Castles

On pages 52–57 you can read how the Normans built castles. Such castles were William's main weapon in seizing control of England. Castles, churches, Norman soldiers and knights – they all became a symbol of Norman military power and control.

2 The Feudal system



- The feudal system. There were many more people on the bottom rung than this picture can show. The vast majority of people in England were villeins or serfs.

3 Violence and cunning

William often used violence to assert control, but sometimes he was more cunning. Here is an example. Despite William's victory at Hastings, some Saxon lords survived and the Danes threatened to invade England, again. In September 1069, a large army led by King Swein of Denmark landed in the north of England. The last great Saxon earls

What?

Hide of land: A unit of land measurement, consisting of the amount of land needed to support a family.

Tasks

- 1 Using books and the internet, carry out research on the Domesday Book. In writing up your findings, you should explain in detail:
 - a) why it was written
 - b) how it was produced
 - c) the problems encountered in its creation.

You should also include details on what it says about somewhere in the area where you live.

- 2 Describe two main events of William's rule.
- 3 Give an example of a key event in William's reign. Why was it important?

Summary task

Look back over your work on this unit. In less than 100 words, describe your impression of William as a leader.

rallied to Swein's cause: Waltheof of the East Midlands, Edwin of Mercia and Morcar of Northumbria. York was attacked and burned to the ground; the Norman garrison was butchered. Rebellion broke out elsewhere. At this point, William acted with considerable cunning. He successfully bribed Swein's brother to withdraw from York; William's armies then retook the city and ruthlessly crushed the rebellions.

What followed, the 'harrying of the North' of 1069, was to prove to be a turning point in the Norman conquest of England. Across the north of England, property was destroyed, crops were burned, animals were killed and thousands of Saxon men, women and children were slaughtered. Those who survived the slaughter died from starvation. The cruel plan worked; Saxon resistance was all but crushed.

4 Controlling the Church

Because the Church was such a powerful institution, William realised he had to take control of it. In 1070 he sacked the Saxon Archbishop of Canterbury, Stigand, and replaced him with the Norman bishop, Lanfranc.

During the reigns of Edward and Harold, appointments of officials to the Church in England had been made by the Pope. With Lanfranc in charge, the Church in England was brought under closer control of the king. In 1073, a new Pope, Gregory VII, was chosen. In 1075, Gregory demanded that William swear him an oath of fealty (loyalty) as King of England, but William refused. William insisted that from now on the king, not the Pope, appointed bishops and abbots.

5 Saxon systems

William kept many of the features of Anglo-Saxon government and administration but used them to his own advantage.

- The Saxon taxation and coinage system worked well. An example was the raising of a tax known as Danegeld which had been used in England for a number of years. William continued this method of raising money.
- The great city of London, so important to the wealth of England, was granted a Charter by William that allowed it to keep all of its old privileges.
- The Anglo-Saxon kings had consulted their nobles at a meeting of the Witan. William set up the equivalent Great Council, which the barons had to attend. All the important archbishops and bishops were required to sit on the Great Council.

6 Domesday Book

In 1085, the Vikings led by a new King Cnut (son of Swein) again threatened invasion. To try to find out how much taxation money he could raise for an army, William decided to carry out a survey of England. Royal officials travelled the land, collecting information on the size, resources and present and past ownership of every **hide of land**. The book, presented to William at Salisbury on 1 August 1086, became known as the Domesday Book. It is an excellent example of William's efficiency as a ruler.

Unit 2

Matilda or Stephen: who should reign?

Between 1139 and 1153, according to the **chroniclers**, 'All England was aflame' and 'Christ and his angels slept'. A civil war had broken out; the times were dark, desperate and very bloody. Was it really all because the barons wouldn't accept a woman as ruler of England?

Source 1

An illustration from a medieval manuscript showing the sinking of the *White Ship* in 1120 and Henry looking very sad.



