



# Vikings

## WORDS

**barley** = a plant that you use to make food and alcohol

**bury** = to put a dead person into a grave

**capture** = to catch somebody and keep him as a prisoner

**chief** = leader of a group of people

**conquer** = to get control of a country by fighting

**explore** = to travel around a place and find out something about it

**found** = to make a town or city

**fur** = the thick soft hair of an animal

**hearth** = the place around a fireplace in a house

**historian** = a person who studies history

**include** = also consist of

**linen** = cloth made from the flax plant

**long-sleeved** = a piece of clothing that covers your whole arm

**merchant** = a person who buys and sells things

**oats** = a grain from which flour is made; it is used for cooking and to feed animals

**one-story** = a building with only one floor

**population** = all the people in a country

**raid** = a short attack

**raise cattle** = to feed cows so that they can be used for getting meat or milk

**settle** = to start living in a place

**shingles** = a small thin piece of wood on the wall or the roof of a house

**slant** = not horizontal but tilted

**slave** = a person who is owned by somebody else and works for him but doesn't get any money

**trade** = to buy and sell

**warrior** = a soldier who is very brave

**worship** = to pray to God

The Vikings were **warriors** who terrorized Europe between 700 and 1000. They also **explored** the coast of Europe and the North Atlantic and even reached America.

The Vikings lived in Scandinavia, the northern part of Europe. They **conquered** and **raided** parts of England, France and Germany, and even got as far south as Spain and Italy.

Viking ships **explored** Iceland and Greenland and at about 1000 the Vikings **founded** a town in North America, but it didn't last very long.

The Viking Age began at a time when the **population** of Scandinavia started to grow. **Historians** believe that, because there was not enough farmland to live on, many Vikings looked for places to **settle** outside Scandinavia. They also made faster ships with which they could travel to farther places.

The Vikings lived on farms or in villages. There were three groups of people:

1. The nobles were the kings or **chiefs** of each village. They also **included** people who were very rich.
2. The freemen were farmers or **merchants**.
3. The third group were the **slaves**, who were **captured** when the Vikings fought against other people.

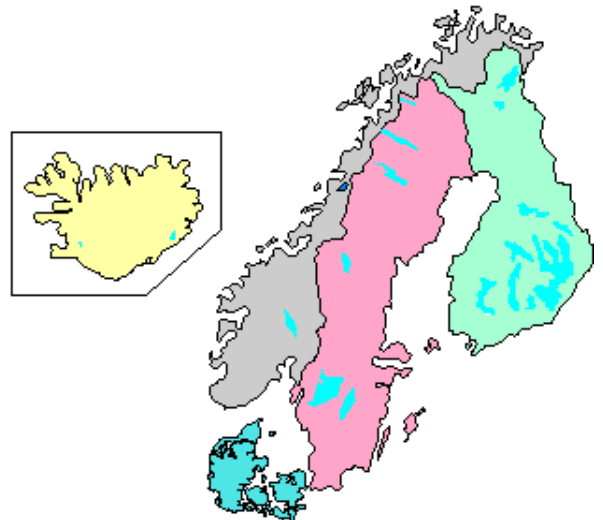
Most of the Vikings were farmers. They grew fruits and vegetables as well as **barley** and **oats**. They also **raised cattle**, goats, pigs and sheep. Some Vikings were fishermen and others were good at building ships. In bigger villages Vikings lived as **merchants**. They sailed a lot and **traded furs**, gold, silver and other things.



Most Viking men wore trousers that reached to the knee and a **long-sleeved** pullover or shirt. Women wore dresses made of **linen** or wool. All Vikings wore leather shoes.

Viking houses were **one-story** buildings with **slanted** roofs. Some houses only had one room. The walls were made of wood or stone. The roof was covered with **shingles** or straw. In every house there was a **hearth** that gave Vikings heat and a place to cook.

Religion played an important role in the life of Vikings. They **worshipped** many gods. The chief god was called Odin. When Vikings died they were **buried** in boats. Rich people were even put into big ships.





