

GCSE

# Anglo-Saxon and Norman England

**REVISION  
PACK**

- Student workbook for Edexcel GCSE History
- 80+ activities, including exam-style questions
- Answers for self-marking



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# Introduction



## Overview of the exam

Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, c.1060-88 is option B1 for the British depth study in paper 2. It requires you to understand the following aspects of the period:

- social
- economic
- political
- religious
- military.

## There are three key topics that you will need to study

Key topic 1 Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest, 1060-66

Key topic 2 William I in power: securing the kingdom, 1066-87

Key topic 3 Norman England, 1066-88

## Assessment objectives

The exam will assess your knowledge of the key features of this period and their causes, as well as your understanding of historical concepts such as consequence, similarity, difference, change, continuity and significance.

Assessment objective		What does it mean?
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your knowledge and understanding of Anglo-Saxon and Norman England.</li> <li>• Your ability to recall and apply a range and depth of factual knowledge about England during this period.</li> </ul>
AO2	Explain and analyse historical events and periods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your ability to communicate and explain the features and characteristics of Anglo-Saxon and Norman England using various second-order concepts such as causation, consequence, similarity, difference, change, continuity and significance.</li> </ul>

## Which questions assess which objectives?

Overall, paper 2 is worth 64 marks (32 for the period study and 32 for the British depth study).

The first three questions (booklet P) will be on your period study. The next three questions (booklet B) will be on your British depth study: Anglo-Saxon and Norman England. The first two questions of booklet B are compulsory; for the third, you choose one out of two options.

## Question 1(a) focuses on AO1

Q 1(a)	Describe <b>two</b> features of ...
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involves describing two separate features/characteristics and giving a piece of supporting information for each.</li> <li>• 1 mark will be awarded for each feature/characteristic.</li> <li>• 1 mark will be awarded for each piece of supporting information.</li> <li>• 4 marks (about 5 minutes).</li> </ul>

## Question 1(b) and 1(c) focus on AO1 and AO2

Q 1(b)	Explain why ... (Essay question with two bullet points.)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involves explaining something in depth.</li> <li>• This essay question will give you two bullet points of information. You don't have to use this information, but it's a good idea.</li> <li>• You must include other information too.</li> <li>• Aim to write on at least three themes, in three structured paragraphs.</li> <li>• 6 marks will be awarded for the quality of your AO1 knowledge and understanding.</li> <li>• 6 marks will be awarded for the quality of your explanation of the situation/event given in the question (AO2).</li> <li>• 12 marks (about 20 minutes).</li> </ul>
Q 1(c)	How far do you agree? Explain your answer. (Essay question with two bullet points.)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You must choose one out of two questions.</li> <li>• They may ask about causation, consequence, similarity, difference, change or continuity.</li> <li>• This essay question will give a statement in quotation marks.</li> <li>• It will also give you two bullet points of information. You don't have to use this information, but it's a good idea.</li> <li>• You must include other information too.</li> <li>• Aim to write on three themes, in three structured paragraphs plus a conclusion at the end.</li> <li>• You need to give a judgement (reach a decision).</li> <li>• 6 marks will be awarded for the quality of your AO1 knowledge and understanding.</li> <li>• 10 marks will be awarded for the quality of your explanation of how far you agree with the statement (AO2).</li> <li>• 16 marks (about 25 minutes).</li> </ul>

### How to use this workbook

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Overall, paper 2 is worth 64 marks (32 for the period study and 32 for the British depth study).

The first part of this guide will help you to refresh your knowledge of the three key topics you have studied on this period and to apply your knowledge using a variety of tasks.

The second part will guide you through how to answer each of the three types of question, with lots of tips and advice.

**Disclaimer:** The suggested approaches and sample questions in this revision pack have been written to complement the teaching of the specification. Edexcel have not endorsed the sample questions or approved the content.

The suggested answers provided are for exemplification. There are many ways of answering most history questions (for example, structuring essay questions). You should draw on your own knowledge and understanding as much as possible to find approaches that suit you. This guide is a good starting point.

Teachit sample

# Section 1



## Key topic 1:

# Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest

## 1.1 Anglo-Saxon society

### What was England like in the 1060s?

England had many features that made it desirable to potential invaders. It was wealthy, with an effective system of government. The king and the Church were very powerful. There were probably around two million people living in England in the 1060s, and they fell into different groups according to their status, with slaves at the bottom. England was not an isolated country before the Norman Conquest. Its people had had to fight off Viking invaders for centuries, and the king at the time, Edward the Confessor, was half Norman.