2.1 How a shipwreck changed history

In November 1120, the *White Ship* was making a routine crossing from Normandy to England. In 1106, King Henry I had conquered Normandy and there was a lot of traffic between the two countries. There was nothing special about this particular trip, except that on board was William, Henry's only **legitimate** son and heir. He was part of a large group of about 100 nobles, their wives and sons. Chroniclers say that, because the trip to Normandy had been successful, most people on board were very drunk. They persuaded the captain to race the *White Ship* against some smaller ships to see who would reach England first. The sea was calm and the moon was bright. There was no reason to suppose that disaster lay minutes away. No one knows why (perhaps the crew were drunk, too) but the *White Ship* hit rocks and sank very quickly. Everyone on board was drowned except one man. And that man was **not** Henry's son.

Henry's problem

William's death left Henry with a huge problem. He needed to be certain that, when he died, there would be a peaceful handover to his successor. Although he had over twenty illegitimate children, his only legitimate heir now was his daughter Matilda. In 1120, she was a young woman of eighteen and married to the Holy Roman Emperor, a powerful European ruler. She was a stranger to England as she had been sent abroad when she was eight years old to learn the language and customs of her new home. Would the barons accept Matilda as their monarch? Henry doubted it.

Did you know?

Chroniclers wrote that, after hearing of the death of his son, Henry I did not laugh again for the rest of his life.

What?

A chronicler: Someone, usually a monk, who wrote down what he thought were the most important events. The accounts were called chronicles. Some, like the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, were written over hundreds of years by many different monks. Others were shorter and written by just one person.

What?

Legitimate: The word literally means 'legal'. A king's legitimate children were children born to the woman he was married to. Illegitimate children were born to women to whom he was not married. Only legitimate children could inherit the throne.

Medieval people expected monarchs to be physically strong: to lead their people into battle, to ride around the kingdom administering justice and quelling rebellions and to control and gain the respect of powerful barons. A woman simply didn't measure up.

Henry's solutions

Desperate for a peaceful handover to his successor, Henry came up with three solutions:

- His first idea was to produce more sons himself. His wife had died in 1118 and so, three months after William's death in 1120, Henry married again. His second wife was a young woman, Adelea of Louvain, but the marriage produced no children.
- His second idea was to persuade the barons to accept Matilda as Queen. Matilda's husband died in 1125 and she came back to her father's court. In 1127 he made all the barons swear they would support Matilda as their queen when he died.
- His third idea was to get some grandsons. He married Matilda off to Geoffrey Plantagenet, Count of Anjou. They had three sons: Henry, Geoffrey and William. The succession seemed secure. Or was it?

It was then that Henry made what seemed to be a serious mistake. Although he acknowledged Matilda, her husband and their sons as his heirs, Henry refused to allow them any sort of powerbase in England or Normandy. This led to furious quarrels between Matilda and her father. Most barons, loyal to Henry who was, after all, their reigning monarch, felt they had no choice but to oppose Matilda. This was not good news for her and built up trouble ahead.

Tasks

- 1 a) Describe, in three sentences, what happened to the *White Ship* in November 1120.
b) Explain why this created a problem for Henry I.
- 2 Read about Henry's solutions. Think of a fourth possible solution and explain why it should work.

2.2 Civil war!

Between 1139 and 1153, a terrible **civil war** broke out in England. It was so bad that law and order broke down completely.

Why did war break out?

What?

A civil war: This is a war between citizens of the same country. It could be a war between barons and the monarch, between two powerful families fighting for power or, as happened in England in the seventeenth century, between supporters of the King and supporters of Parliament.

King Henry I died on 1 December 1135. Would all the barons keep their promises to Henry and support Matilda as queen? Certainly not! Part of the problem was that Stephen, Matilda's cousin and Henry's nephew, was the richest baron in England and he was on the spot, whereas Matilda was in France. He moved quickly. On 22 December he had himself crowned King of England and recognised as Duke of Normandy. Many of the great barons rallied around him.

