



## Y5 Thinking like a historian

### Britain's settlement by Anglo Saxons

#### Key Knowledge:

#### Invasion

The Saxons were many different groups who invaded England in the 5th and 6th centuries from Northern Europe.

The Saxons were warriors and took power where the Romans had left, creating their kingdom in England.

The Anglo-Saxons settled in the eastern parts of Britain, in what is today Kent, Sussex, Essex, and East Anglia. Anglo-Saxon Britain wasn't ruled by one person and the Anglo-Saxons were not united. They arrived as many different tribes and each took over different parts of Britain. There were five key kingdoms.

They brought tools, weapons and farm animals with them and built new villages.

#### Civilisation

Most Anglo-Saxons were Ceorls. These were the common people or peasants.

Ceorls were usually poor and lived in small huts. They worked on the land or had a trade, like weaving, metal-working or carpentry.

Ceorls had to fight for their thane. In return, the thanes gave them protection from invaders.

Slaves were at the very bottom of Anglo-Saxon society. Many slaves were badly treated and forced to work for a thane their whole life.

Slaves would wear cheap, dull clothes made from wool. At the end of their working day, a slave would sleep in the cowshed or barn.

#### Worship and belief

When the Anglo-Saxons arrived in Britain, they were Pagans worshipping a number of different gods. Pope Gregory the Great of Rome wanted to convert the Saxons to Christianity. In AD595 Pope Gregory sent a mission to Britain led by St Augustine to convert the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity.

Augustine arrived in Kent and firstly converted the king there called Ethelbert. More and more Anglo-Saxon kings and their people became Christians too. This is because they realised that by converting to one God, they could unite their people.

## Learning Questions

Why did the Romans leave Britain and what attracted the Anglo-Saxons to settle here?

Why did the Anglo-Saxons come to Britain, and how did they establish their communities and kingdoms?

What was life like for common people (Ceorls) in Anglo-Saxon communities?

How did the Anglo-Saxon justice system resolve disputes and maintain order in the community?

Why was St. Augustine's mission important for the Anglo-Saxons?

How did Mercia become the most powerful Anglo-Saxon kingdom by 796 CE?

