

# Unit 6B Why have people invaded and settled in Britain in the past?

## An Anglo-Saxon case study

### ABOUT THE UNIT

In this unit, children are introduced to the idea that people from other societies have been coming to settle in Britain for a long time. Children find out about what was discovered at Sutton Hoo. By investigating the finds, children learn about the work of archaeologists and about the culture and way of life of Anglo-Saxons who settled in Britain.

### WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

Teachers will usually select one of Units 6A, 6B and 6C. All three units introduce children to ideas of invasion and settlement, using identical introductory activities.

This case study focuses on a key archaeological site and will be a good choice for schools that can visit the British Museum, where the Sutton Hoo treasure is exhibited.

This unit builds on children's work in key stage 1 on using objects, pictures and stories to find out about the past.

### ADAPTING THE UNIT FOR A DIFFERENT AGE GROUP

Year 5 and 6 children could:

- explore more fully reasons for settlement
- consider how we know about the Anglo-Saxon invasion and where in Britain the Anglo-Saxons settled
- apply the process used in investigating the Sutton Hoo grave to another grave, *eg the female grave at Apple Down*
- read extracts from written sources, *eg Bede and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, to help them answer the questions
- research and locate place names connected with settlement by the Anglo-Saxons

### PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if the children have:

- learnt about the way of life of people living at a time beyond living memory
- asked and answered questions and made inferences from artefacts
- considered the different ways in which the past is represented, *eg pictures, buildings, stories, eyewitness accounts*
- listened to stories of past events

### VOCABULARY

In this unit, children will have opportunities to use:

- words associated with settlement, *eg invade, settle, emigration, immigration, refugee, conquest*
- words associated with the period of time, *eg Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Vikings, period, a long time ago*
- words associated with archaeology, *eg dig, excavate, survey, trowel, levels, strata, finds*
- words associated with the Sutton Hoo burial, *eg Christian, sceptre, scabbard, buckle, lyre, grave burial*

### RESOURCES

- a large map of the world
- dictionaries
- flashcards about invasion and settlement
- a class time line
- pictures of Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Viking people
- pictures of Sutton Hoo, *eg aerial photographs, a poster, books, postcard*
- information about archaeology, *eg a video*
- pictures of objects found at Sutton Hoo
- information on Anglo-Saxons who lived in Britain

### EXPECTATIONS

at the end of this unit

*most children will:*

*some children will not have made so much progress and will:*

*some children will have progressed further and will:*

demonstrate knowledge and understanding of why people leave their homeland to settle in another country; ask and answer questions about an archaeological site; show knowledge and understanding of an Anglo-Saxon grave and what it reveals about the beliefs and way of life of Saxons in Britain; know about one or more aspects of life in Anglo-Saxon Britain; know that an event can be interpreted in different ways; present information they have researched, using terminology appropriate to the period

recognise that the Anglo-Saxon period was a long time ago; recall some detail of what was discovered at Sutton Hoo; give some explanation about the person the grave commemorated

use dates relating to the Anglo-Saxon period and the Sutton Hoo burial; have a clear understanding of who was commemorated by the grave and what can be deduced about him from the grave finds; understand some of the strengths and limitations of archaeological evidence and how this has resulted in different interpretations of the grave

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

- to relate their own experience to the concept of settlement
- to recognise that people have been moving between different areas for a long time, and that some reasons for moving were the same as those of people alive today

- to use the terms ‘invade’ and ‘settle’
- to place the Anglo-Saxon period in a chronological framework
- to recognise characteristics that place Anglo-Saxons as having lived a long time ago in the past
- that Anglo-Saxons invaded Britain and that the period of invasion was followed by a period of settlement

- to locate the Anglo-Saxon period on a time line
- about what was discovered at Sutton Hoo
- what we can and cannot learn from objects
- to make inferences from archaeological evidence

- to answer questions about the finds at Sutton Hoo

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

**Why do people move away from where they were born?**  
Discuss the children’s and their families’ experiences of moving home to live either in a different part of the country or in a different country. Use a map to establish where they moved to and from. Encourage the children to suggest why they or their families moved, and list the reasons given. Help them to sort the reasons into those where families chose to move and where they had to move.  
Take opportunities to use and explain words like *settlement*, *emigration*, *immigration*, *refugee*, and how these are different from words like *invasion*, *conquest*.