A furious Matilda, stuck hundreds of miles away in Anjou, France, decided to fight. She concentrated first on Normandy, which her troops invaded in 1136, 1137 and 1138. By 1139 she was ready to take on England. A terrible civil war broke out. Law and order collapsed. Barons swapped sides and illegally built castles to defend their lands. Who would win this terrible civil war?

Source 2

A picture of Matilda from a medieval manuscript.



Source 3

A picture of Stephen from a medieval manuscript.



Source 4

From *The Deeds of King Stephen* written by a monk in the 1100s.

Matilda sent for the richest men in the kingdom and demanded from them a huge sum of money. She demanded, not with gentleness, but with an air of authority. The men complained that they had no money left because of the war. At this, Matilda with a grim look, her forehead wrinkled into a frown, every trace of a woman's gentleness removed from her face, blazed into unbearable fury.

Source 5

An 1137 entry in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, written by monks describing Stephen's reign.

In the days of this King [Stephen] there was nothing but strife, evil and robbery, for quickly the great men who were traitors rose up against him. When the traitors saw that Stephen was a good-humoured, kindly and easy-going man who inflicted no punishment, then they committed all manner of crimes. And so it lasted for nineteen years while Stephen was King, till the land was all undone and darkened with such deeds.

What happened?

- Matilda had plenty of support in the west of England and made her base in Gloucester. But Stephen controlled London, the wealthiest city in England.
- Matilda and her armies advanced eastwards. They defeated Stephen at the Battle of Lincoln in 1141 and captured him. Many barons changed sides and supported Matilda.
- Matilda advanced on London, where Londoners were waiting to welcome her with preparations for her coronation and much feasting.
- London citizens sent a request to Matilda, asking her to reduce their taxes. Angrily, she refused. The city slammed its gates against her. The civil war broke out all over again.

Reaching a compromise

After almost 18 dreadful years, both Stephen and Matilda were ready to give up. The death of his wife and eldest son had depressed Stephen, and Matilda had come to realise she would never command enough support to enable her to rule England. The Treaty of Winchester (1153) was their compromise. Stephen would stay on as King of England for the rest of his life. When he died, Matilda's eldest son, Henry, would succeed to the throne.

This is exactly what happened. Matilda retired to Normandy and Stephen lived for eleven more months. After so many years of civil war, no one was going to argue about Henry's right to succeed. In December 1154, aged 21, he was crowned King Henry II in Westminster Abbey and began his reign in peace.

Did you know?

Henry I is said to have died from eating a 'surfeit of lampreys' – too many eels – his favourite food.

Did you know?

King Henry II, who reigned after King Stephen, was the first of a long line of **Plantagenet** kings of England. King Richard III was the last. Their name comes from the yellow broom flower (in Latin, *planta genista*) which was the badge of Henry II's father, Geoffrey of Anjou, Matilda's second husband.

Task

Using the evidence in Sources 4 and 5, explain whether or not you think Matilda would have made a better monarch than Stephen.

Summary tasks

- 1 Describe two main events of the civil war.
- 2 What do you judge to be the main reason why the civil war lasted so long? Explain your answer.
- 3 'The events of 1139–53 showed that it was hard for a woman to be a monarch in the twelfth century.' Explain how far you agree with this statement.

Unit 3

How successful was Eleanor of Aquitaine?

Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122–1204) was an amazing woman: determined, arrogant, forceful and free-thinking. She was the very wealthy daughter and heiress of Duke William X of Aquitaine, who died when she was fifteen. Her lands and wealth made her very desirable as a bride and within three months she was married to King Louis VII of France. She modernised the French court, turning it into something of a trend-setter in medieval Europe, with its dancing, poets, singing and courtly manners. She even insisted on accompanying Louis on the Second Crusade (1145–49), something unheard of for a woman of her status. Despite producing two daughters, but not the desired son, the marriage was not a happy one. When Eleanor was 29, the marriage was annulled, which means it was declared to have no legal existence.

