

# Vikings and the Kievan Rus



**Directions: Complete the following in any order except for #5. That must be last.**

1. *MAP: complete map of Medieval Europe*
2. *HIPP: on primary source material*
3. *SUMMARY: 30-word summary on the Viking article*
4. *VIDEO: guided notes on 10-min video about the Rus*
5. *EXIT INTERVIEW: oral conversation with Paragas on one SEPTEC theme from what you learned about this topic*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Per: \_\_\_\_\_

# Document: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>H</b>	<b><i>Historical Context</i></b>	<p><i>What was going on when the author wrote this document? What larger events shaped the writing of this document? Try to incorporate relevant regional- or period-specific terminology. How does understanding the context help you better interpret the source?</i></p>
<b>I</b>	<b><i>Intended Audience</i></b>	<p><i>Identify the person or group the author expects to inform or influence. How does this impact the author's message?</i></p>
<b>P</b>	<b><i>Purpose</i></b>	<p><i>Why did the author create this source? What might the author have to gain (or lose) by creating this source?</i> <b>MOTIVE?</b></p>
<b>P</b>	<b><i>Point of View (P.O.V.)</i></b>	<p><i>Who is the author? How did the author's background (race, gender, social class, upbringing, etc.) impact their writing? What broad historical theme(s) influenced the author in creating this document?</i></p>

**DIRECTIONS:** Complete one “HIPP” on the following two documents (used in conjunction)

**Primary Source #1**



**Primary Source #2**

The following passage is from *The Primary Chronicles* written down in 1100 CE when Prince Vladimir sent “ten good and wise men” to compare the religions of the Volga Emirate, the Franks, and the Byzantines.

*We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendor or such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it...We know only that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations. For we cannot forget that beauty.*

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Source: Serge A. Zenkovsky, *Medieval Russia’s Epics, Chronicles, and Tales* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1974), pp. 67-68

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# AP World: 30 Word Summary

1. Read as much of the assigned reading as possible.
2. As you read, think about the main idea(s) of what you are reading.
3. Write a 30-word SENTENCE(S) summary of the main idea(s) in the spaces below. 30 WORDS!!! You may have as few as 27 words, or as many as 33, but no more or no less. Remember, you are writing (a) sentence(s)!
4. You will share your 30-word summary with a group.

THE TOPIC OF MY READING IS: \_\_\_\_\_

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
10	11	12
13	14	15
16	17	18
19	20	21
22	23	24
25	26	27 (You may stop here)
28	29	30
31	32	33 (You must stop here)

# A brief history of the Vikings

By Philip Parker the author of *The Northmen's Fury: A History of the Viking World* (Vintage, 2015).

**\*this document had been edited by Mr. Paragas for educational purposes**

Invaders, predators, barbarians – the Vikings are often portrayed merely as one-dimensional warriors whose achievements include little more than plundering and raiding. But from where did the Vikings originate and were they really violent, godless pagans? Here, Philip Parker explains the real history of the Viking world...



In 793, terror descended on the coast of Northumbria as armed raiders attacked the defenseless monastery of St Cuthbert on Lindisfarne. The terrified monks watched helplessly as the invaders made off with a haul of treasure and a clutch of captives. It was the first recorded raid by the Vikings, seaborne pirates from Scandinavia who would prey on coastal communities in north-western Europe for more than two centuries and create for themselves a reputation as fierce and pitiless warriors.

That image was magnified by those who wrote about the Viking attacks – in other words, their victims. The Anglo-Saxon cleric Alcuin of York wrote dramatically of the **Lindisfarne raid** that the “church was spattered with the blood of the priests of God, despoiled of all its ornaments... given as a prey to pagan peoples” and subsequent (mainly Christian) writers and chroniclers lost few opportunities to demonize the (mainly pagan) Vikings.

Yet, though they undeniably carried out very destructive and violent attacks, from small-scale raids against churches to major campaigns involving thousands of warriors, the Vikings formed part of a complex and often sophisticated Scandinavian culture. As well as raiders they were traders, reaching as far east as the rivers of Russia and the Caspian Sea; explorers, sending ships far across the Atlantic to land on the coastline of North America five centuries before Columbus; poets, composing verse and prose sagas of great power, and artists, creating works of astonishing beauty.