**Who invaded and settled in Britain a long time ago?**  
Ask the children to find the dictionary definitions of the words ‘invade’ and ‘settle’. Ask them to write their definitions in a two-column grid. Lead a discussion to develop the children’s understanding of these terms.  
Give the children cards with words and phrases that could be connected to either invasion or settlement, *eg stay, arrive, conquer, land, visit, remain*. Ask the children to place the cards in the correct columns on their grids. Ask them to feed back where they placed each word and why.  
Establish that groups of people have been visiting, invading and settling in Britain for a very long time. Ask the children to look at the class time line and pick out the people and events they have already learnt about, *eg the Great Fire, Florence Nightingale*. Discuss with the children whether these people or events happened a long time ago, and which occurred the longest time ago.  
Give the children pictures of Anglo-Saxon people. Encourage them to suggest clues that indicate these people lived a long time ago. Help the children to place the pictures at the appropriate place on the time line.  
Give the children pictures showing a variety of Anglo-Saxon images, *eg in armour, in battle, town life, country life, home life*. Ask the children to sort them into invasion and settlement groupings.  
Discuss with the children the relationship between invasion and settlement.

**How was the grave at Sutton Hoo discovered?**  
Tell the children that they will find out about an event from the time the Anglo-Saxons settled in Britain. Ask them to locate the Anglo-Saxon period on the class time line.  
Tell the children about the discovery of the ship burial at Sutton Hoo, the story of the mounds, where they were discovered and about the group of archaeologists who investigated the site.  
Ask children what they know about archaeology. Build on this to provide a brief overview of what an archaeologist does and why.  
Show the children pictures of the grave objects in the order they were discovered by the archaeologists. Then show them what was also discovered – the outline of a boat. Ask the children to guess what it is. Tell them about ship burials. Ask them what is missing from the grave – a body. Why might the body be absent? Explain that this is a mystery.

**What was in the grave?**  
Give children sets of postcards of the objects discovered at Sutton Hoo. Ask them to carry out an ‘artefact enquiry’ for each object. This means completing an enquiry sheet asking questions like: *What is the size of the object? What is it made from? How is it decorated? What is it?* Ask the children to sort the objects into the following categories: jewellery, personal possessions, household objects, weapons.  
Discuss with the children how objects can provide clues about whose grave it is, *eg weapon, helmet, sceptre*.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

CHILDREN

- give reasons why families leave the place where they were born
- recognise that some people choose to leave and that others have to leave the place where they were born

- use a dictionary to find the meanings of ‘invade’ and ‘settle’
- sort words or phrases correctly under the headings ‘invade’ and ‘settle’
- locate on a time line historical events that they have already studied
- select distinctive features of Anglo-Saxon people
- sort pictures to show understanding of features of Anglo-Saxon life
- discuss ideas associated with invasion and settlement

- contribute ideas about the work of an archaeologist
- infer information about the Sutton Hoo burial from pictures
- make a reasonable deduction that an outline of a boat was discovered

- deduce what the objects were
- infer information about the use of the objects, and about their owner
- describe one object discovered at Sutton Hoo

POINTS TO NOTE

This discussion needs to be handled with sensitivity and care, especially if there are any refugee children in the class. It is important to draw out that some reasons for moving today are similar to why people moved in the past, *eg for work, to make a new life, because of fear*.  
Recognising that communities are made up of people from different places, backgrounds and cultures can lead into a discussion of the workings of local and national communities, as a link to citizenship education.  
If there are few children in the class whose families have moved from another country it will be necessary to refer to groups of immigrants that the children know about.

This activity would provide a useful context for reinforcing dictionary skills. The class might consider the range of definitions in dictionaries and information books, as a prelude to children developing their own definitions of the terms.  
The activity could be adapted by giving children a grid with the dictionary definitions already in place.

Before this activity, children may need to be introduced to the work of archaeologists. A video clip of archaeologists at work could help. A letter to parents might reveal someone who is, or knows, an amateur archaeologist who could talk to the children. English Heritage have produced many activities for children about the way archaeologists work.  
The British Museum publishes postcards of Sutton Hoo finds.  
This activity could contribute to learning about the world of work.

