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AQA
GCSE
History

NORMAN ENGLAND

1066–c1100



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1.3 William establishes control

FOCUS TASK

How did William establish control of England?

As you work through this topic gather information and examples under these headings:

- **Terror:** for example, the use of violence to crush rebellions
- **Military presence:** for example, intimidating people by stationing soldiers or castles nearby
- **Patronage:** for example, giving land and positions of power to people to ensure their loyalty
- **Concessions:** for example, compromising or giving enemies what they want to make them support you
- **Legality:** how William tried to show that he was the legal and rightful king of England

Make a large chart divided into five sections to record your findings.

FOCUS

Winning the Battle of Hastings and killing King Harold was only the first step in William's attempt to conquer England. In Chapter 1.3 you will study:

- How William progressed from Hastings to be crowned King.
- How William dealt with rebellions at the start of his reign, with a particular focus on the Harrying of the North.
- How the rebellions affected William's approach to ruling England.
- How William used castles to maintain his power.
- The succession of the throne from William I to his sons, William Rufus and Henry I.

At the end you will write a summary of the techniques used by William to conquer England.

Aftermath

When dawn broke on 15 October it revealed the horrific carnage on the battlefield at Hastings. William of Poitiers wrote, *Far and wide the earth was covered with the flower of the English nobility and youth, drenched in blood*. Harold had been killed, along with his brothers Gyrth and Loefwine. The Normans had also lost many men. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle acknowledged that there was great slaughter on both sides.

William buried the Norman dead but left the bodies of the English on the battlefield – with one exception. The body of Harold, possibly identified by his common-law wife, Edith Swan-Neck, was buried.

William had killed the reigning King of England but that did not mean he would automatically take the throne. He only controlled a tiny portion of the kingdom around Pevensey. Over the following months he gradually imposed control on the rest of the country.

Step 1 – From Hastings to London – William clears the path for coronation

William waited at Hastings after the battle but the main English earls and lords did not surrender to him. They still wanted Edgar as their king. So, after a fortnight, William left a GARRISON of soldiers at Hastings while he went to Romney to punish the town for their role in killing Normans. William of Poitiers says, 'he inflicted such punishment as he thought fit for the slaughter of his men who had landed there by mistake'. He probably burned much of the town and killed key people – although there is no detailed evidence of what happened.

Dover was the next target, which swiftly surrendered knowing how William had dealt with Romney. William refortified the town and left a garrison to defend his position. His next stop was Canterbury. Fearful of violent attack, the citizens promised to be loyal to William.

At the same time, he sent troops to Winchester to take control of this important city which housed the royal TREASURY and also confirmed the surrender of Queen Edith, Edward the Confessor's widow. Harold's sons fled to Ireland.

William finally headed for London in late November.

PROFILE

Earl Wulfstan

Son of the Earl of Northumbria, one of the most powerful Anglo-Saxon earls during Edward the Confessor's reign.

- Made Earl of Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire in 1065.
- Submitted to William after Hastings and kept his title and land.
- Joined in the northern rebellion of 1069, with King Swein and Edgar Aetheling.
- In 1070 swore loyalty to William again and married William's niece. His title was restored.
- In 1072 made the Earl of Northampton and Northumbria.
- Joined the revolt of the earls in 1075 and was subsequently arrested and sentenced to death.
- The only English earl to be executed under William I.

While William was terrorising the towns of Kent, the English were deciding what to do next. They did not want William as their king. There was an alternative, Edgar Aetheling, Edward the Confessor's nearest relative. He was supported by Archbishop Ealdred and most of the remaining English nobles (including Earls Edwin and Morcar), as well as many people in London.

However, concerns about Edgar's age and ability to rule effectively, meant that he soon lost support. In addition, once William started his violent suppression of opposition in the south, the English nobles were scared. They saw that the best way of retaining some of their power was to back William. So in December Edgar, along with many English nobles, travelled to Berkhamsted and swore oaths of loyalty to William. Even the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle stated that they had no choice but to do this and were foolish not to have done it earlier.

On Christmas Day, William was crowned King of England at Westminster Abbey by the Archbishop of York, Ealdred.

SOURCE 1

William's coronation depicted in the chronicle of Matthew Paris.



Step 2 – Dealing with the powerful English lords

William claimed he was the rightful heir to the throne – that he had been promised the throne by Edward the Confessor. So to help prove the **LEGITIMACY** of his claim to England he tried to ensure there was continuity from Edward the Confessor's reign. **ROYAL WRITS** continued to be written in English until the 1070s and Stigand remained as Archbishop of Canterbury until 1070.

English lords who pledged loyalty to him were allowed to keep their land. Earls Edwin, Morcar and Waltheof (see Profile) were allowed their titles and land. Edgar Aetheling was also given land. Waltheof married William's niece and there was discussion of a marriage between Earl Edwin and William's daughter. Others were able to buy land from him. For example, Gospatric paid a great deal to become Earl of Northumbria in 1068.

However, William dealt harshly with those who had died at Hastings. He seized their land, disinherited their families and gave it to Normans who had fought for him. In this way he established a network of loyal Normans all across the country to ensure he was in control.

In March 1067 he felt secure enough to return to Normandy. He left England in the hands of his half-brother Odo, the Bishop of Bayeux and William Fitz Osbern who became Earl of Hereford (see Profiles on page 22). However, to be extra sure he took some of his potential enemies with him to Normandy so he could watch them closely. This included Archbishop Stigand, Edgar Aetheling, and Earls Edwin, Morcar and Waltheof.

THINK

- 1 What is happening at each of the numbered points in Source 1?
- 2 What actions did William take in the weeks and months after his victory at Hastings to make the English submit to his rule? Use the text on this page to add evidence and examples to sections 1 (Terror) and 2 (Military presence) of your chart.
- 3 Add notes to section 3 of your diagram about the use of patronage. You will also find something here for legitimacy.

PROFILE

William Fitz Osbern

William the Conqueror's cousin and one of his most trusted Lords.

- A staunch supporter of the Norman invasion of England, who fought with William at the Battle of Hastings.
- Made Earl of Hereford in 1067 and placed in charge of areas which the Normans did not fully control.
- Left in charge of England along with Bishop Odo in 1067 when William returned to Normandy.
- Helped put down rebellions in the south west in 1068.
- Put in charge of the castle at York early in 1069.
- Killed at the Battle of Cassel, in France, 1071.

PROFILE

Bishop Odo



William's half-brother who ruled England when William was in Normandy.

- Bishop of Bayeux, Normandy. Probably the person who commissioned the Bayeux Tapestry.
- Odo was not a religious man and gained his position due to his family connections.
- Fought at the Battle of Hastings.
- Made Earl of Kent in 1067 and trusted to safeguard the south east of England against internal and external threats.
- Tried for fraud in 1076, he lost some land and wealth. Imprisoned in 1082 and released in 1087 by William II.
- Rebelled against William II in favour of Robert Curthose, William I's eldest son.
- Became Curthose's adviser and died on his way to the Holy Land in 1097.

Step 3 – Dealing with early revolts

Despite William's attempt to win over the leading English earls, most of the English hated Norman rule. The Normans were foreign invaders taking over a proud country with a strong identity. Wherever they went the Normans built castles, or in many cases forced the English to build them for them. They started collecting taxes to pay for building the castles and to pay the Norman soldiers. English lords killed at Hastings were **DISINHERITED**, so many people in England got a new Norman lord. William's deputies Odo and Fitz Osbern were very unpopular as they supervised these changes and also allowed violence, including plunder and rape, to take place.

Unrest was inevitable. During 1067 small local risings took place. Normans were murdered by resentful Englishmen. But over the following two years rebellions against Norman rule became more serious (as you can see from Figure 2).

William changes his strategy

William had successfully seen off rebellions in many parts of the country but these rebellions ended William's idea of including English nobles in his government. He had hoped to show that there was continuity from Edward's reign to his own to make his claim seem more rightful. But this had not prevented rebellion. William knew by this point that trying peaceful tactics was not working.

The fact remained that the Normans were foreigners. They were not welcome in England and certainly not trusted. Castles and taxes were resented as was the loss of land to Norman lords. These measures encouraged the next phase of rebellion – perhaps the English no longer felt they had anything to lose. And the next rebellion gave William the excuse he may have been looking for to violently crush English rebellions.

