



KING ALFRED THE GREAT

KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER



Overview

Alfred was born in Wantage in today's Oxfordshire in AD849.

His father was Aethelwulf, King of Wessex.

He was the youngest of 5 brothers.

He became King of Wessex in AD871 at the age of 21.

He died in AD899. He ruled for 28 years.

A portrait of King Alfred the Great



Why was King Alfred the Great so great?

Alfred the victor!

Alfred was a good fighter and leader and he learnt from his defeat at the hands of the Vikings. He copied the Viking tactics and at the **Battle of Edington in AD878**, Alfred and his army defeated **Guthrum** and his men.

Alfred realised that the constant battles were bad for both sides. He and Guthrum signed the **Treaty of Wedmore** which agreed terms of peace.

Alfred the peacemaker!

Alfred continued to pursue cooperation with the Vikings. **In 886**, he negotiated a land settlement. A border along Roman Watling Street split the groups. North and east England would be ruled by the Vikings. This area became known as the **'Danelaw'**. The Anglo-Saxons gained areas of West Mercia and Kent.

Alfred the defender!

Despite the Danelaw, Viking raids still occurred and Alfred did several things to protect his kingdom.

Alfred continued to build **fortresses** across Wessex called **'burghs'**. He organised **rotas** for his army so that when a Viking raid happened the forces could defend the kingdom. Nowhere in Wessex was more than 20 miles from a fortress.

Alfred the lawmaker!

Alfred believed that law and order was very important for his people. He established a code of laws based on the Old Testament and on laws used by other Anglo-Saxon leaders. He liked to keep an eye on the judgements that were being made, to check that his people were being treated fairly.

Alfred the educator!

Alfred was a keen reader and writer and believed education should play a large part in his kingdom. He translated Latin texts into old English and encouraged other scholars and teachers to do the same. He wanted his people to be able to read texts in their own language as well as in traditional Latin.



Key Vocabulary

Monarch

Reign

Wessex

Anglo-Saxon

Viking

Battle of Edington

Treaty

Danelaw

Fortress

Conquest

Christianity

Laws

Education

Compassion



King Alfred died and was laid to rest in a cathedral in Winchester, the capital of the Kingdom of Wessex, in AD899.

In 1899, it was decided to build a statue of King Alfred in the center of Winchester to mark the millennium of his death - he died 1000 years earlier. The statue was finished in 1901.

It has the inscription: 'Aethred, To the founder of the Kingdom and the Nation.'

King Alfred the Great Timeline

AD849: Alfred is born.

AD871: Alfred becomes King of Wessex.

AD878 (January): King Alfred fled to Somerset to escape the Vikings.

AD878: The legend of the burnt cakes.

AD878: Battle of Edington - Alfred defeats Guthrum, the Viking leader.

AD878: Treaty of Wedmore declares

AD886: Danelaw was enforced.

AD890: Anglo-Saxon Chronicle was begun.

AD899: King Alfred dies and is buried in Winchester.