An example of an artefact enquiry sheet can be found in *Expectations in history* (SCAA, 1997, pages 16–17).  
This activity could be developed by looking at the designs on Anglo-Saxon jewellery and considering the imagery used.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

- that there are some things we can learn, and some we cannot, from archaeological remains
- to make deductions about who the grave commemorated

- to locate the Anglo-Saxon homelands on a map
- about the way of life of the Anglo-Saxons

- to make connections between information provided in more than one source
- to draw on a variety of sources and present appropriately what they have learnt about the Sutton Hoo burial
- why there are different interpretations of the burial

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

Whose grave was it?

Go over what is known about the person from the objects. *What do these things tell us about the person? What kind of person was this? How do we know? What don't we know? What would we like to know? How could we find out? Is this a useful source of information?* Encourage the children to infer whether this was a person who lived recently or a long time ago, was a man or woman, was rich, important or ordinary, etc. With the children's help, make a list under the heading 'What we know about this person'.

Ask the children to think about what the remains do not tell us, *eg name, family, what the person looked like*.

What was life like at the time the person in the grave was alive?

Ask questions to help the children recap what they have learnt about settlement.

Help them locate on a map the lands the Anglo-Saxons originally came from. Ask the children what they know about these countries. *Why might the Anglo-Saxons have wanted to come to Britain?*

Divide the children into small groups and ask each group to carry out an enquiry into an aspect of life in Anglo-Saxon times, *eg clothes, food, homes, women's work, men's work, transport, leisure, beliefs*. Help them to devise a set of questions appropriate to the topic to focus their enquiries. Work with the groups to make links between grave finds and what they discover, *eg men's clothes held with clasps (gold clasp), Christian characters (crosses on bowls), soldiers' armour*.

What have we found out about who was buried in the grave?

Ask children to present their findings. Tell them that their aim is to provide as much information as possible, to help the teacher role-play the 'owner' of the grave. Ask questions that link their research to the grave findings, *eg What would have kept my cloak in place? What was this clasp like? What was my belt like? What were my helmet and sword like? Was I a Christian? How do you know? Was I a sailor? (They may think so because of the boat, but may have discovered that ship burial was a usual form of burial.) Was I important? (Remind them that the clasps were solid gold.)* Record this information for future reference.

Ask children to draw and write a description of what they think 'he' might have looked like, using records of their findings to include as much detail as possible.

Ask several children who have produced contrasting accounts to read or role-play their accounts. Discuss the differences between the accounts and consider why there are differences.

Discuss why there is still a mystery, *eg We don't know the person's name, how the person spoke, or what happened to the body*. Discuss with the children why there are different interpretations of what the person was like.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

CHILDREN

- suggest what can be learnt about the person from the objects found in the grave
- make inferences about the person buried at Sutton Hoo from pictures and written sources

- locate a map where Anglo-Saxons came from
- suggest why Anglo-Saxons came to Britain
- find out about an aspect of life in Anglo-Saxon times

- present information about one aspect of life in Anglo-Saxon times
- answer questions linking what they have found out to the objects found in the grave
- make their own interpretations of the person whose grave it was
- suggest what information remains unknown about the person whose grave it was
- suggest reasons why there are different interpretations of the person

POINTS TO NOTE

For the research activity, each group could be given a small number of questions to focus their research on one aspect of Anglo-Saxon life, *eg What work did women do in the home? What work did they do outside?* These questions could be teacher-generated or based on suggestions from the children. The children could use a four-column grid with the headings 'Questions', 'Answers', 'Details', and 'Source'.

This activity could be adapted by asking the children to organise their own enquiry questions using a greater range of resources.

A useful out-of-class task could be the children researching thoroughly an aspect of Anglo-Saxon culture, *eg patterns, illuminated manuscripts, legends, and myths*, for a classroom display.

A visit to the British Museum to see the exhibition on the Sutton Hoo grave and other finds from the Anglo-Saxon period would be a valuable way to start or finish this unit.

The children's drawings and accounts could be used as a class display.

The activity could be adapted by providing a writing frame to help the children write their 'descriptions' of who was buried in the grave.

The role-play activity would reinforce work on speaking and listening.

*Beowulf* and Anglo-Saxon poems and riddles could be shared as part of work on oral poetry and word play. Descriptive work in the unit can be linked to work on characters in fiction, drawing out the different approaches of the imaginative writer and the historian.

