

Anglo Saxon Kingship



("King Offa Tintern Abbey #dailyshoot #wales" by Leshaines123 is licensed under CC BY 2.0)

Have you ever visited the Old Hall at Tatton Park on a school trip, on an open day or seen it whilst out exploring? If yes, then you've trodden on the same land as Anglo Saxons! There's evidence this area was home to an Anglo Saxon farming community with a longhouse.

During Anglo Saxon times, England was split up into several areas called kingdoms which were ruled by different kings (and sometimes queens). Have you heard of the old kingdom of Mercia? Tatton Park was part of Mercia, which dominated Anglo Saxon England from around 600 to 900 AD. The most famous Mercian king was Offa who ruled from 757 - 796 AD. Read on to learn more about how Anglo Saxon kings ruled.

Here are a few fun activities about Anglo Saxon Kingship for you to try in the classroom or at home.

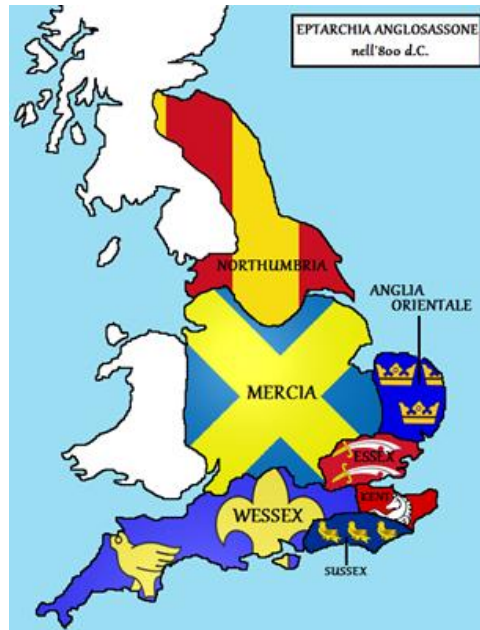
Activity 1: Naming Kingdoms

Before England was united in the later Anglo Saxon period, it is often called a 'Heptarchy' as it was mainly made up of the following seven kingdoms: East Anglia, Essex, Kent, Mercia, Northumbria, Sussex, and Wessex. But these were turbulent times; the number of kings, the number of kingdoms and the size of their lands often changed!

The map on the next page is of Anglo Saxon England during a period called the 'Mercian Supremacy' when Mercia was ruled by strong leaders and their power extended far across England. Can you correctly label the kingdoms of East Anglia, Essex, Kent, Mercia, Northumbria, Sussex, and Wessex?

Now, give yourself a royal Anglo Saxon name and decide on a name for your kingdom. Be as creative as you want, get inspiration from where you live or use a book or the internet to research Anglo Saxon words and their meanings. For example, the name Tatton comes from the Anglo Saxon 'Tata's tun' or in modern English, the farm of Tata (who was a chief).





("File:Mappa Eptarchia Anglosassone.png" by Seven97 is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0)

Activity 2: Defend your Kingdom

It was very important for Anglo Saxon kings to defend their kingdom from attack by others. Many kings built fortresses to protect their lands and made their people guard them. For example, King Offa of Mercia ordered the building of 'burhs' (fortified towns) for defensive reasons.

Pretend that part of your bedroom is your kingdom and build a fort made out of pillows, cushions, bedsheets and whatever else you are allowed to use. Then make a list of people you would trust to defend your land.

Activity 3: Reward Time

After winning a battle, Anglo Saxon kings often rewarded their loyal warriors with lands and treasure. In fact, many people fought for their kings in the hope of being rewarded afterwards - if they survived that is! Offa of Mercia granted land in Middlesex and London when he controlled those areas.

Imagine you are a successful Anglo Saxon king and make a list of your family and friends. Who would you grant lands to and why? Perhaps you could give a farm to a family member who enjoys gardening and a coastal fortress to a friend who likes the sea?

You could also use the Anglo Saxon Jewellery resource to make jewellery to reward your loyal family and friends.

