

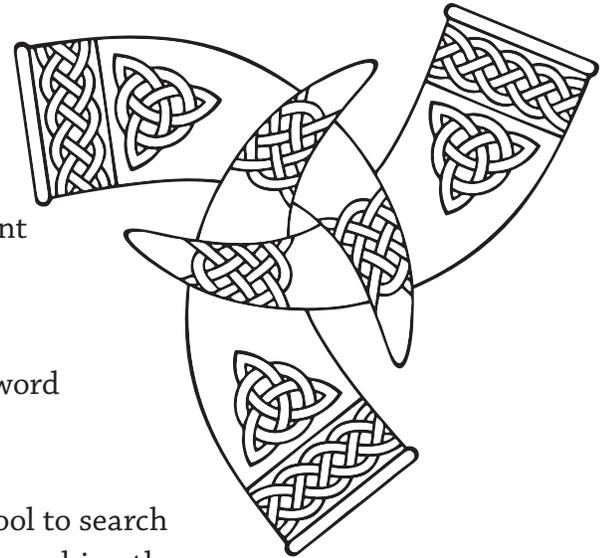
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The Vikings: Daily Life

Viking crews sailed off each spring “to go a-viking”—to raid or trade (or both) in search of wealth and adventure. However, many Vikings remained at home. Others lived in Viking trade centers or settlements established as a result of voyages to distant lands. What was it like to live in a Viking village? Let’s find out!



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Find It!

Find the answers to the questions below by using the “Search” tool to search key words. Since this activity is about Vikings, you can start by searching the key word “Vikings.”

Write the answers on the lines provided or below the question.

1. Vikings came from the region of northern Europe known as Scandinavia. Today, this region includes the modern nations of _____, _____, and _____.

2. How long ago did the ancestors of the Vikings move to Scandinavia?

3. Few Scandinavians of the Viking Age spent all their time going a-viking.

The majority worked as _____.

4. What led a large number of people in Scandinavia to leave their homes to seek wealth or a new place to live during the Viking Age?

Lose It!

Which of the answers to the questions below **do not** belong in a description of the Vikings? Circle the answer to eliminate.



5. Each Viking community had a “Thing” (pronounced “ting”). The Thing
 - a. had more authority than a king or chief
 - b. determined when to go to war
 - c. was made of icy snow
 - d. was a governing council
6. Viking women
 - a. had more rights than women in other European societies
 - b. could decide for themselves who to marry
 - c. could own land
7. The Vikings ate with
 - a. knives
 - b. forks
 - c. spoons
8. What foods did hunters and fishers supply for the Viking communities in Scandinavia?
 - a. deer
 - b. whales
 - c. herring
 - d. turkeys
 - e. cod
9. Vikings usually built their houses with
 - a. bricks
 - b. stone
 - c. wood
 - d. straw
10. A Viking burial could include:
 - a. being buried in a boat or full-sized ship.
 - b. being buried with many possessions.
 - c. being buried with living pets and slaves.
 - d. being buried next to the grave of an enemy.
11. Men wore trousers and a long-sleeved pullover shirt that reached below the waist. Women wore long, loose-fitting dresses. What was most Viking clothing generally made of?
 - a. wool
 - b. leather
 - c. cotton
 - d. linen

12. Viking warriors wore
 - a. armor made of layers of animal hide
 - b. helmets with a cattle horn on each side
 - c. coats of chain mail
 - d. metal helmets



Match It!

Draw lines to match each word below with its definition.

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 13. fiord | a. a court poet |
| 14. knorr | b. a common design in Viking art |
| 15. skald | c. a Viking trading ship |
| 16. gripping beast | d. deep coastal inlet |

Unscramble It!

Stories about the gods of the early Vikings are related in Norse mythology. Writers have borrowed characters and plots from Norse mythology all the way into the 21st century. Can you unscramble these names and match them to their definitions? Do any names sound familiar?

RHOT YRFE JFEEYR DINO GRAADS LLLAVHAA

17. _____ chief of the Norse gods and goddesses
18. _____ god of thunder and lightning
19. _____ and _____ twin gods, the god of agriculture and fertility and the goddess of love and fertility
20. _____ home of the gods
21. _____ a hall where Vikings went if they died fighting. There, they could fight all day and dine all night.

Find It!

22. What were the three social classes of Viking society?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

23. Where did the slaves in Viking society come from?

24. Who sat in the “high seat” in a Viking home?

25. Honor was important to Vikings. If one family member was disgraced, the entire family was _____, even the _____.



26. When did the Viking chieftain Rollo adopt Christianity?
(Hint: Find out more in the article about Rollo.)

27. Why did the King Charles III grant Rollo land in France as his own and did the King’s plan work? (Hint: Find out more in the article about Rollo.)

See It!

In the Vikings article, find the picture labeled “L’Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site.”

28. Examine the picture of a reconstructed Viking house. Based on the description of Viking housing in the “Viking” article, draw a diagram of what the inside of the house might look like.

29. Imagine living in a Viking house. What would be some advantages of its design?
What would be some disadvantages?

Viking Art

30. In the “Vikings” article, find the photograph of a Viking picture stone. Pick out three items illustrated on the stone, and describe how they are representative of Viking society.

| Item | What makes it “Viking” |
|----------|------------------------|
| 1. _____ | _____ |
| 2. _____ | _____ |
| 3. _____ | _____ |

31. The Vikings were skilled woodcarvers. What type of carvings did they favor for the upraised “prow” (front end) of a warship?

