KS3 History: revision notes

The Norman Conquest

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1066: three claimants

- Edward the Confessor died in January 1066 without a son. **Harold Godwinson**, Earl of Wessex, was crowned king.
- William, Duke of Normandy, said Edward had promised him the throne and that Harold had sworn an oath to support him.
- **Harald Hardrada**, King of Norway, also claimed the throne, helped by Harold's exiled brother Tostig.
- The Channel Islands were already part of the Duchy of Normandy, so William was already their duke.

The battles

- Hardrada invaded the north. Harold marched north and defeated him at the Battle of Stamford Bridge on 25 September 1066.
- William's fleet had been held back by the wind. It crossed while Harold was in the north, landing at Pevensey on 28 September.
- At the Battle of Hastings on 14 October 1066, Harold's tired army formed a **shield wall** on a hill. The Normans used archers, cavalry and pretend retreats to break it, and Harold was killed.
- William was crowned in Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day 1066. The **Bayeux Tapestry** tells the story from the Norman side.

Keeping control

- Castles: **motte and bailey castles** were built quickly all over England to control the land around them.
- The **Harrying of the North** (1069 to 1070): after rebellions, William's army destroyed villages, crops and animals, and many people starved.
- The **feudal system**: the king gave land to barons in return for loyalty and knights; knights served the barons; peasants worked the land.

Your notes

- The **Domesday Book** (1086) recorded who owned the land and what it was worth, so William knew how much tax he could collect.

Your notes

Key terms

Claimant	Someone who claims a right to the throne.
Harold Godwinson	The English earl crowned king in January 1066.
William of Normandy	The duke who won the Battle of Hastings and became King William I.
Harald Hardrada	The King of Norway who invaded England in 1066.
Shield wall	A line of soldiers with overlapping shields.
Motte and bailey castle	A wooden castle on a mound (motte) with a fenced yard (bailey).
Harrying of the North	William's destruction of the north of England in 1069 to 1070.
Feudal system	Land given in return for loyalty and service.
Domesday Book	A survey of England's land and property made in 1086.
Bayeux Tapestry	A long embroidery showing the Norman Conquest.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. Who became king after Edward the Confessor died in January 1066?
2. Where did Harold defeat Harald Hardrada in September 1066?
3. When was the Battle of Hastings?
4. Why was Harold's army tired at Hastings?
5. When was William crowned king?
6. What was the Domesday Book?
7. When was the Domesday Book made?
8. What was the Harrying of the North?

Answers

1. Harold Godwinson
2. Stamford Bridge
3. 14 October 1066
4. They had just fought at Stamford Bridge and marched south
5. Christmas Day 1066
6. A survey of land and property in England, made for tax
7. 1086
8. William's destruction of villages and crops in the north to crush rebellion

What to do next

Practise 13 questions on this topic

Try 4 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

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Your notes