



### 3.2B. Viking Raids

**What do you see in this picture? Describe the Viking ships. Who are the men on shore? Where have they come from? Why do you think they have landed here? What might they encounter here?**

**In this slide** we see Norsemen, or Vikings, landing on shore.

- The Vikings, also called Norsemen, lived primarily the Scandinavian lands of northern Europe. From the coasts of Scandinavia they sailed to the lands that are now Britain and France, later establishing colonies as far away as Russia and islands in the North Atlantic. At home in Scandinavia they lived in small villages in homes made of logs or boards, with figures of dragons carved onto the building for symbolic decoration. Scandinavia's coastlines and harbors were conducive to trade and were prosperous centers for fishing. However, most of the rest of the country consisted of land that was unsuitable for farming. Consequently, many Vikings took to life on the sea. In their language a viking was a pirate, and to go a-viking, meant to go on an adventure overseas. Vikings raided manors and monasteries in England and the Frankish kingdom to obtain money and goods. Their success as sea-raiders stemmed from their skill as sailors and the excellence of their sailing vessels. The Vikings sailed on massive ships, long and narrow with the bow at the front carved in the shape of a dragon. They slept in leather sleeping bags, and used copper pots to cook meals along the shores where they stopped.
- Vikings were traders and explorers as well as raiders. The men were adventurous, opening up new water and trade routes as they traveled. The Viking Eric the Red pushed farther west than anyone known before him. In 986, the Vikings reached Greenland. Later sagas, or stories, tell of Eric's son, Leif Ericson, who crossed the Atlantic Ocean on a Viking ship and reached the northeast coast of North America. The Vikings named the area where they landed Vinland. Today the land is called Newfoundland. But Vinland was cold in the winter and far away from the Vikings' home, so they left Vinland without establishing a colony there.
- During the time following Charlemagne's rule, Europe lacked a strong central government. The weak and divided empire was easy for the Vikings to attack. Using battle axes, swords, and spears, the Vikings raided many parts of Europe. Metal helmets decorated with pictures of animals, and shirts made from iron rings covered by a large piece of cloth, protected the Vikings from the people they raided. Probably the Vikings' greatest weapon was their power of intimidation. The massive longships, which took the form of dragons, terrified the people of Europe. The Vikings named their ships "Snake of the Sea," "Lion of the Waves" and other frightening names. While the Vikings prayed to their pagan gods for success, Europeans prayed to the Christian God, "From the fury of the Norsemen, Good Lord, deliver us!" Often the Europeans under attack would offer the Vikings land or gold rather than attempting to fight against or flee from the Vikings.

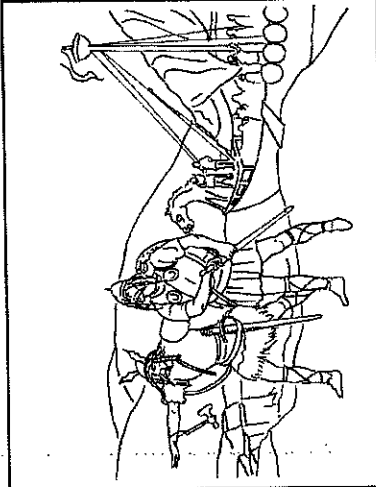
- The Vikings' own society also had no strong central government. The Vikings were separated into smaller tribal units ruled by a jarl or military leader. Often Viking households included 20 to 30 relatives all living together. The family formed a strong unit. If one family insulted another, both families would engage in fights that often ended in someone's death. Later, payments of money replaced physical duels in such conflicts.
- Viking culture centered around war. Education was not considered important; most people were illiterate. When it was time to go to battle, men communicated by using fires. A Viking man who saw the fire, lit another to call on others, and then hurried to battle. Boys were taught to value physical strength and learned the stories of great warriors. Girls learned how to sew and care for the home so that their husbands could go off to battle. Both men and women grew their hair long. Men purchased a woman to marry; and men could accordingly sell their bride if they changed their minds. Once married, however, women were given substantial respect. They were in charge of the household, had the right to own property and seek a divorce, and were allowed to attend public meetings and talk with men. Women were also looked to as healers; they grew herbs to use as medicine for the sick and wounded.
- Vikings worshiped pagan gods whose identities were adapted to fit the Viking lifestyle. The gods were perceived as extra-powerful humans, subject to jealousies, passions, and trickery. The Vikings used sacrifices of crops and animals to persuade the gods to act in their favor.



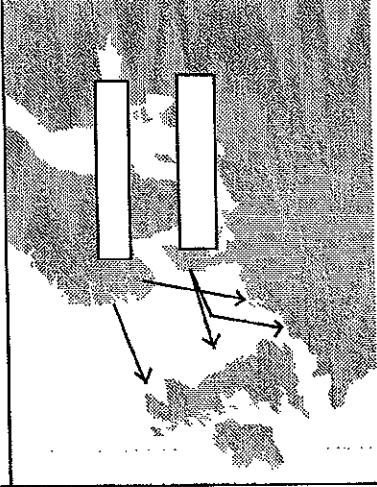
Ask two students to come forward and stand in front of the slide assuming the positions of the Norsemen. Prompt the Vikings to answer the following questions:

- **What are you wearing? What do you have on your head? On your belt?**
- **How are you feeling right now?**
- **How did you get here? How would you describe the ship you came on?**
- **Where did you come from? What was the journey like?**
- **What are you looking for?**
- **Why do you have weapons?**
- **What will the people who live here think of you?**
- **What do you think will happen when you meet them?**

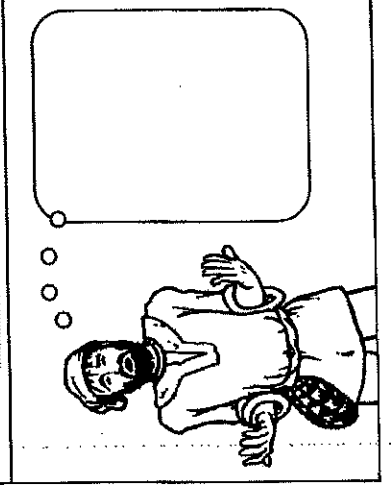
# Slide 3.2B: Viking Raids



Who were the Vikings?



Where did they raid and why?



What was their impact on Europe?