Source 1

A medieval painting of a royal lady, believed by many historians to be Eleanor of Aquitaine.



3.1 Wife of Henry II and Queen of England, 1154–89

On 18 May 1152, just eight weeks after the annulment of her marriage to King Louis VII, Eleanor married Henry Plantagenet, Duke of Anjou, who was eleven years her junior. They were well-matched in wealth and temperament: this marriage was to be stormy. It was also a significant one. Henry was the son of Matilda (see page 16) and heir to the throne of England. When King Stephen died in 1154, Henry Plantagenet became King Henry II with Eleanor as his queen.

Managing England

Over a number of years, through their marriage, tough bargaining, clever alliances and some fighting, Eleanor and Henry had created a strong and powerful empire, the Angevin Empire, stretching from the Scottish borders to the Pyrenees in France.

The empire was so vast that Henry was often away from England, dealing with matters in Europe. During these times, he made Eleanor **Regent** of England, trusting her to run the country on his behalf. She dealt with routine business, making sure Henry's orders were carried out, approving of the acts of his ministers and judging disputes.

Source 2

Part of a letter sent from Eleanor to the tenants of Abingdon Abbey.

To the knights and men holding lands from Abingdon Abbey, greetings. I command that without delay you provide Vauquelin, Abbot of Abingdon, with the same services which your ancestors provided in the days of King Henry, grandfather of our sovereign lord; and if you do not do so, then the King's justice and my own will make you do so.

What?

Regent: A person appointed to run the country when the monarch is a child, away or ill.

Source 3

Part of a letter written by Eleanor to John FitzRalph, a London baron.

I have received a complaint from the monks of Reading, saying they have been unjustly dispossessed of certain lands in London. I command you to look into this without delay, and should it be true, to ensure these lands are returned to the monks without delay, so that in future I shall hear no more complaints about problems in law and justice. I will not tolerate their being unjustly deprived of anything that belongs to them.

‘Beware your wife and sons’

This warning was given to Henry II by Raymond of Toulouse, a powerful noble in southern France. Eleanor had given birth to five sons (William, who died when a child, Henry, Richard, Geoffrey and John) and three daughters (Matilda, Eleanor and Joan). Probably angered at the way King Henry was deciding how the Angevin Empire was to be divided between their sons on his death, fed up with his many affairs and weary of having to share the ruling of Aquitaine with him, in 1173 Eleanor joined with her teenage sons, Henry, Richard and Geoffrey, in rebelling against him. This was an astonishing development. Royal sons often rebelled against their fathers, but for a queen to side with her sons against her husband, the king, was unheard of in medieval times. Across the Angevin Empire, there were nobles who joined the rebellion against Henry, hoping to benefit if Eleanor and her sons won. It was the biggest crisis of Henry’s reign, but he survived it and in less than a year his enemies were asking for peace.

Henry was generous in victory as far as his sons were concerned. They all received money and Henry and Richard were granted castles too. John, who as a child of seven years old hadn’t taken part in the rebellion, was the biggest winner, gaining castles in Normandy, Anjou and England, as well as substantial amounts of money. The loser was Eleanor. She had been captured in the autumn of 1173 while trying to reach her sons in Paris. In 1174, Henry took her back to England and imprisoned her in Salisbury castle. A royal palace had been built inside the castle walls, so Eleanor had a comfortable imprisonment. She was moved between palaces, appeared with Henry at festivities such as Christmas and even sometimes took part in government. However, she always had guards with her and was never free for as long as Henry lived.

Did you know?

Eleanor is said to have invented built-in fireplaces because she found the north of France so cold. The first one was built when she planned and ordered the renovation of Louis’ palace in Paris.

Did you know?

When Eleanor became Queen of England, a chronicler described her as ‘By the wrath of God, Queen of England’. The chronicler, most probably a monk, is saying that God was angry at her becoming Queen of England.

