HOW TO USE - NOTES FOR TEACHERS

These resources from Historic Royal Palaces are multi-purpose.
They are ready for you to tweak and use in your lessons.

For the best experience, download and open the file in the PowerPoint desktop app.

Answers are found under the slide. Click on the notes symbol at the bottom of the screen.

Delete text and images to make your own worksheets.

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Lived: c.1025 - 1075
Birthplace: England

Reigned: 1045 – 1066

In the biography, Edward and Edith are presented in a **saintly** light.

QUEEN EDITH

An intelligent and resilient Saxon Queen

Edith was well educated and spoke several languages.

- Edith married King Edward the Confessor in 1045 and was **crowned** queen.
- Became one of his closest advisors.
- After he died, Edith's brother Harold became king.
- She became one of the richest women in England.

In 1066, her brother King Harold was killed at the Battle of Hastings.

She was one of the very few English landowners to keep all their lands after the battle.

She later became the **patron** of a **biography** of King Edward.

Q: What evidence is there that Edith was an intelligent and resilient woman?

Courtesy of the British Library
Cotton Tiberius B. V, Part 1

SAXON FARMER

A free man who worked the land to support himself and his family

At the time, the walled city of London was surrounded by farmland.

Most **Saxons** living in England at the time of the Norman Conquest were farmers. They usually paid rent for their land to a lord.

After 1066, the Normans introduced the **feudal system** to England. All farmers now had to work for a set number of days a week on their lord's land.

- Grew a wide range of crops including einkorn (a type of wheat), barley and oats.
- Made and used tools such as **scythes**, forks and **billhooks**, and ploughs pulled by oxen.
- Kept cows, sheep, pigs, goats, chickens and ducks.

Q: Can you describe the tools the farmers in the image are using? How do you think the **feudal system** changed their lives?

Courtesy of the British Library
Cotton Claudius D.II

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR

The first Norman King of England

Lived: c.1028 - 1087
Birthplace: Normandy, France

Reigned: 1066 - 1087

He was the first king to be **crowned** at Westminster Abbey.

- Became the Duke of Normandy.
- Was an experienced and ruthless **military** commander.
- Inspired fear and respect.

In 1066, he became King of England after defeating the **Saxon** King Harold at the Battle of Hastings. After this, he was also known as William the Conqueror.

He knew that the key to controlling England was to control London.

He ordered a great stone **fortress** to be built in London, now known as the White Tower at the Tower of London. It took 25 years to complete.

He was **crowned** at Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day.

Q: Why do you think William built a huge **fortress** in London?

Courtesy of the British Library Thompson 33

NORMAN KNIGHT

A highly trained warrior who fought on horseback

Norman **knights** were the sons of **noblemen**. When they were young, they were trained to ride horses and fight with a sword.

At around the age of 18 they were knighted in a ceremony where they were tapped on each shoulder with a sword.

The **knights** were the Normans' 'secret weapon' at the Battle of Hastings.

Saxons and Vikings always fought on foot.

To go into battle, a Norman **knight** needed:

- a strong warhorse known as a 'destrier'
- a suit of **mail**, a helmet and a shield
- a sword and a **lance**.

Q: What items protected Norman **knights** in battle?
How did the Norman **knights** help William I to win the battle of Hastings?

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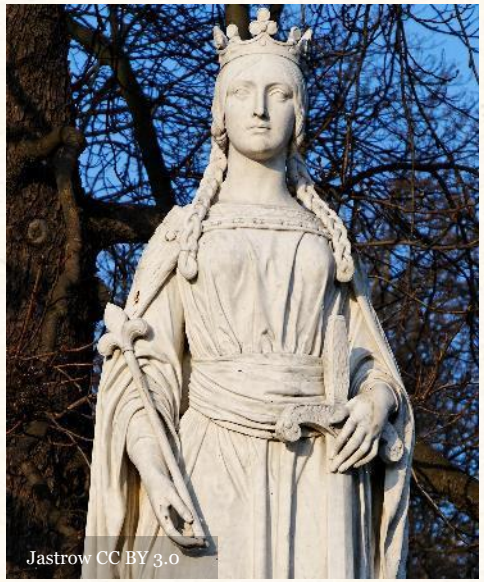


Jastrow CC BY 3.0

QUEEN MATILDA

A powerful Duchess of Normandy and Queen of England

Lived: c.1031 - 1083
Birthplace: Flanders, France

Reigned: 1066 - 1083

Made sure all her children were extremely well educated.