The Vikings originated in what is now Denmark, Norway and Sweden (although centuries before they became unified countries). Their homeland was overwhelmingly rural, with almost no towns. The vast majority earned a meagre living through agriculture, or along the coast, by fishing. Advances in shipping technology in the 7th and 8th centuries meant that boats were powered by sails rather than solely by oars. These were then added to vessels made of overlapping planks (‘clinker-built’) to create longships, swift shallow-drafted boats that could navigate coastal and inland waters and land on beaches.



Exactly what first compelled bands of men to follow their local chieftain across the North Sea in these longships is unclear. It may have been localized overpopulation, as plots became subdivided to the point where families could barely eke out a living; it may have been political instability, as chieftains fought for dominance; or it may have been news brought home by merchants of the riches to be found in trading settlements further west. Probably it was a combination of all three. But in 793 that first raiding party hit Lindisfarne and within a few years further Viking bands had struck Scotland (794), Ireland (795) and France (799).

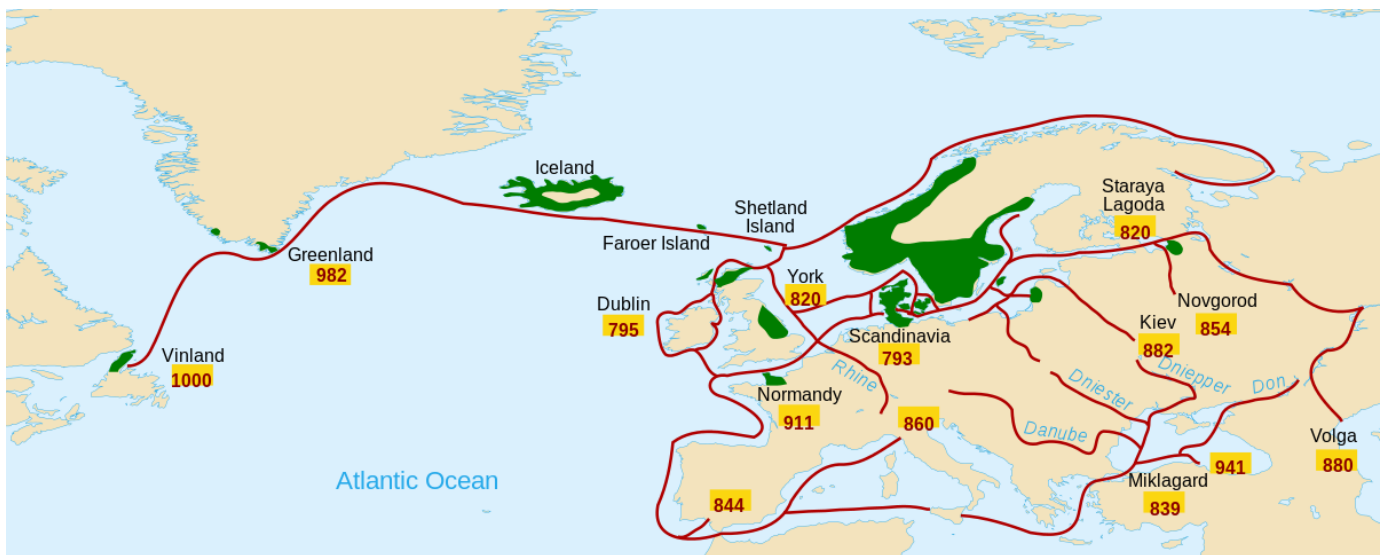
Their victims did not refer to them as Vikings. That name came later, becoming popularized by the 11th century and possibly deriving from the word *vik*, which in the Old Norse language the Vikings

spoke means 'bay' or 'inlet'. Instead they were called *Dani* ('Danes') – there was no sense at the time that this should refer only to the inhabitants of what we now call Denmark – *pagani* ('pagans') or simply *Normanni* ('Northmen').