Tasks

- 1 Look carefully at Source 1. Explain what impression it gives you of Eleanor.
- 2 Read Sources 2 and 3. What do they tell you about:
 - a) the kind of things Eleanor did as Regent of England
 - b) the ways in which she carried out her work?

3.2 Mother of two kings: was she the power behind the throne?

King Henry II died in Chinon, France, on 6 July 1189. From that day, Eleanor was no longer Queen of England. But that did not mean that she retired quietly. Far from it!

King Richard I's reign, 1189–99

Eleanor and Henry had five sons. Their eldest son, William, died as a child and their second son, also called Henry, was killed fighting in France. The throne of England therefore passed smoothly but somewhat unexpectedly to their third son, Richard, who at the time was in France.

Source 4

From *A History of Britain* by Simon Schama, published in 2000.

There were many, like Eleanor now in her seventies, who greeted the death of Henry II with dry eyes. For her, as for many, it was an occasion for rejoicing. When Richard, with his intensely blue eyes and red-gold hair, with his character formed by Eleanor, was finally seated on the throne, she could once again assert herself in the business of the state.

What?

The Third Crusade, 1189–92: An attempt to reconquer the Holy Land following the capture of Jerusalem by Salah al-Din.

Source 5

A portrait of Berengaria, engraved in the nineteenth century.



One of the first things Richard did when he became King was to send orders to England that his mother should be released from her royal prison and that she should act as Regent of England until he was ready to take over his kingdom. His messenger arrived in Salisbury, only to find that Eleanor had already demanded her freedom and had ridden off to Westminster in order to receive, on Richard's behalf, oaths of loyalty from many lords. She then travelled through southern England, dispensing justice and carrying out Richard's wishes. This made sure that, although Richard was virtually unknown in England, he was welcomed with enthusiasm when he landed in Portsmouth in September 1189.

Between 1189 and 1192, Richard was away from England, fighting in the **Third Crusade**. While he was absent, Eleanor had a strong influence over the ways in which England and the rest of the Angevin Empire was governed. When she was travelling in Europe, Eleanor often intervened to defend Richard's lands, managing her army and her estates in Aquitaine. She even found time to find Richard a wife: Berengaria of Navarre. Richard and Berengaria married in Limassol, Cyprus, on 12 May 1191 while he was taking part in the Third Crusade. Berengaria was the only English queen never to set foot in England.

Dreadful news came in 1192. On his way back from the Crusade, Richard was seized near Vienna by the Duke of Austria and was handed over to the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry VI. Henry demanded that the English pay a ransom for the release of their King. The ransom was set at 34 tons of gold – the equivalent of three times the annual income of the Crown. Eleanor set to with all speed, working with the government to raise the money from a country that had already been taxed heavily to pay for Richard's crusade. The churches and monasteries were stripped of their wealth; freemen were forced to contribute a quarter of their

annual income, priests one-tenth of theirs, and the poor gave what they could. Richard's continental subjects were also forced to contribute.

Eventually the sum was raised. Eleanor herself, along with a large party of nobles and officials, travelled to Mainz in Germany to hand over the ransom money to Henry VI. After a lot of complicated negotiations, Richard was finally released on 4 February 1194. Not everyone was delighted. Philip of France sent a message to John, Richard's remaining brother, saying 'The devil is out. Look to yourself'.

In March 1199, Richard was hit in the shoulder by a crossbow bolt while besieging a castle in Limousin, France. The wound turned gangrenous and Eleanor, who rode hard for over 100 miles across France, was at his bedside when he died.

King John's reign, 1199–1216

Source 6

An image of Eleanor on her tomb in the Abbaye Royale de Fontevraud. She was buried next to her husband, King Henry II.



