

# Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, c1060–88.

KT1 – Anglo-Saxon Society and the Norman Conquest, 1060-66

<b>Tier 3 Vocabulary</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Cavalry</b>	Soldiers on horseback
<b>Manoeuvres</b>	Special moves/ tactics used during a battle by troops.
<b>Feigned retreat</b>	Pretending to run away so that the enemy chased them and could be surrounded.
<b>Elite</b>	The best

Learning sequence

Anglo-Saxon Society & Government

The House of Godwin

The Claimants to the throne

The Battles in the North

The Battle of Hastings



1.  
Troops

# Who will win: Anglo-Saxons or Normans?

Type of Soldier	Advantages	Disadvantages
Anglo-Saxon Housecarls		
Anglo-Saxon Fyrd		
Norman Knights		
Norman Archers		
Norman Foot soldiers		

# Harold's housecarls

## Housecarls: advantages

A disciplined shield wall protected housecarls against arrows and was very hard to break. The housecarls' heavy axes caused severe injuries and took down horses.

## Housecarls: disadvantages

Depended on discipline and endurance. Once the shield wall was weakened, its advantages disappeared; opponents could charge through and cause chaos.

Weapons: javelin, long axe (1.3 m handle, big swing), sword. The housecarls were trained to swing their axes with such force that they could cut a horse's head off.

Shields: usually round, wooden shields with central metal boss. Housecarls formed the shield wall, with troops two or three lines thick behind it. Housecarls practised making a temporary gap in the wall for axemen behind to strike, then closing the wall again.



Elite skills: shield wall, long-handled axe; discipline and endurance. Harold's housecarls were the best foot soldiers in Europe. Would fight to the death to defend their king.

Armour: chain mail or metal plates sewn onto leather. Cone-shaped helmet with nose-piece. Similar design to Norman armour.



# Who will win: Anglo-Saxons or Normans?

## Harold's Anglo-Saxon Army

### Fact file

#### Anglo-Saxon housecarls

**Who were they?** Professional soldiers, highly trained, well paid and fiercely loyal to Harold.



**How were they armed?** Their main weapon was a battle axe. The handle was a metre long and the axe head was made from sharpened iron. One swing of the axe could cut the head off a horse or split a man's head in half. Sometimes they used a double-edged sword. They carried shields, and wore short coats of chain mail and pointed iron helmets.

**What were their tactics?** In defence, they formed a shield wall. In attack, they swung their axes. They fought on foot.

### Fact file

#### Anglo-Saxon fyrd

**Who were they?** Working men who were called up to help the king in time of danger. Led by the king's thegns, they were trained as fighters.



**How were they armed?** The thegns had swords and spears and some were archers; the ordinary working men used their own farming tools like axes, pitchforks and scythes.

**What were their tactics?** The fyrd fought on foot and engaged the enemy in hand-to-hand fighting.

1.  
Troops

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Norman Foot soldiers		

I Do

We Do

You Do



# William's knights

## Knights: advantages

Devastating charges; height advantage for the mounted knight to strike downwards in combat.

## Knights: disadvantages

Horses vulnerable to attack, advantage of charge lost when charging up hill.

Gonfanon: a battle pennant used for signalling manoeuvres (a special move troops carry out).

Weapons: lance, also javelin, sword, mace.

Horse: specially bred to be strong enough to carry an armoured knight and trained for battle. William had to bring his war horses (called destriers) across the Channel.



Shield: kite-shaped, to protect left side and leg.

Armour: chain mail. Probably not onesie-style as shown in Tapestry but with flaps to cover legs. Cone-shaped helmet with nose-piece.

Saddle, stirrups, spurs: the knights' saddles held them tightly in place on their horse so they could use their arms freely. The stirrups allowed them to stand in the saddle for a powerful lance-thrust; the spurs helped in manoeuvres.

Elite skills: years of training to fight on horseback, special manoeuvres.



## William's Norman army

William's Norman army was very different from Harold's Anglo-Saxon one.

### Fact file

#### Norman knights

**Who were they?** William's best soldiers, highly trained, well paid and loyal to William.

**How were they armed?** They had spears, swords and heavy iron clubs covered in spikes.

**What were their tactics?** They charged at the enemy, riding on strong war horses, cutting down the enemy's foot soldiers.



### Fact file

#### Norman archers

**Who were they?** Trained and well-paid members of the army.

**How were they armed?** They had bows and arrows but very little armour.

**What were their tactics?** They could fire up to six arrows a minute, killing a man from 180 metres away.



### Fact file

#### Norman foot soldiers

**Who were they?** The main part of William's army.

**How were they armed?** They had swords and shields.

**What were their tactics?** They went in for the kill after the knights and archers had done their work.



1.  
Troops

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# Describe two features of William's army at the Battle of Hastings.

This question is **worth 4 marks**.  
You get **2 marks per feature**.

**A feature** is something distinctive or characteristic e.g. one feature here might be the system of earldoms. Each feature needs a **supporting detail**. This is some specific information that shows you understand the feature.

## Self-assess

Have you included:

- One clear feature of William's army at the Battle of Hastings
- A supporting detail for the feature
- Another clear feature of William's army at the Battle of Hastings
- Another supporting detail

**Describe two features of William's army at the Battle of Hastings (4).**

*One feature of William's army at the Battle of Hastings was...*

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*For example,*

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*Another feature of William's army at the Battle of Hastings was...*

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*For example,*

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I Do

We Do

You Do