Here are some key words that you will need to know for this topic:

Key word	Definition	Category
<b>hierarchy</b>	The order of status in a society, with the most powerful and wealthy at the top.	
<b>ceorls</b>	Better off than peasants, these people still mostly worked on the land but had more freedom than peasants.	
<b>earls</b>	The highest-status people in Saxon society after the king. They ran large areas called earldoms, raised men to fight in the king's army when needed and often advised the king.	
<b>peasants</b>	Making up about 70% of the population, these people had to work on the lord's land for part of the week in exchange for land they farmed to support their own family.	
<b>slaves</b>	These people had no freedoms at all. They could be bought and sold and had to do whatever work their masters demanded of them.	
<b>thegns</b>	These people were in charge of smaller regions within earldoms. They were responsible for ensuring law and order was maintained and for helping to collect taxes owed to the king.	
<b>Danelaw</b> Also see: Hardrada, 1.3; northern revolts, 2.2	This was an area in north and east England with strong Viking roots. When Viking invaders came from Scandinavia, some settled in these areas. There were often slightly different customs and language here compared to the rest of England.	

<p><b>witan</b></p> <p><i>Also see:</i> succession crisis, 1.3</p>	<p>The small group of men who advised the king, mostly made up of earls and bishops. They met whenever the king needed them. They had the final say in the event of a succession crisis.</p>	
<p><b>mint</b></p>	<p>The place where coins were made, located in the bigger towns. This was an important process so was overseen by a royal official.</p>	
<p><b>burh</b></p>	<p>A town with defensive walls, created to hold off a Viking attack.</p>	
<p><b>archbishops</b></p>	<p>The highest-ranking Church officials. England had two: in Canterbury and in York.</p>	
<p><b>bishops</b></p>	<p>These oversaw each diocese or see (local area) for the Church and were in charge of individual priests.</p>	
<p><b>writ</b></p>	<p>Written instructions issued by the king and sent to sheriffs.</p>	
<p><b>sheriffs</b></p> <p><i>Also see:</i> Norman law and order, e.g. forest laws, 3.2</p>	<p>These were local administrators who carried out the king's orders in each shire and helped maintain law and order there.</p>	
<p><b>tithing</b></p>	<p>A group of around 10 men who were responsible for each other's good behaviour. If one committed a crime, the others had to report him to the authorities or risk a fine.</p>	
<p><b>hue and cry</b></p>	<p>If someone spotted a crime being committed, they had to shout out and encourage others to stop and catch the criminal.</p>	
<p><b>wergild</b></p>	<p>This was a form of compensation if you killed or injured someone, paid to the victim or their family. The amount varied depending on which body part you'd injured, and the status of the victim.</p>	

► **Task 1: Rank order**

Put the people from lines 2-6 of the table in hierarchy order, with the highest status first.

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

► **Task 2: Categorisation**

In the third column above, give one or two categories to each key word:

**social order**

**Church**

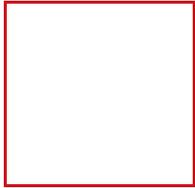
**government**

**towns**

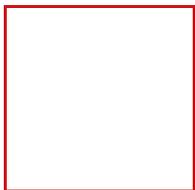
**law and order**

## What was the role of the Church in Saxon England?

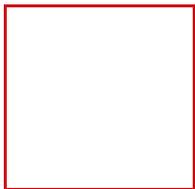
England, like most of the rest of Europe (or Christendom), was a Christian country and its Church was under the overall control of the Pope. The two archbishops of Canterbury and York worked with the king, but the Pope was God's representative on earth. Because of this, and for many other reasons too, the Saxon Church was very powerful in England.



- Archbishops and bishops often had places on the witan and helped the king to rule the country.



- People's belief in heaven and hell was very real. They relied on their local village priest to help them get to heaven by avoiding sin. As scientific understanding was limited compared to ours today, God's judgement was used to explain both good and bad things happening.



- While priests lived and worked in their local communities, monks and nuns lived completely separately in monasteries and abbeys. They prayed on people's behalf, and some wrote chronicles - records of what had been happening.



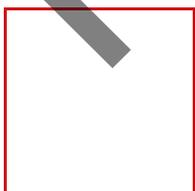
- The Church was wealthy as well as powerful since it owned around 25% of all the land in England. Some ceorls and peasants lived on Church land and owed rent to bishops.

Also see:  
William's distribution  
of land, 3.1



- The Church in England had developed slightly differently from other parts of Europe, and the Saxons had their own saints and relics.

Also see:  
William's appeal to the  
Pope, 1.3; Norman  
changes to the  
Church, 3.1



- In 1066, Stigand was the Archbishop of Canterbury and Aldred was the Archbishop of York. They had equal status.

Also see:  
William's appeal to the  
Pope, 1.3; Lanfranc's  
replacement of  
Stigand, 3.1

► **Task 3:** Add a small icon to each of the bullet points above to help the information stick in your memory.

## How were towns and villages different?

Towns and villages had some similarities, but also important differences from each other.