Matilda's parents were Count Baldwin of **Flanders** and Adela of France.

- Matilda married William, Duke of Normandy, around 1051.
- Served as **regent** in Normandy when William invaded England.
- **Crowned** Queen of England at Westminster Abbey in 1068.
- Matilda and William had four sons and five daughters.

Matilda returned to Normandy after her coronation, and served as **regent** while William was in England.

She also ruled England as regent when William was in Normandy between 1081 and 1083.

Q: How did Matilda enable William to rule both Normandy and England?

Courtesy of the British Library Royal 20 A. II

WILLIAM II

A strong but unpopular king

Lived: c.1057 - 1100
Birthplace: Normandy, France

Reigned: 1087 - 1100

He was killed by an arrow while out hunting, supposedly by accident.

William II was the third son of William I. His mother was Queen Matilda. He had an elder brother called Robert who **inherited** Normandy.

William II was a strong **military** commander.

- Defeated two invasions of England by the Scottish king.
- Extended the power of the Normans into areas that had been part of Scotland.
- Led invasions against his brother in Normandy.

William increased **taxes** to pay for these wars and his expensive lifestyle. He is also known as 'William Rufus'. Rufus is a Latin word meaning 'red'.

Q: Can you suggest how William might have got his nickname?

Why do you think he was an unpopular king?

GUNDULF OF ROCHESTER

The Norman monk who supervised the building of the White Tower

Lived: c.1024 - 1108
Birthplace: unknown

Gundulf was probably born in Normandy and came to England in 1070.

He was a **monk** and an **architect**. He was already well known for his skill in designing and building stone castles and churches.

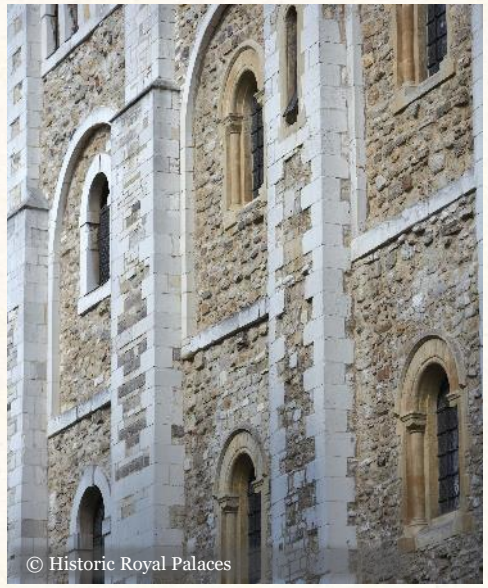
In 1077, William I asked Gundulf to **supervise** work on a great **fortress** in London. The work focused on the White Tower at the Tower of London. In exchange, William gave Gundulf the title of **Bishop** of Rochester and gave him permission to build a new cathedral there.

In 1888, when part of Rochester Cathedral was restored, a statue of Gundulf was added to the building.

He is also known as the 'father' of the **Royal Engineers**.

Q: Gundulf wanted to build churches not **fortresses**. How did William persuade him to work on the Tower of London?

What might the statue of Gundulf be holding?



RANULF FLAMBARD

One of the first prisoners held at the Tower of London and the first to escape

Lived: c.1060 - 1128
Birthplace: unknown

This image shows windows at the White Tower where Ranulf may have been held.

'Flambard' is a nickname meaning fiery.

Ranulf became **Bishop** of Durham and was a powerful government **minister** to King William II. Part of his job was to collect **taxes** ordered by the King. This made him unpopular.