FIGURE 2

The main rebellions against Norman rule 1067–1069.

1067 The Welsh Borders

*The Normans lost many men when they attacked Herefordshire, which was controlled by Eadric 'the wild'. Eadric was joined by Bleddyn and Riwallon, two Welsh kings. They took a great amount of **PLUNDER** but could not gain control of the borders and returned to the relative safety of Wales.*

1068 The south west

*The city of Exeter refused to swear loyalty to William. There were two reasons for this. Many people were unhappy at the heavy taxes being **LEVIED** by the Normans and others were supporters of the Godwins. Harold Godwinson's mother, Gytha, was living in the south-west. She plotted with other surviving members of the Godwin family to challenge William.*

*This threat was serious enough to bring William back to England to deal with it personally. He **BESIEGED** Exeter, attempting to take the city by force and undermine the walls. The town surrendered after 18 days (after the escape of Gytha and others in the pro-Godwin camp). The English lords gave in to William (although many in the town did not want to give in) and may have been taxed less harshly as a result. On this occasion William was conciliatory: he did not punish them and did not tax them harshly. This may have been a tactic to win support in the south west. He also constructed a castle in the city and left the city guarded by his half-brother, Robert of Mortain, Earl of Cornwall and his soldiers. He then went to deal with minor rebellions in Bristol and Gloucester.*

However, there were further problems in the south west. Godwinson's sons, who had fled to Ireland after their father's death at Hastings, attempted to invade in both 1068 and 1069. They were defeated on both occasions. During the second, significantly, Exeter refused to support them. This was partly due to the presence of the castle and garrison there and is evidence that the castle building programme was effective.

Step 4 – The Harrying of the North

The north had always been a difficult area to control, even for the Anglo-Saxon kings. There had already been trouble due to the unwise appointment of Copsig in Northumbria. Several dangerous rivals also remained free, either in the north of England or Scotland. In 1069, William decided to appoint a new earl to improve his control over the area. Earl Robert Cumin travelled north with an army numbering in the hundreds. He allowed his men to loot and kill and travelled to Durham. The Northumbrians fought back.

This started a general uprising which encouraged the return of Edgar Atheling and Gospatric amongst others. They joined with the locals and led an attack on York. The Norman sheriff sent William a message begging for help to avoid surrender. William acted promptly, put down the rebellion and built a second castle in York. William Fitz Osbern was placed in charge – this reflected how seriously William took this uprising.

SOURCE 3

Simeon of Durham, a local chronicler.

At first light the Northumbrians who had banded together burst in through all the gates, and rushed through the whole town killing the Earl's companions. The house where Cumin was staying was set alight. Some of those inside burnt to death, others rushed out through the doors and were cut down. Thus the Earl was killed on 31 January.

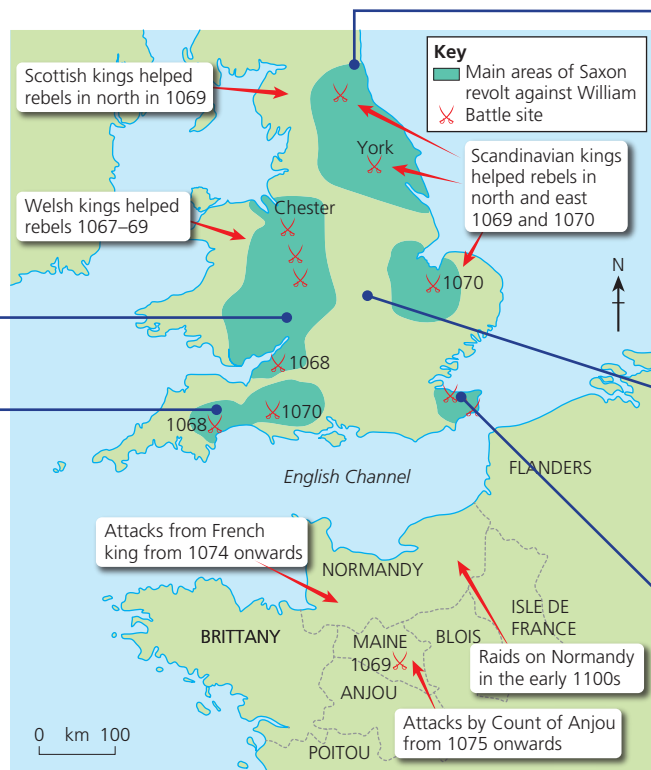
SOURCE 4

From the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.

... with all his army that he could collect ... utterly ravaged and laid waste that shire.

THINK

- 4 What steps did William take to deal with the rebellions? Add more to sections 4 (concessions) and 2 (military presence) of your chart.
- 5 Why did William's plans for governing England change?



1067 Northumbria

In 1067, William had appointed Copsig to rule the northern part of Northumbria. This was an odd decision given that Copsig had worked for Tostig previously and both had been hated by the Northumbrians. Copsig was ambushed and his head hacked off by his predecessor soon after arriving in Northumbria.

1068 Edwin and Morcar

Edwin and Morcar had submitted to William in the hope of retaining some of their power but they realised their power was being eroded. Some of their land had been given away and talk of Edwin marrying William's daughter came to nothing. They rebelled and encouraged many others to follow suit.

William marched north and ordered a castle to be built at Warwick. Edwin and Morcar, once again, submitted. William went on to build castles at Nottingham, York, Lincoln, Huntingdon and Cambridge. He placed these castles in the care of loyal Norman subjects.

1067 Kent

In Kent, people were angry at how they were being treated by the Normans. They persuaded Eustace of Boulogne (who had fallen out with William the Conqueror) to attempt to seize Dover Castle. He did not attack with enough force however, and was soon defeated and returned home.

SOURCE 5

Anglo-Norman historian Orderic Vitalis.

Nowhere else had William shown such cruelty. Shamefully he succumbed to this vice, for he made no effort to restrain his fury and punished the innocent with the guilty. In his anger he commanded that all crops and herds, chattels and food of every kind should be brought together and burned to ashes ... so that the whole region north of the Humber might be stripped of all means of sustenance ... so terrible a famine fell upon the humble and defenceless populace, that more than 100,000 ... perished of hunger.

For this act which condemned the innocent and guilty alike to die by slow starvation I cannot commend him. For when I think of helpless children, young men in the prime of life ... I am so moved to pity that I would rather lament the grief and sufferings of the wretched people than make a vain attempt to flatter the perpetrator of such infamy.

Danish involvement

This was not the end of the trouble. King Swein of Denmark had been COURTED for some time by a few English lords. The unpopularity of Norman rule probably convinced him that he had an opportunity to take England. His fleet of 240 ships arrived in late summer 1069. They were joined by Edgar Aetheling, Earl Walthoef and Earl Gospatric. They captured York in September 1069. The Danes then retreated to Lincolnshire. William was in peril, facing other rebellions around the country as well as the Danes and the northern rebels. He offered the Danes generous terms (including money) if they were to leave by the following spring and they agreed. He then proceeded to deal with the rest of the northern rebels with devastating effect – with mass killings, burning of homes, animals and crops and plundering. This became known as the HARRYING OF THE NORTH.

Debate regarding the Harrying of the North

Orderic Vitalis (see Source 5) claimed that 100,000 were killed but historians dispute that level of destruction. This would have been five per cent of the English population at the time. However, there were plenty of places in Yorkshire described as 'waste' 16 years later in the DOMESDAY BOOK (see page 42); most destruction probably took place further north. The land may simply have been described as waste as it was considered worthless. It is likely that William's aim was to make the north temporarily uninhabitable and therefore make further rebellion impossible.

Whatever the level of destruction, the opinion of Orderic Vitalis (Source 5) is significant. He was often very complimentary of the Conqueror, but was damning in his comments on the Harrying of the North.

William celebrates

William appeared to have no regrets. He celebrated Christmas in York, even wearing his crown amidst the ruins of the city on Christmas Day. This was to remind people of his position and authority. Early in 1070, he tracked down some of the rebel leaders. Some swore loyalty to him, others, such as Edgar Aetheling, fled to Scotland. He then went on to put down further risings on the Welsh border.