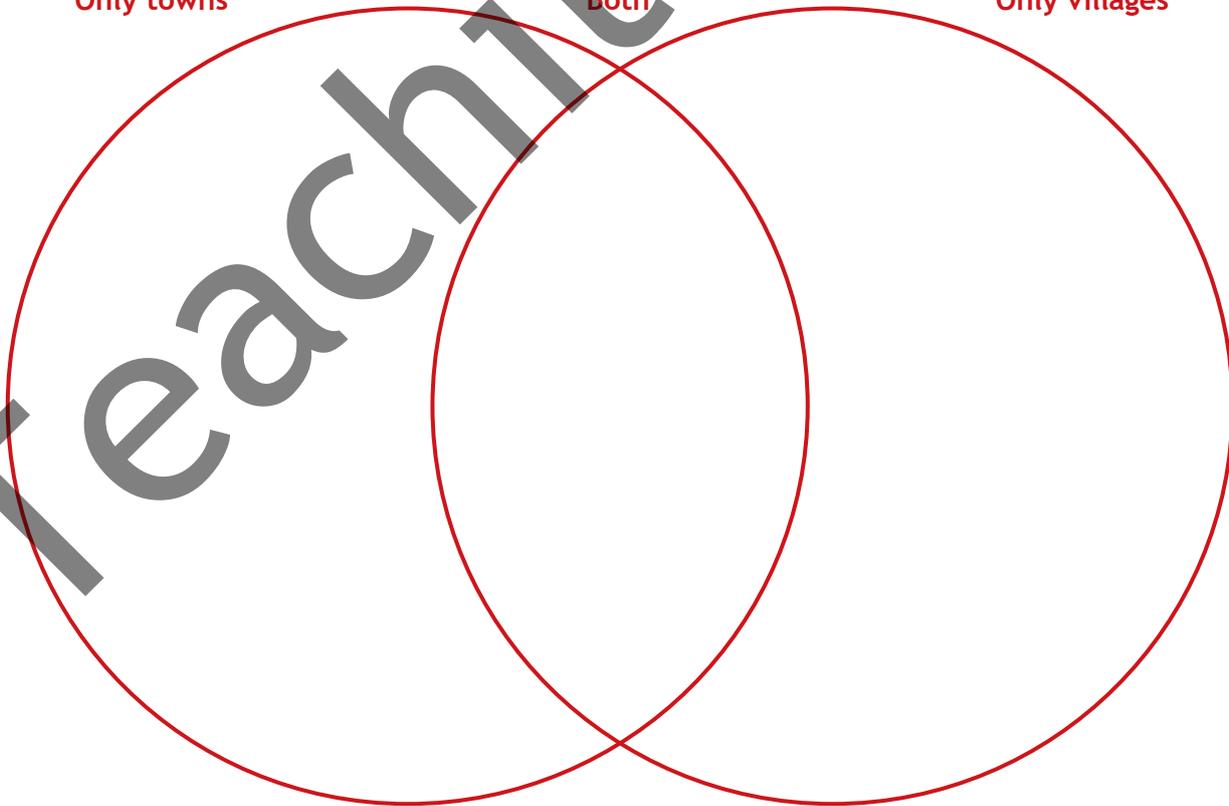
- **Task 4:** Use the colour coding to help you write each feature below into the correct place on the Venn diagram.

Around 90% of the population lived in these.	Around 10% of the population lived in these.
Some of these were also 'burhs' with defensive walls in case of a Viking attack.	These typically contained around 12 to 15 households.
Markets were held here. Sometimes goods from faraway places could be bought, e.g. spices from Asia.	Most had a church and a manor house for the local lord.
Mints could be found here, producing coins under the supervision of royal officials.	Most buildings had one storey; some had two. <small>Also see: castles 2.1</small>
There was farmland close by to grow crops and rear livestock.	The largest examples of these were London (8,000 people), Southampton and York.

Only towns

Both

Only villages



► Task 5: 4-mark exam question

**4-mark features question**

Describe two features of towns in Anglo-Saxon England.



The technique here is exactly the same as the 4-mark technique for the paper 1 breadth study. You need to state one feature, then add a sentence of supporting detail - do this twice. The paper is laid out to remind you to do this. **Avoid** stating only one feature and adding several bits of information just about that - you do need two **separate** ones.

Model answer to the above 4-mark question, which would gain 1 mark for each sentence:

**Feature 1** → *Only around 10% of the population lived in towns. Even the largest ones like London and York probably had fewer than 8,000 inhabitants.* ← **Supporting detail 1**

**Feature 2** → *Some towns were also burhs. This meant they had defensive walls built around them in case of a Viking attack.* ← **Supporting detail 2**

Now write your own answer using the same structure for each feature.

**How did the economy work in Anglo-Saxon England?**

- Late Saxon England had a strong economy and traded with many other countries. Its main exports were wool and cheese, and it imported jewellery, wine and textiles.
- Slaves could be bought and sold at port towns and even sent to live in other countries.
- People often paid rent with the goods they produced rather than with money. This was because, especially in villages, there was a subsistence economy: people used and ate almost everything they produced and had little to spare to sell for money. Some peasants paid their lords rent in eels if they lived near a river!

► **Task 6:** What further information could you add from task 4 to help explain how the Saxon economy worked? (**Clue:** What was the role of money in Anglo-Saxon England?)

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