John was accepted in England as King. However, it was by no means certain that all the Angevin Empire in France would agree to have John as their ruler. Mostly, they preferred Arthur, John's nephew and Eleanor's grandson. Eleanor, now nearly eighty, negotiated a smooth takeover for John. Part of the negotiations involved an agreement that Louis, King Philip of France's heir, would be married to one of John's nieces. Undaunted, Eleanor travelled to Castile to select the girl, choosing her granddaughter Blanche. Later, in 1201, war broke out between John and Philip. Eleanor was besieged in her castle by Arthur, and rescued by John who captured and later, killed him (see page 24).

Exhausted, Eleanor retired to Fontevraud, near Chinon in Anjou, her favourite religious community, where older aristocratic women went for spiritual comfort. She died there in 1204, aged 82.

Tasks

- 1 What do you find most interesting about Eleanor's life? Why?
- 2 Compare Eleanor's life and career with those of Matilda (page 16). Matilda was Eleanor's mother-in-law. In what ways was Eleanor similar to, and in what ways different from, Matilda?

Summary tasks

- 1 **a** Describe the main events of Eleanor's life.
- b** What do you judge to be the most significant event in Eleanor's life? Explain your answer.
- c** 'Eleanor was a failure as a queen.' Explain how far you agree with this statement.

Hint: *Think about the things she did that ended well and the things she did that ended badly.*

Unit 4

Were King John's problems of his own making?

For a monarch to control England, he or she needed the support of the barons; they ran the country and even raised money for the monarch. King John, who succeeded to the throne in 1199 when his brother Richard died, fell out with his barons. In 1215, John was forced to sign what was known as Magna Carta. Ever since, he has had the reputation of being a bad king. But is that judgement fair and were John's problems entirely of his own making?

The Angevin Empire

When John became King of England in 1199, he also inherited the Angevin Empire. However, the Empire was not automatically his. To take possession of the French part of the Empire he had to promise to serve the King of France. But, as suggested in the previous unit, the current King of France, Philip II, and the French barons did not want John. They preferred his nephew Arthur.

John's first task was to get himself accepted as King by Philip II of France. Luckily his mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine (see pages 20–23), helped him. She persuaded Philip that John should be King, not Arthur. In return, John pledged loyalty to Philip and agreed to be his vassal – that is, to serve Philip. So in 1200, John took control of his lands in France; his reign had got off to a good start.

4.1 What problems did King John face?

1 Marriage

In 1200, John also married Isabella of Angoulême. This was a useful move because control of Angoulême, a region of France, would help John to keep a firm grip on his Angevin Empire. But the marriage caused problems. A powerful French baron called Hugh, Lord of Lusignan, had already been promised that Isabella would be his wife. When Hugh heard that John had married her, he complained to King Philip of France. He ordered John to appear before a French court to answer for his actions. John refused to appear before the court and, in 1202, Philip ordered that John should lose his lands in France.

2 Murder

Philip made John's nephew Arthur Lord of Aquitaine, Maine and Anjou and declared war against John. At first, John was the more successful military leader and he even took Arthur prisoner. What happened next did great damage to John's reputation. In 1203, John ordered that Arthur be murdered. Arthur was stabbed to death, a stone was tied to his body and it was thrown into the River Seine. This murder caused widespread disgust among the barons in both France and England. Many French barons became supporters of Philip in his war against John.

3 Taxes on the barons

Things now went from bad to worse for John. In 1204, his mother Eleanor of Aquitaine died so he lost control of Aquitaine. King Philip conquered Normandy, so he lost that region too. John spent most of his reign trying (and mostly failing) to win back these French lands. He had three big problems.

- Richard had spent much of his reign fighting Crusades in the Holy Land (see pages 70–73). He ran up big debts paying for these wars, so money was short.
- Normally the barons could be relied on to provide a king with an army, but in this case they refused because they did not trust John and the English barons did not think that the French lands were important.
- If John could not get an army from the barons then he needed to recruit whoever would fight for him. So he recruited **mercenaries**. These mercenaries were expensive and they were not really loyal to John.

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