## Raids

At first the raids were small-scale affairs, a matter of a few boatloads of men who would return home once they had collected sufficient plunder or if the resistance they encountered was too strong. But in the 850s they began to overwinter in southern England, in Ireland and along the Seine in France, establishing bases from which they began to dominate inland areas.

The raids reached a crescendo in the second half of the ninth century. In Ireland the Vikings established *longphorts* – fortified ports – including at Dublin, from which they dominated much of the eastern part of the island. In France they grew in strength as a divided Frankish kingdom fractured politically and in 885 a Viking army besieged and almost captured Paris.



By the mid-11th century united kingdoms had appeared in Denmark, Norway and Sweden and the raids had finally begun to subside. There was a final burst of activity in the early 11th century when royal-sponsored expeditions succeeded in conquering England again and placing Danish kings on the throne there (including, most notably, Canute, who ruled an empire in England, Denmark and Norway, but who almost certainly did not command the tide to go out, as a folk tale alleges). Vikings remained in control of large parts of Scotland (especially Orkney), an area around Dublin and Normandy in France (where in 911 King Charles the Simple had granted land to a Norwegian chieftain, Rollo, the ancestor of William the Conqueror). They also controlled a large part of modern Ukraine and Russia, where Swedish Vikings had penetrated in the ninth century and established states based around Novgorod and Kiev.

## Settlements

This was not the full extent of the Viking world, however. The same maritime aggression that had caused them to plunder (and ultimately conquer) settled lands also led them to venture in search of unknown shores on which to settle. Vikings probably arrived in the Faroes in the eighth century and they used this as a stepping-stone to sail further west across the Atlantic.

In the mid-ninth century a series of Viking voyages came across **Iceland** and in the year 872 colonists led by Ingólf Arnarson settled on the island. They established a unique society, fiercely independent



and owing no formal allegiance to the kings of Norway. It was a republic whose supreme governing body was, from 930, the Althing, an assembly made up of Iceland's chief men which met each summer in a plain beside a massive cleft in a ring of hills in the center of the island. It has a strong claim to be the world's oldest parliament.

## Religion

Iceland was the location of another drama that highlights the transition of Viking societies away from warrior chieftainships. Christianity came later to Scandinavian Viking societies than to many other parts of Europe. Whereas France's kings had accepted Christianity by the early sixth century and the Anglo-Saxon kings of England largely in the seventh, Christian missionaries only appeared in southern Scandinavia in the ninth century and made little headway there until Harald Bluetooth of Denmark accepted baptism in around 960. Harald had become Christian after a typical piece of Viking theatre: a drunken argument around the feasting table as to which was more powerful – Odin and Thor, or the new Christian God and his son, Jesus.



Iceland remained resolutely pagan, loyal to old gods such as Odin; the All Father; a one-eyed god who had sacrificed the other eye in exchange for knowledge of runes; and Thor, the thunder-god with his great hammer Mjölner, who was also especially popular with warriors.

Detail of a stone relief representing the divine triad: Odin (the chief god in Norse mythology), Thor (god of thunder) and Freyr (god of fertility). Gotland, Sweden. Image c1987. (Photo By DEA/G DAGLI ORTI/De Agostini/Getty Images)

Iceland became Christian to avoid a civil war. Competing pagan and Christian factions threatened to tear the Althing apart and dissolve Iceland into separate, religiously hostile, states.

## Explorations

Iceland, too, was the platform from which the Vikings launched their furthest-flung explorations. In 982 a fiery tempered chieftain, **Erik the Red**, who had already been exiled from Norway for his father's part in a homicide, was then exiled from Iceland for involvement in another murder. He had heard rumors of land to the west and, with a small group of companions, sailed in search of it. What he found was beyond his wildest imaginings. Only 300 kilometers west of Iceland, **Greenland** is the world's largest island, and its south and south-west tip had fjords [deep, narrow and elongated sea or lakedrain, with steep land on three sides] and lush pastures that must have reminded Erik of his Scandinavian homeland. He returned back to Iceland, gathered 25 ship-loads of settlers and established a new Viking colony in Greenland that survived into the 15th century.