THINK

- 6 How convincing is the interpretation of the Harrying of the North in Source 5?
- 7 What actions had William taken to punish the north and how are these portrayed in Source 6?
- 8 Why did William deal with the north in such a brutal manner?

SOURCE 6

The Harrying of the North



Step 5 – Dealing with East Anglia 1070–71

William's troubles weren't over. Indeed, many of his followers were clamouring for a return to Normandy. He paid them off by taking money from the monasteries. More seriously, the Danes had never returned home and were joined by King Swein in May 1070. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle claimed that people came from all over the FENLANDS, hoping that Swein would help to take England out of Norman hands. With the support of the local people he was soon able to take control of Ely.

The Danes were then joined by Hereward the Wake. They went on to loot and destroy much of Peterborough. However, it appears that Swein had already given up on the idea of conquering England. He resigned himself to the tradition of Viking raids, plundering enough treasure to make an expedition seem worthwhile. William was able to offer a favourable peace deal and Swein returned to Denmark.

Hereward continued to cause trouble and was joined by Earl Morcar. They were soon defeated and Morcar was imprisoned for the rest of his life. Hereward held out for some time but was eventually given his lands back, as he was considered a nuisance rather than a serious threat.

From 1072 there was relative stability in England. William also made an agreement with King Malcolm of Scotland called the Peace of Abernethy. Malcolm submitted to William as his superior and expelled Edgar Aetheling from his court.

Step 6 – Dealing with the earls' revolt, 1075

There remained one last challenge to William's power in England – but this time it came from a Norman!

Roger, Earl of Hereford had become dissatisfied with his position. His father, William Fitz Osbern, had been able to rule over more territory and had more influence than Roger. He grew increasingly annoyed at his lack of influence and plotted with the Earl of East Anglia, Ralph de Gael. Neither man had fought with William at Hastings, so they did not feel the same loyalty to him that their fathers had. They persuaded the English Earl Waltheof to be involved at first.

This revolt had the potential to be very dangerous for William. It involved his own men. It could also draw in the Bretons, English and the Danes. Ralph was from Brittany. Waltheof could gain the support of the English. The Danes sent a fleet of 200 ships.

However, the attempted revolt failed completely. Waltheof did not in fact ever join in. Instead he fled to Normandy, hoping to save his own position. Ralph was cornered at his manor. The forces of Bishop Wulfstan of Worcester stopped Roger even leaving Herefordshire. By the time the Danish fleet arrived, the revolt was almost over and they soon left.

William dealt with the rebels decisively. Roger and Ralph lost all of their land. Waltheof was beheaded. This was the last major revolt against William.

THINK

- 9 Add evidence to all four sections of your chart. Don't forget to include how William dealt with the threat from the Danes, as well as the violence he used against the English.

PROFILE

Hereward the Wake



- Hereward has become a figure of legend, however much of his fame comes from stories which have little basis in truth.
- He was probably from near Bourne in Lincolnshire and had some sort of noble status.
- He was exiled at the time of the Battle of Hastings and he returned to England later in 1066.
- He then found that his brother had been slain by the Normans and their estates seized, so he had good reason to rebel against the Normans.

Castles

Every step of control you have been reading about was accompanied by castle building. Castles were central to Norman control, so let's step aside from the story and have a closer look at how and why the Normans used castles.

Very few castles had been built in England prior to 1066. During Edward the Confessor's reign, some castles were built in Herefordshire, an area dominated by a Frenchman, Earl Ralph. The only comparable fortifications were the **BURHS** (fortified towns) built in the ninth century by Alfred the Great to defend the country against Viking incursions. However, burhs were built to defend the people whereas castles were built to impose Norman rule on the rebellious English.

By contrast, castles were a vital part of William's strategy to control England. When he landed at Pevensey, one of William's first actions was to build a castle to help defend his position. Everywhere they went they built castles.

They were built across the country (see Figure 8) but were more concentrated in vulnerable areas. This included the borders of Wales and Scotland, the south coast (due to fear of invasion), any significant towns and cities, places where rebellions had already taken place and any other strategically important places. No significant town was more than a day's march from a castle, which gave the Normans the ability to deal with any rebellions swiftly.

How were castles built?

The early Norman castles were **MOTTE AND BAILEY** castles built from wood (see Figure 9).

The motte was an earthen mound encircled by a ditch and palisade (fence). A tower, often called a **KEEP**, was built on the top of the mound. The ditches made it harder for attackers to reach the keep. The bailey was the outer area of the castle which was also defended by a wooden palisade and ditch. Some early castles only had the bailey because constructing the motte could take some time.

The troops were stationed in the bailey as were their horses. They could retreat to the motte for extra protection. The tower was the safest area and was also used as a lookout, as well as providing an imposing structure to remind the English that they were under constant surveillance.

A motte and bailey castle could be erected in a matter of days, but the early castles had obvious weaknesses – not least that the wooden structure could be burnt or might rot. In time many were rebuilt in stone.

Why were castles built?

Castles had two main functions:

- **Strategic:** They housed soldiers who would put down any attempted rebellion in their area. William did not have a great number of troops, so they would be moved to where they were most needed. This was enough to deter anyone considering mounting a challenge to Norman rule.
- **Symbolic:** Castles were also a permanent reminder to the English of who was now governing the country. To add to their impact, the Normans often destroyed housing in towns to make space to build their castles, they got the English to build them and they charged the English taxes to maintain them.

SOURCE 7

Anglo-Norman historian Orderic Vitalis.

... the fortifications that the Normans called castles were scarcely known in the English provinces. And so the English – in spite of their courage and love of fighting – could only put up a weak resistance to their enemies.

THINK

- 11 Why did William build a castle at Pevensey on his arrival in England?

FIGURE 8

Map showing the location of castles.



Case-study 1: Pickering Castle

A good example of both functions of a castle is Pickering Castle, built during the Harrying of the North.

SOURCE 10

Artist's impression of how the castle would have appeared while it was being built in wood.



How was Pickering built?

It was originally built in wood. In Source 10 you can see an artist's impression of the building stage. In the centre the motte, some palisades (fences) to surround the bailey, and a keep on top of the motte. Unlike other castles the bailey was divided into an inner ward and outer ward. The keep dominates the bailey and gives a clear view of the local area. Later the wooden keep and curtain walls were rebuilt in stone and they still survive today, as you can see from Source 11.

THINK

Draw your own simplified drawing of Source 10 to label the following features:

- | | |
|------------|----------------|
| ● Motte | ● Ditch |
| ● Palisade | ● Curtain wall |
| ● Bailey | ● Inner Wall |
| ● Keep | ● Outer Wall |

SOURCE 11

Pickering Castle today, showing the remains of the stone castle. You can see that the stone castle follows exactly the outlines of the original wooden motte and bailey.



How was Pickering built?

Pickering Castle fits the general pattern that the Normans built castles in the most vulnerable parts of the country. The first castle was built in 1069–70 when William faced major resistance from the people in Yorkshire and Durham. The castle was used as a base for Norman soldiers to carry out the Harrying of the North and was built to control the Whitby to Malton road which ran from north to south and the Thirsk to Scarborough road from east to west.

After the north was under control, William still administered east Yorkshire from Pickering Castle. There would always be Norman soldiers garrisoned there to put down any further rebellion. It was also a useful defence against the Scots who often tried to take over or raid parts of Northumbria. The castle was designed to be imposing, to remind local people that they were being watched by the Normans – this would discourage rebellion.

You can also see from Figure 12 how many different buildings there were inside the bailey in later years. Indeed after the Normans, Pickering Castle was used strategically until the mid-fourteenth century.



Case study 2: Pevensey Castle

Pevensey Castle also exemplifies many features of the Conquest and Norman military control. Its story, however, is very different from Pickering's.

Before 1066: The Roman Fort

The Romans built the fort around 290 AD, in a strong defensive position on a peninsula surrounded by marshes and a tidal lagoon. It was one of nine shore forts built by the Romans. The fort was probably used as the base for a fleet and formed part of a system of defence against Saxon pirates. The Romans built a huge curtain wall around the fort. This was probably about 9.5 metres high. The Romans also built at least ten towers used for the placement of artillery weapons.

By the time William arrived in England there was an Anglo-Saxon village inside the Roman walls.

1066: The Norman castle

William landed at Pevensey Bay on 28 September 1066. He sheltered within a temporary wooden keep built within the Roman defences.

