The Anglo-Saxon Period

449 A.D.- 1066 A.D.
Early Inhabitants of Britain

- Celts
- Romans
- Anglo-Saxons
- Vikings
- Normans
The Celts

- Were the first important inhabitants of Britain
- Gave Britain its name
- Had an oral literature
- Had a pagan, nature-centered religion
- Had vast landholdings
- Made many cultural advancements
Celtic Britain
Celtic Landholdings

► National Geographic’s map
Celtic Religion

- Druids - a class of Celtic priests
The Romans (50 A.D.-410 A.D.)

- Christianity
- Written literature
- Monasteries
- Latin
- Architecture
- Roman alphabet
- Warfare
- Roads
- Hadrian’s Wall
Roman Baths, Roads, & Construction
The Anglo-Saxons (449-1066 A.D.)

► Angles, Saxons, and Jutes
► Germanic, or Teutonic, people
► Origin: Germany and Denmark
Anglo-Saxon Runes, or Futhorc

The diagram illustrates Anglo-Saxon runes with their corresponding meanings:

- Feoh - f: "wealth"
- Uruz - u: "cattle"
- Thorn - þ: "thorn"
- Mund - m: "mouth"
- Rauz - r: "ride"
- Ced - c: "torch"
- Ziefu - z: "gift"
- Pynn - p: "joy"
- Haebl - h: "hail"
- Nyd - n: "need"
- Isi - i: "ice"
- Jear - ā: "year"
- Eeoh - eo: "yew"
- Peor - p: "game"
- Eol - x: "elk-sedge"
- Siöl - s: "sun"
- Tyr - t: "Tyr"
- Beorc - b: "birch"
- Eoh - e: "horse"
- Mann - m: "man"
- Lai - l: "lake"
- Ing - ð: "Ing"
- Óðel - ò: "estate"
- Dæg - d: "day"
- Ac - a: "oak"
- Æsc - æ: "ash"
- Yr - y: "bow"
- Ear - e: "earth"
- Iar - ia: "serpent"
- Kalc - k: "chalice"
- Kalc - kk: "spear"
- Gar - g: "fire"
- Cpeor - cp: "stone"
Anglo-Saxon Government

- Families, clans, tribes, kingdoms
- King, freemen (earls and churls), thralls
- Witan, or council of advisors to the king
Alfred the Great
849-899 A.D.

► Promoted education and English
► Instituted laws
► Used military skill and England’s first navy to defend Wessex from Viking invasion
► Promoted Christianity
► Started the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle
Characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon

- Were warlike, often fighting with other kingdoms
- Had a common language that is known today as Old English
- Were pagans who adopted Christianity
- Valued fame, bravery, honor, generosity, comitatus (loyalty between a king and his thanes)
Anglo-Saxon Religion

- Paganism - a belief in many gods
- Wyrd - the personification of fate, or the three goddesses of Destiny; “that which happens”
- Valhalla - Norse “hall of the slain” awaiting the brave who die in battle; a place of feasting and fighting in preparation for the battle that would end the world, Ragnarok
- Nominal Christianity
Venerable Bede
672-735 A.D.

- Lived in monasteries (Wearmouth and Jarrow) since age of seven
- Became deacon at nineteen and priest at 30
- Respected for his devotion, piety, and discipline
- Known as The Father of English History
- Wrote *A History of the English Church and People*, the first English history
- Revered as a scholar, teacher, and writer
- Wrote about science, history, and theology
Caedmon of Whitby

► Anglo-Saxon herdsman and monk
► Earliest known English poet
► Father of English religious poetry
► Author of “Caedmon’s Hymn”
Vikings

Origin of the Vikings

- Iceland
- Norway
- Sweden
- Denmark
- Scotland
- Ireland
- Britain
- England
- Germany

North Sea
Viking Characteristics

► Came from Denmark, Norway, and Sweden
► Known as Danes or Northmen
► Were not literate but contributed place names to the English language
► Valued freedom, law, and honor
► Engaged in farming, exploration, trade, and development of towns
Normans

- Ended the Anglo-Saxon Period in 1066 A.D. with the Norman Conquest
- Led by William the Conqueror, who claimed the old Anglo-Saxon king, Edward the Confessor, had promised him the throne
- Introduced the French language and culture
- Began linguistic changes resulting in Middle English