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**axe** = a tool with a heavy metal blade; it has a long handle and you use it to cut wood

**bow** = a curved object that you use for shooting arrows ;it has a string connected to a thin piece of curved wood

**brave** =not afraid in dangerous situations

**broad** = wide

**defend** =to protect yourself from being attacked

**direction** =the way something comes from or moves

**disappear** =to be gone again

**fear** = to be afraid of

**increase** = to make bigger

**invade** = to enter a country and take control of it

**keel** =a bar along the bottom of a boat that keeps it steady in the water

**laid** = put

**landmark** = something that you can easily see and that helps know where you are

**navigator** = a person on a ship who says which way to go

**raid** = a short attack on a place

**rely** =to trust on someone or depend on them

**row** =to make a boat move across the water with wooden sticks

**shallow** = not deep

**shield** =a large piece of metal that soldiers use to protect their bodies when they fight

**speed** =how fast something is

**stable** = balanced

**victim** =a person you attack

**warrior** = a soldier who is very brave

Because the Vikings lived near the sea, they travelled a lot by boat. They were the best shipbuilders of their time. Viking ships could sail better than others because they **laid** a long piece of wood at the bottom of the ship, which became known as the **keel**. It made the ship **stable** in stormy weather and it also **increased** the **speed**.

Viking **navigators** used the sun and the stars to find out where they were. They also **relied** on **landmarks**, like islands. On cloudy days they found directions with the help of birds or whales.

Vikings liked fighting. They were very **brave** and liked adventures, but they could also be very brutal. Many Europeans **feared** them.

When Vikings **invaded** a new territory they usually came with a few hundred ships and thousands of **warriors**. Sometimes they landed with only a few ships, **raided** villages and quickly **disappeared**.

Vikings were famous for their surprise attacks. They could **row** their light boats into **shallow** rivers and overran their **victims** so fast that they had no chance of **defending** themselves.

Vikings fought with **axes**, **bows** and arrows. They used both hands to swing their **broad axe** at an enemy, chopping off their hands or their heads. Most **warriors** carried round wooden **shields** to protect themselves. They also wore helmets made of leather.





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### WORDS

**A.D.** = after the birth of Christ

**archaeologist** = a person who studies what is left of old buildings

**crew** = all the people who work on a ship

**discover** = to find something that you didn't know before

**explorer** = a person who travels around and tries to find out something about new places

**found** = to start something new

**historian** = a person who studies history

**map** = a piece of paper that shows countries, towns, rivers, cities etc..

**natives** = people who have lived there all the time

**persuade** = to make someone do something by giving them reasons for doing it

**raise cattle** = to feed cows so that they can be used for getting meat or milk

**ruins** = the part of a building or a small town that hasn't been destroyed

**settle** = to start living in a place where not many people have lived before

**settlement** = a small new town or village

**shore** = coast

**voyage** = trip by boat

## Eric the Red and Leif Ericson

Eric the Red was a famous Viking **explorer** who lived at about 950 **A.D.** He got this name because of his red hair. When his father had to leave Norway because he had killed somebody, Eric went with him. The family **settled** in Iceland.

Eric decided to **explore** the island and when he sailed west he **discovered** Greenland.

In 985 he **persuaded** some friends and relatives to go to Greenland with him. Two towns were **founded** there with a total of about 400 people.

Eric became the leader of these two towns. Some **settlers** were farmers and **raised cattle** pigs and sheep. Others hunted bears and other animals.

When Eric died his son Leif Ericson became the leader of the towns in Greenland. He also continued the **voyages** of his father and led the first Viking expedition to the coast of North America.

In 1002 Ericson sailed west from Greenland. With a **crew** of 35 men, he landed on a **shore** where he met **natives** who grew grapes. The men made wine from the grapes and Ericson named the place Vinland.

Nobody knows where Ericson exactly landed, because there were no **maps** at that time. Many **historians** think that the landing place was an island near today's coast of Newfoundland. **Archaeologists** found the **ruins** of an old Viking **settlement** there. Others think that Ericson may have travelled as far south as Massachusetts.

Over the following twenty years the Vikings founded many **settlements** in the new world but they didn't last very long.