The parts to make the wooden castle were pre-fabricated – i.e. already prepared and brought over from Normandy. Timbers had been cut to the correct size. They brought the bolts to fix them in place. This meant the castle could be built very quickly.

The aims of the castle were to defend the Norman garrison and to intimidate the English. The castle protected fighting men, supplies and equipment – these could be used for defence and as a base for attack.

During the 1070s a permanent castle was built. This included a keep and two fortified enclosures within the Roman walls.

During the rebellion of 1088 against William Rufus (William II), the castle was besieged and only surrendered when supplies of food ran out after six weeks.

THINK

12 Add evidence to section 2 of your chart about castles.

FIGURE 12

Ground plan showing the stages in building Pickering castle.



William dies

The Earls' Revolt of 1075 was the last major rebellion William faced in England. He was relatively secure in England, but his position in Normandy had deteriorated and he spent a lot of time there keeping order. In 1086 he was injured at the Battle of Mantes. He fell against the pommel of his saddle (a raised area at the front of a saddle) and damaged his intestines, although he may already have been ill. He was taken to Rouen to be cared for. After a slow decline lasting six weeks, William the Conqueror died on 9 September 1087, at the age of 59.

William was very overweight by the time of his death. His body was transported to Caen but it would not fit into the coffin. The monks tried to force his body to fit and his swollen bowels burst, resulting in an 'intolerable stench' according to Orderic Vitalis.

Continuing the Norman dynasty

You will know already that a king's death could lead to major crises. In this case it was clear that one of William's sons would become king. The Normans had firm control over England. However, which son should it be?

Relations between William and his eldest son, Robert Curthose, were poor. According to Orderic Vitalis, William said of his son:

I granted the dukedom of Normandy to my son Robert, because he was the eldest. The grant thus made and ratified I cannot annul. But I know for certain that the country which is subject to his dominion will be truly wretched. He is proud and silly.

Therefore William granted the crown of England to his second surviving son, also called William (often referred to as Rufus to save confusion with William I). Robert had hoped to rule both England and Normandy so Rufus' appointment caused tension between the brothers. The youngest son, Henry, was given money but no land.

King William II

Rufus was sent to England on 7 or 8 September 1087. He had with him a letter addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lanfranc which ordered Lanfranc to help Rufus. On 26 September 1087, Rufus was crowned king by Archbishop Lanfranc in Canterbury Cathedral. However, he soon faced challenges from his brother Robert, as well as potential threats within England.

In 1088, Bishop Odo of Bayeux began to plot a rebellion. He was supported by six out of ten of the leading (Norman) BARONS. Many of these barons held land in both England and Normandy and did not want to swear loyalty to two different rulers in two countries. The fact that Rufus and Robert were rivals made this even more problematic.

William of St Calais (Bishop of Durham) informed Rufus of the plot. Rufus took decisive action. He divided the rebel barons with a combination of promises and a reminder of their oath of loyalty. He promised to grant them hunting rights and to make just laws – although this did not happen. By the end of the summer, Odo had surrendered.

In 1091 William then travelled to Normandy to challenge Robert. They managed to agree terms and although they often fell out, Robert's involvement in the First Crusade from 1096 largely kept him away from England for the rest of Rufus' reign.

SOURCE 13

An oil painting of William II (William Rufus) made circa 1626. Rufus means red and he was probably given this name due to his red hair and red complexion.



THINK

13 How convincing do you find Source 13 as a portrayal of William II.

SOURCE 14

An oil on panel portrait of Henry I made circa 1626.



Henry I

On 2 August 1100, William Rufus was killed in a hunting accident in the New Forest. He was shot by an arrow apparently fired by a friend, Walter Tirel. It is suspected that his younger brother Henry may have plotted to murder Rufus. Accounts from the time contradict each other but Henry was so swift to claim the throne that this adds to the suspicion. However, there is no proof and hunting accidents were common so Rufus' death may simply have been an accident.

In 1101, Henry reached an agreement with his brother Robert that they would each stay in their own DOMAIN. In 1105, however, Henry attacked Normandy. In 1106 he defeated Robert at the Battle of Tinchebrai. By 1107, Henry I ruled both Normandy and England as his father had done. The Norman Conquest remained intact.

FOCUS TASK

You have been gathering information about how William took control of England.

1. Read through the information you have gathered. Highlight the successful measures taken by William. Think about why these measures were successful.
2. What advice might William give to his successors, based on his experience? Your task is to use your finished chart to write William's 'five golden rules' for his sons wanting to take and keep control of a country.
3. Write a conclusion explaining which method or methods were the main reasons for William being able to maintain control. Explain your choice.

LEARNING TIP

Make sure you can remember at least one example of each method William used to control England. Also make sure you know how dealing with the rebels changed his ideas on the way he would govern England.

KEYWORDS

Be sure you learn what these words mean and are able to use them confidently in your own writing. See the glossary on page 76 for definitions.

- Barons
- Besieged
- Burhs
- Conciliatory
- Disinherited
- Domain
- Domesday Book
- Garrison
- Harrying of the North
- Legitimacy
- Levied
- Patronage
- Plunder
- Motte and bailey
- Royal writs
- Treasury

TOPIC SUMMARY

William establishes control

- William took over two months to secure the throne before being crowned king.
- William ruled both England and Normandy and had to rely on loyal followers to rule on his behalf.
- Taking over England was a gradual process and met with great opposition.
- William was able to overcome all the rebellions against him but it was not easy and he had to use a variety of tactics, such as intimidation, patronage and granting concessions.
- The use of terror in the north was to try to prevent any future rebellion in a troublesome region.
- William built castles throughout the country to maintain a military presence, particularly in difficult areas, and to intimidate the people in the hope they would not attempt to rebel.
- While the succession to his sons was not without complications, the Normans were secure in their leadership of England.

FOCUS

The previous topic took a top down view of Norman England – how it was governed and how the Normans organised England to control it and get rich from it.

This topic views Norman England from the bottom up – focusing on the daily lives of people in towns and villages. How far did the changes investigated in Chapter 2.1 impact on them? Many historians argue that there was a lot of change for the rich as a result of the Norman Conquest, but for the poor there was less change.

In this topic you will examine:

- What life was like in medieval villages and how far it changed as a result of the conquest
- How towns were changing and how life in towns compared with life in villages

2.2 Economic and social changes and their consequences

FOCUS TASK

In this unit you will learn about the development of villages and towns under the Normans. To help you establish how much life changed, you are going to make a table.

	Villages	Towns
Changes made by the Normans		
Continuity – how did peoples' lives continue as before?		

As you work through the chapter, add to your table.

Towns and villages before 1066

Before 1066 most people lived in the countryside. Most worked for a thegn who gave them a place to live and land to farm. They grew crops and kept animals. Life was tough for most people. Laws favoured the landowner. Sometimes the harvest was good but famine could also strike. Sheep farming was still the main industry in England. However the amount of cultivated land was increasing and food production was increasing too.

Towns had started to develop, especially in the south and east, but only 5–10 per cent of the population lived in towns. Towns grew up around important royal or church centres. They also developed due to trade – especially ports. Town life could be easier than the countryside but disease was more common due to unsanitary conditions.

Immediate impacts of the Norman Conquest

The economic impact of the Norman Conquest was negative to start with.

- **Taxes:** The Normans increased rent and taxes and much of the money raised was spent in Normandy.
- **Land:** They took land away from nearly all English land owners, which led to poverty for some.
- **Destruction:** They desolated large areas of northern England in the Harrying of the North. The important town of York was sacked. Other towns saw homes demolished to make way for Norman castles. 166 homes were demolished in Lincoln.
- **Buildings:** The Normans spent effort and money on castle and cathedral building and warfare which provided a living for soldiers and craftsmen, but not for builders – forced English labour was used.
- **Freedom:** The Domesday Survey shows that the number of freemen declined dramatically as a result of the Conquest. Freemen who could not afford the increased rents had to revert to being villeins – working for the lord with limited freedom.