Erik's son, **Leif**, outdid his father. Having heard from another Viking Greenlander, Bjarni Herjolfsson, that he had sighted land even further west, Leif went to see for himself. In around 1002 he and his crew found themselves sailing somewhere along the coast of North America. They found a glacial, mountainous coast, then a wooded one, and finally a country of fertile pastures that they named **Vinland**. Although they resolved to start a new colony there, it was – unlike either Iceland or Greenland – already settled and hostility from native Americans and their own small numbers (Greenland at the time probably had about 3,000 Viking inhabitants) meant that it was soon abandoned. They had, though, become the first Europeans to land in (and settle in) the Americas, almost five centuries before Christopher Columbus.

# Guided Notes on the Vikings and Kievan Rus – VIDEO

**\*From the video “Vikings Expansion – The Lands of the Rus – Extra History #4”**

The Viking age truly begins in the \_\_\_\_\_. When the Scandinavian born Vikings arrived in what is today the “Baltic States” they were called the \_\_\_\_\_ by the local inhabitants.

The \_\_\_\_\_ river led the Vikings to the Caspian Sea and then the city of Baghdad, while the Dnieper River led them to the \_\_\_\_\_ Sea and the city of \_\_\_\_\_, the capital of the Byzantine Empire. The Vikings used their \_\_\_\_\_ to travel down rivers and even over land to raid. Eventually the Vikings found that it was more profitable to \_\_\_\_\_ rather than raid.

Early Rus Vikings raided Constantinople by surprise but were unsuccessful in taking the city because of its enormous \_\_\_\_\_. The Byzantines also used \_\_\_\_\_, a petroleum-based incendiary (fire) weapon they used on their ships and even in primitive hand-grenades. Eventually the Rus began to trade instead of raid with the Byzantine Empire and founded a new trading city on the Dnieper called \_\_\_\_\_.

The Byzantine Empire, impressed with the martial skills of the Rus Vikings, recruited them into the “Varangian Guard”, soldiers for hire, also known as \_\_\_\_\_. In turn, the Rus Vikings converted to \_\_\_\_\_ Christianity. Yet the Rus Vikings were never the majority of the population. They were only ruling elite of the Kievan principality.

***\*take no notes on Olga (she cry)***

**Prince Vladimir** converted to Christianity after the Byzantine emperor offered his daughter in \_\_\_\_\_. He accelerated Kievan Rus adoption of Byzantine culture and traditions (religion, language), and eventually the Scandinavian roots of the kingdom faded away, as they were assimilated into this new Slavic Kingdom. Years later the founding of the modern-day country of \_\_\_\_\_ would take its name from the Rus Vikings.



**Complete the following map of Europe c.900 CE:**

1. **Label (use a dot)** in **RED** the cities of: Constantinople, Rome, London, Paris, Cordoba, Novgorod, Kiev, Moscow, Baghdad, Venice
2. **Label and trace in BLUE** the rivers: Volga, Dnieper
3. **Label** the bodies of water in **BLUE**: Black Sea, Caspian Sea, North Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Atlantic Ocean
4. **Label and color in GREEN** the Islamic regions: Umayyad (al-Andalus) and Abbasid Dynasties
5. **Label and color in ORANGE** the Byzantine Empire
6. **Trace** the Norse raiding/ trading routes in **HIGHLIGHTED-PINK**
7. **Label and color** the Norse homeland of Scandinavia in **PINK**
8. **Label and outline** the Norse settlements of Iceland, Normandy and Kievan Rus in **PINK**
9. Add the following annotations to your map in **BLACK** and **frame it** with a box/ circle: Use post-it notes if you run out of room.
  - a. Year the Kievan Rus kingdom was founded
  - b. The approximate location and year of the Viking raid on the monastery of Lindisfarne
  - c. Approximately what location the Mongols will come from on the map with an arrow
  - d. The year the Eastern Orthodox Church was founded (place in or near Byzantine Empire)
10. **Extra credit:** Draw a Viking Longboat icon in the upper left corner of the map in the Atlantic Ocean

0 500 km