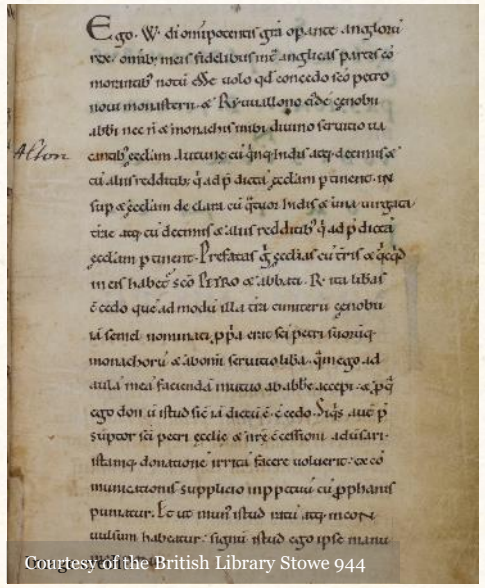
In 1100, William's brother, Henry I, became king. Ranulf was arrested. He was **imprisoned** in the White Tower at the Tower of London. His escape involved:

- Ordering barrels of wine to have a feast with the guards.
- Asking his friends to hide a rope inside one of the barrels.
- Watching the guards get drunk.
- Escaping out of a window using the rope and into a waiting boat.

Q: Can you think of any reasons why Henry might have wanted to imprison Ranulf, when he became king?

WILLIAM OF POITIERS

A Norman priest who wrote a biography of William I



Courtesy of the British Library Stowe 944

Lived: c.1020 - 1090
Birthplace: France

William of Poitiers' original biography no longer exists. This image shows an example of Latin writing from around the 1070s.

William of Poitiers described William I at the Battle of Hastings:

'William was a noble general, inspiring courage, sharing danger, more often commanding men to follow than urging them on from the rear.'

William was born into a wealthy Norman family. He originally trained as a **knight**. Later, he became a priest and **chaplain** to William, Duke of Normandy (who later became King William I).

William of Poitiers wrote a **biography** of William I between 1071 and 1077. It tells the story of how William I planned and achieved the conquest of England. It also includes a detailed description of the Battle of Hastings which is probably based on first-hand **oral** accounts.

William wrote the biography in Latin. Translated into English, the title is 'The Deeds of William, Duke of the Normans and King of the English'.

Q: Why is William of Poitiers' description of the Battle of Hastings important as historical evidence? Do you think the biography is likely to be biased?

Lived:
Birthplace:

Q:

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VOCABULARY LIST

architect | person who designs buildings and plans and supervises them being built

billhook | tool with a short handle and a wide curved blade used for cutting small branches off trees

biography | story of someone's life written by someone else

bishop | important and powerful member of the Christian church

chaplain | churchman who provides religious support to a particular person or organisation

crowned | when a crown is placed on the head of someone during a ceremony to recognise them officially as king or queen

engineer | person who designs, builds or maintains engines, machines or structures such as buildings or bridges

feudal system | form of government based on land ownership with the king at the top and farmers or peasants at the bottom

Flanders | large region in northern Europe in the Middle Ages

garrison | group of soldiers defending a town or building, or the buildings that the soldiers live in

government | group of people that have the authority to rule a country

imprisoned | kept in a prison

inherited | given something such as money or a title after the death of the person who had owned or held them before

knight | man who served his king or lord as a soldier on horseback in the Middle Ages

lance | type of long spear

mail | type of armour made up of small metal rings linked together

VOCABULARY LIST

military | word used in connection with an armed force such as soldiers

minister | someone with a lot of power and responsibility in government

monastery | building or buildings where religious communities of men called monks live and worship

monk | member of a religious community of men

Noblemen | men of high rank in society

oral | spoken rather than written

oxen | a type of cattle often used to pull carts or ploughs

patron | someone who gives financial or other support to a person or organisation

policies | plans for how to do things, usually used by the government or big organisations

regent | person who rules when the king or queen is unable to

Saxon | one of a group of people who lived in Britain from around 410 to 1066; the first Saxons came from what is now Germany

Royal Engineers | military unit which provides engineering support to the British Army.

saintly | someone who is very holy

supervise | tool used for cutting crops with a long-curved blade attached to a long handle at an angle

scythe | type of long spear

taxes | money that you have to pay to the government or ruler; in the past taxes were used to pay for things such as building projects and wars