Longer-term impacts of the Norman Conquest

After this initial disruption, from the late 1090s Norman England entered a period of economic growth that continued for much of the next 150 years. Population grew. Villages grew. Towns grew. Trade grew. Wealth grew. The foundations for this were built in the Norman period and were driven by three things:

- **Increased security:** If there is a threat of war or violence, people don't invest or take risks. Anglo-Saxon England had been constantly invaded but once the Normans were in control the threat of invasion diminished and so trade flourished.
- **A more European outlook:** The Normans strengthened links between England and mainland Europe. The wool and cloth trade with Flanders increased. England exported more raw materials.
- **Money:** Soon after the Norman Conquest, William brought with him some wealthy Jews to help him manage royal finances. Jewish moneylenders began to play an important role in boosting the economy. Being able to borrow money helped traders and merchants develop their business.

How were villages affected by the Norman Conquest?

We'll start with the Domesday Survey because it provides a unique snapshot of life in Norman England. The survey covered nearly 13,500 villages (often called manors) and towns. Nothing of such a scale had been undertaken before, and it is not until the 1801 Census that it is surpassed in terms of detailed information about English villages. The survey is the most important historical document of its time.

Let's take one example, Hoddesdon in Hertfordshire, and see what Domesday tells us about the impact of the Norman Conquest.

Lord

In 1066 Hoddesdon had been held by King Harold. In 1086 it was now held by Normans: King William, Count Eustace of Boulogne and Robert Gernon. This is very typical of the way land ownership had changed from the English to the Normans.

Size

It had 67 households. By Domesday standards this makes it a large village. (Some Domesday settlements had only 5 or 6 households.)

Villagers

Although it was a big village there were still only 91 villagers and nearly all of them were villeins owing service to the lord. There was only one freeman. This again is very typical. The number of freemen declined massively due to the Norman Conquest. There were also 22 slaves. This suggests that the lords who held Hoddesdon were rich since keeping slaves was expensive.

Church

It had a church which would have been the centre of village life.

Value

It was taxed quite highly which further confirms that the lord was quite wealthy. And the value of the land had risen from £50 in 1066 to £60 in 1086. This tells us that the villagers had probably not seen much violence during the Conquest.

Land

Domesday also tells us how much land was used for farming. Domesday measures land by ploughs. A ploughland is the amount of land that can be ploughed by a team of eight oxen. Hoddesdon had 40 ploughlands which means a lot of cultivated land. One fifth was used by the lord, the rest by the villagers. That would keep 100 people very busy all year round. With so much farming land it is no wonder that it was quite wealthy. There were also 120 acres of meadow, some pasture and enough woodland for 840 pigs (tax on woodland was often paid in pigs so it was measured in pigs!).

Livestock

There were only 3 cobs (horses) and 40 cattle. But there were 195 pigs and 193 sheep. Again this shows a relatively wealthy farming settlement. And there were certainly more animals than people. Hoddesdon is clearly a thriving and wealthy village.

It is interesting to compare Hoddesdon to villages in northern England, which had been so violently affected by the Harrying of the North. For example, Domesday tells us that Pickering in Yorkshire had been worth £88 in 1066 but by 1086 was worth just £1! The lord in 1066 had been Morcar but in 1086 King William controlled the area. Another example from the north is Malham, where the land was described as 'waste'. This was most likely due to the effect of William's terror.

However the survey can only tell us so much. The questions it asked were all about land and wealth. There is so much more we would like to know and to answer those questions we need to use other sources.

ACTIVITY

- 1 From the information on this page, what is the biggest change to have happened to the village of Hoddesdon because of the Norman Conquest?
- 2 Look up www.opendomesday.org to see if your own local area appears in Domesday. If so see what you can find out about the impact of the Norman Conquest.

FIGURE 1



FACTFILE

Classes of peasants

Approximately 97 per cent of the population of England were peasants. There were several types of peasant.

- **Freemen** were free peasants who paid rent to the lord for their land. Sometimes they had to carry out **BOON WORK** (extra days of unpaid work for the lord). The number of free peasants fell significantly between 1066 and 1086 and many became villeins.
- **Villeins** worked on the lord's land for no pay. They had no freedom and could not leave the village without permission. They were granted some land to farm for themselves.
- **Bordars** and **cottars** were poorer than villeins and they were given less land by the lord.
- **Slaves** made up about 10 per cent of the population in 1066. They had no freedom and no land. Slavery rapidly declined after the Norman Conquest partly due to a change in attitude but also because it was probably easier to give land in return for labour than it was to support slaves.

Wharram Percy

The deserted village of Wharram Percy in Yorkshire has been extensively researched by archaeologists and historians. How was Wharram Percy affected by the Norman Conquest?

There had been a village here from the mid-ninth century. Before 1066 it had a wooden church and a handful of houses where the peasants lived and farmed. The land was held by two Anglo-Saxon landowners. However, by 1086 the land had been taken from its Anglo-Saxon holders and passed onto a Norman family called the Percys, who developed it.

Over the next 100 years the population grew. Norman influence and Norman wealth can be seen as wooden buildings were rebuilt in stone. Source 2 shows what it probably looked like in the late twelfth century. The biggest change was social – the things you cannot see. The lord was now a Norman not an Anglo-Saxon. The peasants were being charged higher rent. Some freemen could no longer afford their rent so returned to being villeins – effectively owned by the lord. The lord spoke French and the English had to learn French to understand him.

SOURCE 2

A reconstruction drawing of the village of Wharram Percy, Yorkshire.

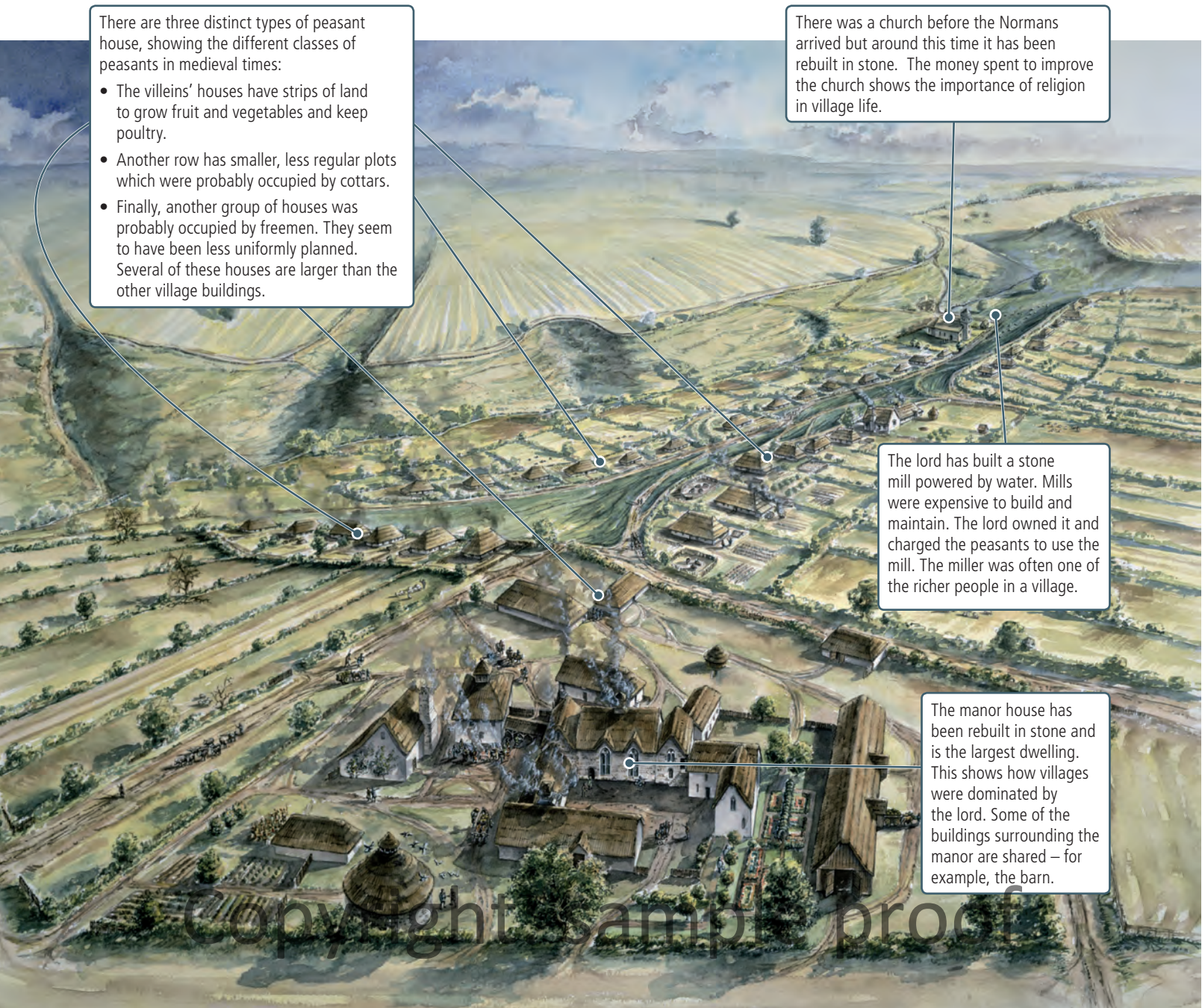
There are three distinct types of peasant house, showing the different classes of peasants in medieval times:

- The villeins' houses have strips of land to grow fruit and vegetables and keep poultry.
- Another row has smaller, less regular plots which were probably occupied by cottars.
- Finally, another group of houses was probably occupied by freemen. They seem to have been less uniformly planned. Several of these houses are larger than the other village buildings.