32. The Vikings used an alphabet made up of characters called _____.

33. What is a saga?

34. What have historians learned from the works of Snorri Sturluson, the great Icelandic poet and historian who lived shortly after the end of the Viking Age? (Hint: For this question, see the Snorri Sturluson article.)



Teacher Page

Answers:

1. Scandinavia is a region of northern Europe that today includes Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.
2. The ancestors of the Vikings moved from parts of northwestern Europe into Scandinavia beginning about 2000 B.C.—that is, some 4,000 years ago.
3. The majority of Scandinavian people worked as farmers. Some were merchants or craftspeople.
4. Historians believe there was rapid population growth in Scandinavia during this time and a short age of land. At the same time, Scandinavians developed new skills in shipbuilding and navigation that enabled them to sail farther than ever before.

5. NOT: c

Each Viking community had a governing council called a “Thing” (pronounced “ting”). This council was made up of the community’s nobles and freemen. It made laws, decided whether to go to war, and held trials to judge criminals. Its decisions were more important than the rulings of the king or chief.

6. NOT: b

Parents arranged most Viking marriages, and the husband ruled the Viking family. But Viking women had more rights than the women of other European societies of that time. A woman could own land and had a right to share in the wealth that her husband gained.

7. NOT: b

The Vikings used spoons and knives to eat, but not forks.

8. NOT: d

Turkeys were native to the Americas and were not known in Europe until centuries after the Viking Age.

9. NOT: a

Viking houses were usually made of wood or stone. They had slanted roofs covered with shingles, sod, or straw. There were few windows. A hearth provided light, heat, and a place to cook.

10. NOT: d

Vikings had elaborate burial customs, including what are called “boat burials,” in which people were laid to rest in a boat that was then buried. The burials of some wealthy people included possessions such as beds, jewelry, and weapons. In some cases, the person’s dogs and even slaves were buried alive in the grave.

11. NOT: c

Most Viking clothing was made of wool or linen. Most people wore leather shoes. Warriors often wore leather helmets.

12. NOT: b

Vikings never actually used such helmets. Warriors often wore cone-shaped helmets made of leather and armor made from thick layers of animal hides. Sometimes the hides had bone sewn into them for added protection. Leaders might wear metal helmets and “chain mail,” a type of armor made of interlaced metal rings.

13. d. A fiord (fjord) is a deep coastal inlet. Fjords are common along much of the Scandinavian coast. They contributed to making water travel an important form of transportation in the area.

14. c. A knorr was a Viking trading ship. Knorrs were about 50 feet (15 meters) long.

15. a. A skald was a court poet who entertained Viking kings and their guests.

16. b. A gripping beast was a favorite interlocking artistic design in which an animal with a twisted body grips its throat, sides, or other body parts.

17. Odin, also called Woden, was chief of the Norse gods and goddesses. The word “Wednesday” comes from the name Woden.

18. Thor, the son of Odin, was the god of thunder and lightning. The English word “Thursday” comes from the name Thor.

19. Frey and Freyja were twin gods. Frey was the god of agriculture and fertility. His twin sister, Freyja, was the goddess of love and fertility.

20. Asgard was the home of the gods.

21. Valhalla was a hall in Asgard where Vikings went if they died fighting.

22. The three social classes were nobles, freemen, and slaves.

23. Many of the slaves were Scandinavians whose ancestors had been enslaved. Others were Europeans who had been captured in Viking raids and battles.

24. The husband used a chair called the “high seat.” The rest of the family sat on benches.

25. Honor was important to Vikings. If one family member was disgraced, the entire family was disgraced, even the ancestors.

26. Rollo adopted Christianity in 911. The date is known from a treaty he made with the king of France.

27. King Charles hoped that Rollo, now with French lands of his own to protect, would help defend France from other Viking raiders. But after a few years, Rollo began to raid nearby land and expand his territory.
28. Answers will vary, but might include such features as a hearth, beds near the hearth, a high seat and benches, one or more rooms, a doorway, and few or no windows.
29. Answers will vary. Possible advantages might include a slanted roof in a climate where there is a lot of snow, building materials that provide insulation, and a hearth to provide light and warmth. Disadvantages might include water from rain leaking through a sod roof, limited light and space, and no bathrooms.
30. Answers will vary, but may include: a mounted Viking warrior wearing a cone-shaped helmet and carrying a round shield, various details of the Viking ship and rowers, waves below the ship representing the seas that the Vikings crossed, or the interlocking pattern around the border.
31. Many prows ended with a carving of the head of a dragon or a snake.
32. The Vikings wrote with characters called runes. Early runes consisted chiefly of combinations of straight lines.
33. The sagas were stories of heroic deeds written by descendants of the Vikings in medieval Iceland. Although they were written later, many sagas related stories about the Viking era.
34. His *Heimskringla (Circle of the World)* is a history of the kings of Norway from their origins up to his own day. Snorri probably also wrote *The Saga of Egill Skallagrimsson*, a saga about a great poet of the 900's who was one of Snorri's forefathers.