There was a church before the Normans arrived but around this time it has been rebuilt in stone. The money spent to improve the church shows the importance of religion in village life.

The lord has built a stone mill powered by water. Mills were expensive to build and maintain. The lord owned it and charged the peasants to use the mill. The miller was often one of the richer people in a village.

The manor house has been rebuilt in stone and is the largest dwelling. This shows how villages were dominated by the lord. Some of the buildings surrounding the manor are shared – for example, the barn.



Daily life in Norman villages

Work for the poor

Working life was changed very little by the Norman Conquest. Just like the Anglo-Saxons, people in Norman England were nearly all farmers so life varied according to the seasons and the weather much more than by who ran the country.

Harvest time was the busiest time of the year, but farming was always hard work. Peasants worked long hours in the fields. Almost everything was done by hand with no machines to help apart from the ox-drawn plough.

Each village was surrounded by large fields (normally three but this did vary). These fields were divided into strips and each villager had a few strips to farm. It was usually agreed which crops to grow in each field. Wheat, rye and barley were the common ones. Crops could be destroyed by disease and bad weather. Even when conditions were good it was a struggle to grow enough food to survive in the winter months.

Peasants also had their own gardens or plots in which to grow fruit and vegetable and keep poultry and common land to graze their animals. Some woodland would be reserved for collecting firewood.

Most people in villages were peasant farmers. However, there were other roles. Most villages needed a blacksmith, and a miller. There would also be carpenters (particularly for specialist tasks like building houses or making wagons) and weavers – although many peasants would do such work for themselves.

Work for the rich

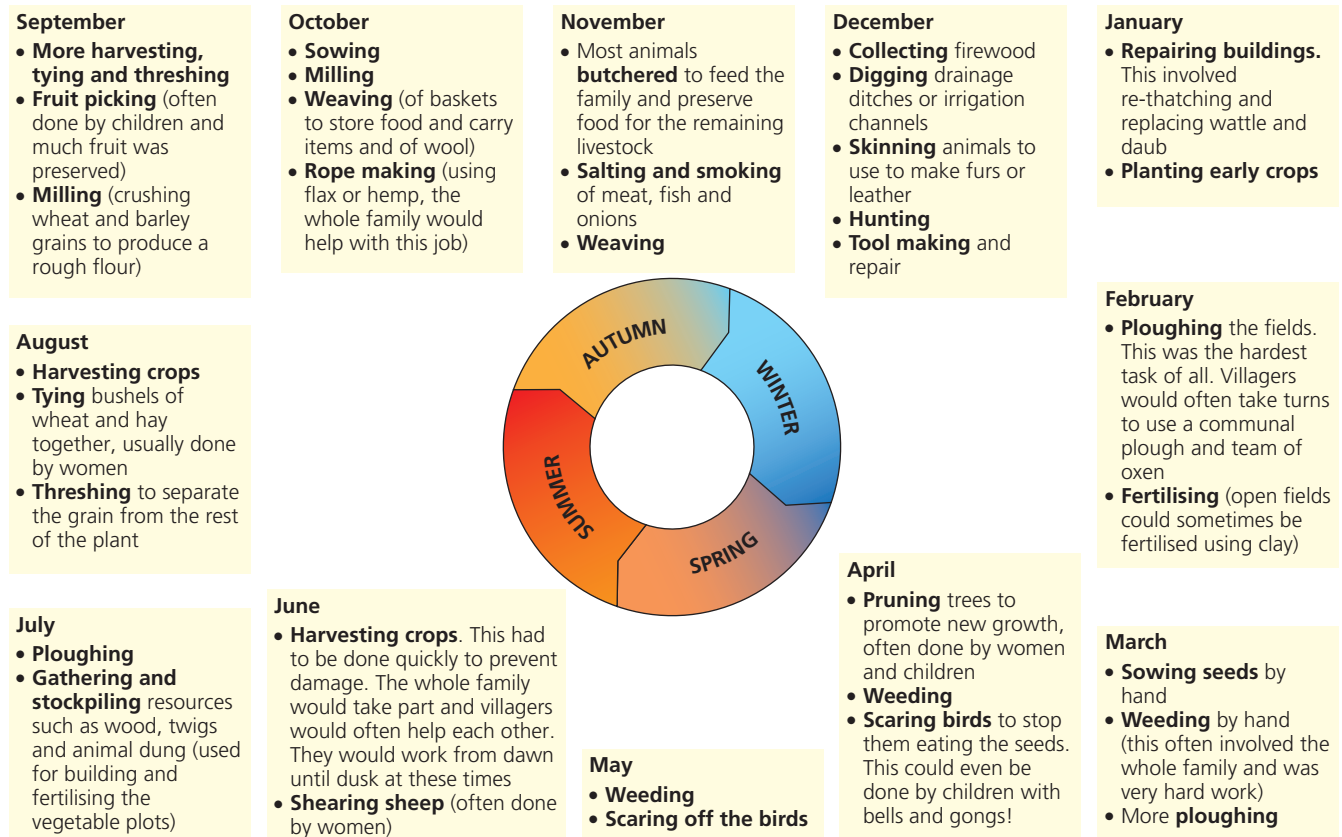
The lords and bishops were the richest people after the king. Bishops had the job of running a diocese of the church. Lords owned land but were not farmers. They did not have to do physical labour. Their income came from the produce of the land farmed by their tenants. However they spent their time in running their estates. Knights were also quite rich and they owed military service to the king so would spend time perfecting their military skills – horsemanship in particular – or hunting. Sheriffs (shire reeves) would oversee the administration and judicial functions of a shire (a county).

THINK

- 1 What do you think were the most difficult aspects of peasant life?

FIGURE 3

The medieval farming year. The diagram shows the key tasks for each month of the year. Some tasks were done throughout the year but only the peak times are shown here.



Housing and health

Houses were dark, damp and smoky. They were made up of a large single room, usually without windows. There would be a fire in the middle of the room for warmth and cooking and smoke would escape through a hole in the roof. The floor was made of earth covered with straw. Animals would be brought into the house at night.

Hygiene was poor. Life expectancy was much lower than today. Forty years old was considered a good age. People had little time for entertainment because they worked hard tending their livestock and land, although religious festivals were a time of feasting and fun.

Diet for the poor

The diets of the poor hardly changed at all because of the Norman Conquest. Peasants ate what they could grow, so their diet was simple.

- The staple foods were bread, oat porridge and vegetable stew.
- Bread was made from rye and was quite rough and heavy. They had to pay to bake it in the lord's ovens.
- Meat was a special treat as animals were valuable. As there was no refrigeration, the only way to preserve meat was by salting or smoking it. Salt was expensive so meat would usually be smoked.
- They kept hens for eggs and grew vegetables and fruit. They kept animals for milk to make their own cheese.
- Some peasants would eat fish caught in the sea or in nearby rivers or ponds.
- The only sweet food was fruit, which would often be preserved, and honey.
- POTTAGE was the most common meal. This was a soup made from beans and peas and flavoured with herbs.
- Water was not safe to drink so peasants would brew their own weak beer to drink. They would also drink milk.

The diet of the peasants was very repetitive, but it was probably healthier than that of the rich. At harvest time they may even have had a feast provided by the lord of the manor. However that was in the good years. If crops failed, peasants were at risk of hunger and even famine.

Diet for the rich

The rich had a far more varied diet than the poor.

- They also ate bread, but this was made from wheat rather than rye. It was called 'white bread' but it was more like modern brown bread.
- They ate far more meat. Roast meat such as pheasant, woodcock, partridge, larks and blackbirds was popular.
- Meat was forbidden during Lent and on Fridays, so they ate fish instead.
- Meat might not always be very fresh, so spices were used to disguise the taste.
- The rich did not eat many vegetables or much fresh fruit. Vegetables were seen as food for the poor, although the rich did like onions, garlic and leeks.
- Dairy products were not eaten much either, as they were also considered a food for the poor.
- Fruit was generally served in pies or preserved in honey rather than eaten fresh.

Sometimes they had feasts which were elaborate affairs with several courses. Each course would have a mixture of sweet and savoury food. Special foods included head of boar, venison, crane, peacock, swan, pork, chicken and rabbit. It is likely that a lot of food was wasted as only small portions of each dish were eaten.

Due to their very unbalanced diet and less physical work the rich were probably less healthy than the poor. Many rich people suffered from bad teeth, scurvy and rickets.

Manners!

People usually ate with their fingers. If any cutlery was used it was only a knife and perhaps a spoon. Rich people had plates to eat from, made from wood, pewter or even silver. Most other people ate from a crust of dry bread called a TRENCHER.

ACTIVITY

Use the text on pages 45–49 to give Source 4 a score out of 10 for how convincing it is. Think about these things:

- role of weather
- presence of a castle
- style of church
- style of house
- style of dress
- health of animals
- tasks – fetching water, feeding animals, cutting wood, herding animals.

SOURCE 4

A modern interpretation of life in a Norman village.



Case Study: How did the Normans change Nottingham?

All towns have their own story so it is hard to choose a totally typical Anglo-Saxon/Norman town. However the town of Nottingham illustrates the impact of the Norman Conquest well.

Anglo-Saxon Nottingham: Nottingham was originally a small Saxon settlement called Snottingham; which literally meant the settlement belonging to Snotta. The name gradually evolved into Nottingham, probably because the Normans had difficulty with pronouncing the 'Sn'.

The area was captured by the Danish Vikings around 867–68 and it became one of the five burhs of the Danelaw. The town provided a good defensive position as it occupied high ground above the marshland around the River Trent. Additionally it was near to where the river could most easily be crossed.

In the early tenth century it came under the control of the king of England at the time (Edward the Elder, son of Alfred the Great) who fortified it further to defend against the Vikings. It became a centre of royal administration. It grew gradually and by 1066 it probably had about 1,500 inhabitants – making it a large town by English standards.

Norman Nottingham: The Normans built a wooden castle soon after the Conquest in 1067–68. The castle encouraged further development and Nottingham became a reasonable sized town. It was important to the local area although it was not that important nationally.

The main changes made by the Normans are summarised in the labels below. These changes were typical of the changes in many other towns across England. Nottingham got:

- a new lord;
- a castle which triggered further growth as people moved to live near the castle;
- a Norman population arrived; a new Norman church;
- a new market (and later an annual fair);
- and the town increased in size.

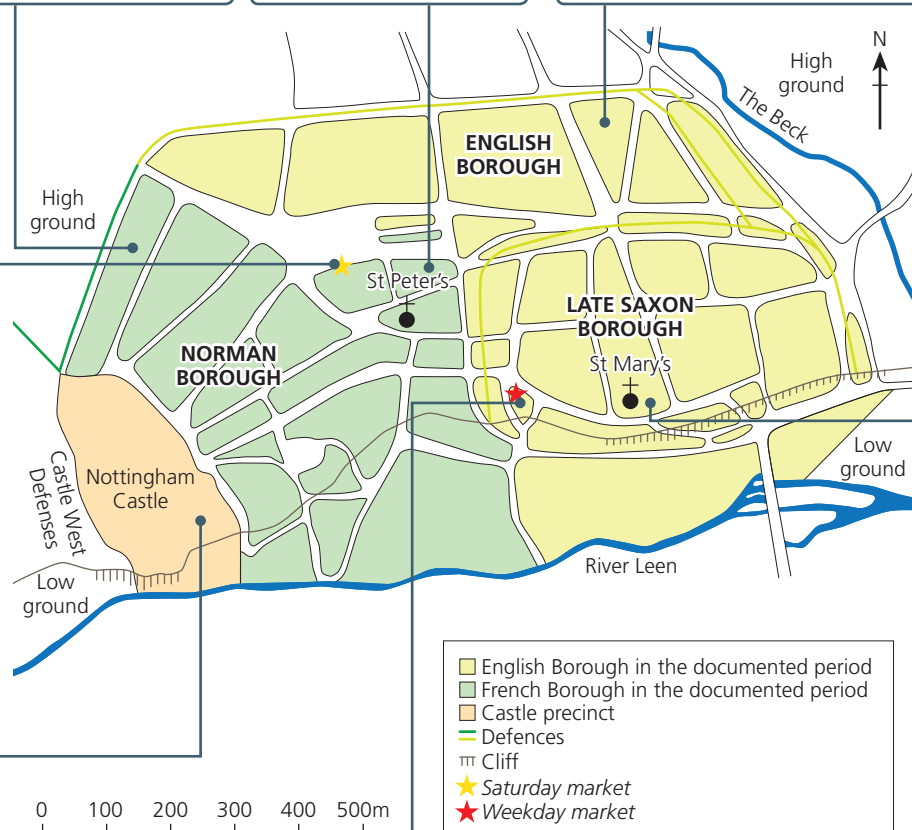
French Borough. This area is dominated by the castle. There were buildings before the Norman Conquest but after the Conquest it developed into a proper town. Most Normans lived and worked here.

St Peter's Church. This new church was built by the Normans in around 1100 to serve the inhabitants of the French Borough.

English Borough. This area is the original Anglo-Saxon town. The Anglo-Saxons built defences around it. After the Norman Conquest the Anglo-Saxon population continued to live and work here. It was administered separately to the French Borough. Indeed Nottingham had two sheriffs until 1835!

Saturday market. The Saturday market was probably established between 1070 and 1080. William Peverel found that when the Normans used the weekday market in the English Borough, quarrels erupted with the English. He therefore decided to establish a market which would serve both boroughs. The Saturday market was evenly split – with a Norman section and an English section. This market quickly established itself as the dominant one in Nottingham.

Castle. Built on high ground in wood in 1067–68 to help secure the route to the north of England. It was controlled by the new Norman lord, William Peverel. Rebuilt in stone in 1150–89.



St Mary's Church was an Anglo-Saxon church. A church is mentioned in the Domesday entry for Nottingham. This is probably it.

Lenton Priory William Peverel founded the Cluniac Priory of Lenton around 1103 just south of Nottingham.

Weekday market. This was the original Anglo-Saxon market. It ran every weekday but not on Sundays. It continued to serve the English Borough after the Norman Conquest. The Normans established a much larger Saturday market in the French Borough but even then the Weekday market continued for trading everyday goods.

The development of towns

There had been very few towns in Anglo-Saxon England. But they were very important trading centres. Anglo-Saxon England had a strong trade with mainland Europe and Scandinavia, mainly exporting wool and cloth. Under Norman control trade increased and the number of towns and the size of towns gradually increased too. Trade increased because Norman rulers had greater links with mainland Europe.

The Domesday Survey in 1086 recorded 18 towns with a population of over 2,000 (see Figure 4) and 112 smaller towns and boroughs. However, England was still vastly rural. In 1086 only 5 per cent of the population lived in towns.

Why did Norman towns grow?

Towns grew as trading centres mainly in livestock, fish, salt and wool. Britain's main export was wool to the cloth towns of Flanders, so coastal towns near ports on the south and east coast grew. Others grew where rivers crossed or where important roads met. Many towns also developed around important castles and abbeys.

Towns attracted people who wanted to set up shops and businesses. Most towns were well protected by high walls or fences, gates or moats. The gates would be guarded and locked at night. Traders would be charged to enter.

FIGURE 5

Towns in Norman England in 1086. The biggest towns were London (more than 10,000 people), Winchester (more than 6,000) and Norwich, York and Lincoln (with populations of 4–5,000).



People often moved from the countryside to the town in order to learn a trade or work as servants for rich merchants. If a villein managed to live in a town for a year and a day, he would be declared a freeman.

Citizens of towns (also called **BURGESSES**) had responsibilities including serving as watchmen, helping the town/city militia in times of trouble and paying taxes. Their rights included legal protections – they could only be tried in the town courts. They also had freedom of movement (unlike villeins).

Once a town became large and established it could apply for a **CHARTER** from the lord or king to become independent. The town could then govern itself by electing a council and a mayor. It might be allowed to run a regular fair or market. Charter towns could set their own taxes, but still had to pay taxes to the lord and the king. Charters existed during this period but became far more common in the thirteenth century.

Features of Norman towns

Of course, each town was different, but they shared many basic characteristics.

- There was a mixture of residential and commercial properties.
- There were churches and religious houses (such as an abbey or monastery).
- There was also a market place and in some towns, a castle.
- Sometimes towns were built on a grid structure, but they were not always well planned.
- Houses (usually wooden) were built close together and often the buildings were larger above the ground floor because land in the towns was so expensive. Streets were narrow and there was little provision for hygiene.
- A high street would have been the main road through the town leading to the gates. This road would have been wider than the rest, needing to be at least the width of a lance. Any buildings that narrowed the high street were knocked down.
- Merchants and craftsmen would operate their business from buildings on the high street. As most people were illiterate, signs for shops used pictures and symbols instead of words, to show what goods and services they were selling.
- Overcrowding led to overflowing waste and an increased risk of disease, house fires and theft.

THINK

- 2 Compare Figure 4 with Figure 2, Chapter 1.3, on page 23 which shows the extent of Norman control. What conclusions can we draw about the Norman Conquest by looking at the location of the major towns in England at the time of Domesday?

FACTFILE

Craftsmen and apprentices

- Apprentices were usually teenage boys who signed up to work with a master for seven years.
- They would work hard while learning the craft and in exchange they were fed, clothed and housed.
- Once they completed their apprenticeship, they became journeymen. Journeymen were paid wages for their work.
- Journeyman comes from the French word 'journée'.
- Unlike an apprentice who was bound to work for someone for seven years, a journeyman could work for anyone and get paid by the day.
- Eventually, a craftsman could become a Master. In order to become a master craftsman, an apprentice proved his skill by producing a perfect piece of work (known as a masterpiece).

Guilds

- The Normans introduced guilds to England. A guild was a society of merchants which controlled who was allowed to carry out business there. To practice as a merchant you had to be part of the guild.
- Guild members often became involved in governing the town.
- Craft guilds were introduced later in the Middle Ages and were used to monitor the quality of goods and set prices, wages and conditions of work.

Jobs in Norman towns

Towns were centres of trade so needed all sorts of craftsmen. Medieval records show all the following: bakers, butchers, fishmongers, brewers, tailors, armourers, robemakers, washerwomen, gold and silversmiths, apothecaries, barbers, moneylenders, masons, potters and shoemakers and many more. You can sometimes see signs of these old trades in the street names of towns, for example: Silver Street; Brewer Street; Fish Street.

In the later Norman period the craftsmen created guilds to ensure high standards of work and to protect themselves from competition. They valued their reputation so there was a system of training and apprenticeship (see Factfile).

Hierarchy in Norman towns

There was a social hierarchy in towns, just as there was in the countryside.

- Top: merchants, lawyers, doctors and property owners – many of whom became much richer through the Norman period.
- Middle: craftsmen. Once they had become accepted as a master of their trade, they could also become well off.
- Bottom: unskilled workers and servants (the richer people in towns employed servants).

Becoming a craftsman in a town, such as a silversmith or learning a trade such as carpentry, gave ordinary people the opportunity to have a much more comfortable life and to earn more money than farming in a village. Many people who moved to towns did become richer. However, this was not always the case. Another way to improve your life was to get an education and learn to read and write. Very few people went to school in Norman England. If you were poor, the only chance of any education was to become a monk or a priest.

Ludlow, 1250

The picture below shows the town of Ludlow, Shropshire. Ludlow was a new town created and planned by the Normans after they built their castle. This shows it 200 years after the Norman Conquest. It has grown into quite a busy trading centre.

FIGURE 5

Picture of a medieval town



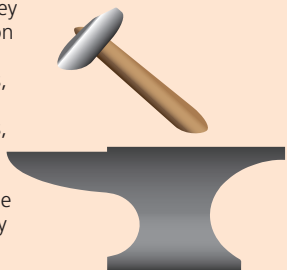
ACTIVITY

- 1 Work with a partner to study this picture of Ludlow (Figure 5) and see all the different jobs that would be needed to keep this town going. See Figure 6 if you want ideas.
- 2 Compare Ludlow with Wharram Percy (Source 2, page 46). Where would you prefer to live and why?

FIGURE 6

Medieval jobs.

Blacksmiths were skilled craftsmen and were highly valued. They worked mainly with iron and made a variety of objects, including tools, rivets, nails, hinges, locks, keys, horseshoes, gates, ornaments, weapons and armour. Many blacksmiths made a good living, especially in the towns.



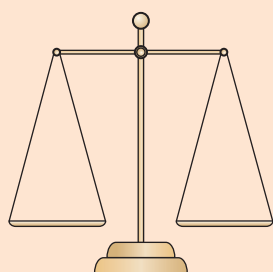
Bakers: Bread was the staple food in medieval times. Some bakers cheated their customers and as a result they were subject to strict laws on pricing and portion sizes. Peasants were allowed to use bakers' ovens to bake their own bread.



Armourers: Armour had to be made to fit each individual, so this was a skilled role.

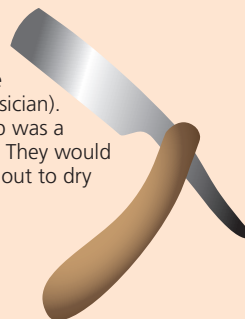


Apothecaries sold remedies made from herbs and plants.

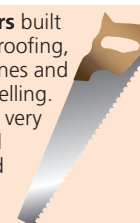


Moneylenders: There were no banks so moneylenders performed a useful service. Christians were not allowed to perform this role, so Jews who had come over from mainland Europe did this work instead, which often made them unpopular.

Barbers did not only cut hair; they also extracted teeth and even amputated limbs of poorer people (the wealthy would go to a physician). The sign for a barber's shop was a red and white striped pole. They would hang blood stained towels out to dry from these poles.



Carpenters built furniture, roofing, siege engines and wood panelling. They were very skilled and considered essential.



FOCUS TASK

You have been making a table showing continuities and changes in villages and towns after the Norman Conquest.

1. Choose two colours and highlight in your table the positive and negative points of life under the Normans.
2. Use the information you have gathered to write an account of life under the Normans.

You need to consider: the lives of people in towns, the lives of people in villages and how being rich or poor would affect your experience. Think about writing separate paragraphs on each section.

Finish your account by deciding whether life was better under the Normans or Anglo-Saxons. You need to explain and justify your decision.

You could write this as an historian looking back or you write it from the point of view of an Anglo-Saxon person living in 1100 who has lived through the period since 1066.

TIP

Make sure you can name several differences between village life and town life and between life for the rich and life for the poor.

KEYWORDS

Be sure you learn what these words mean and are able to use them confidently in your own writing. See the glossary on page 76 for definitions.

- Apprentice
- Bordars
- Burgesses
- Cottars
- Guilds
- Journeyman
- Master
- Pottage
- Villeins

TOPIC SUMMARY

Medieval life

- Peasants had the hardest lives of all and many lacked any real freedom. They farmed to survive and many made little profit.
- Some peasants moved to the towns to find better jobs. Others were trying to break free from the ties of the countryside.
- The rich had a far more varied diet than the poor, although it was less healthy. The poor ate healthy food but were vulnerable to food shortages.
- Many towns grew in size and importance under the Normans.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- 1 Explain what was important about the growth of towns in Norman England.
- 2 Write an account of the ways in which villages changed after the Norman Conquest.