**B1: Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, c. 1060-88**

1: Anglo-Saxon society

* English society was hierarchical. Tiers of people were bound together by duty and responsibility.
* At the top was the king, followed by the major earls. The king was elected. Usually it would be the son of the previous king, but not always.
* The king governed with the advice of his Council (Witan). The Witan included bishops, earls, generals and judges.
* The king kept a small number of soldiers, huscarls, which were sometimes mercenaries.
* He could also call on earls, bishops and thegns for military support. Edward the Confessor did this on a number of occasions during his reign, 1051, 1052 and 1065.
* The total number of armed men at his disposal was about 14,000.

**Earldoms**

* The major earldoms were Wessex, Mercia and Northumbria.
* Below the senior earls, there were junior earls who controlled divisions of the big earldoms. Often these were related to the major earls.

**Society**

* Below them came landowners, thegns, and below them freemen, serfs and slaves. The great majority of people lived in villages and. There were few large towns.
* The bonds that held society together were of two kinds. Landowners owed service to their lord. This might be in the form of taxes or military service.
* There were also bonds between groups of people. There were no police forces and very few royal troops, so law and order was in the hands of the people themselves.
* The king or the earls would deal with major breakdowns of law and order, but everything else would be tackled by people themselves.

**The legal system**

* Law courts in the main were popular assemblies and law was tradition. It could vary from shire to shire.
* Increasingly, kings had intervened in justice to create courts and standardise procedure. In practice, the king could intervene in any case.
* Edward travelled and heard cases (although the farthest north he ever went was Gloucester) on a regular basis. He was asked by landowners to decide disputes over land and wills.
* Edward does not appear to have passed many laws. The Law of England in 1066 was much as it had been in 1042.
  + During much of his reign, England was peaceful. The Anglo-Saxon system of law and order based on shires, hundreds and wapentakes was effective.

## How did Anglo-Saxon law operate?

* + - Anglo-Saxon law was based on the local community, with the king presiding over the operation of the law, and was centred on the ideas of peace and the king’s peace.
    - The Anglo-Saxons believed that every man was entitled to peace, while the king’s peace applied to the roads and all their users.
  + The king had his own court - the Witan - for dealing with cases involving the nobility and the most serious crimes.
  + England was divided into shires - controlled by a royal official known as the shire-reeve (sheriff).
  + Shires were divided up into hundreds. The hundred courts dealt with minor cases, while the shire court dealt with more serious crime. The sheriff had to act on writs sent by the king.
  + In towns there were also special burgh (borough) courts.
  + The free inhabitants of each small community had to belong to a Tithing.
  + The Anglo-Saxons had no police force, so it was the duty of all Tithings to arrest criminals by raising the hue and cry.

## How were cases judged?

* + Trial by the community: this involved using a jury (made up of local men who knew the people involved).
  + The accused tried to prove his innocence by swearing he was not guilty, using oath helpers or compurgators.
  + Trial by ordeal: if the accused was a suspicious character and had often been accused of crimes, or had ever been found guilty of perjury (lying under oath).
  + If the jury simply could not agree, the defendant had to undergo trial by ordeal.
  + There were three types of ordeal: cold water, hot water, and hot iron.

## Anglo-Saxon punishments

* The most common form of punishment was the payment of compensation and fines.
* More serious crimes (treason, betrayal of your lord, murder, arson and house-breaking) were punished by death and the confiscation of all the criminal’s goods and property.
* The most common form of execution was death by hanging. However, the church favoured the avoidance of the death penalty and the use instead of harsh physical punishments.

**The influence of the Church**

* Anglo-Saxon England was a loyal member of the Catholic Church. English warriors went to fight for the Pope.
* England was also remote and the Pope had less influence than in other countries.
* The King had more influence and control than elsewhere. Edward the Confessor was the patron of the Church and could make all appointments within it.
* On one occasion, he took advantage of his power to make his clerk a bishop.
* He had the power to appoint bishops and the Pope did not challenge that. Usually, Edward expected something in return for an appointment.
* It was not unknown for appointees to make suitable gifts to Edward by way of thanks, but he did not expect this as a matter of course.

**Finance**

* Edward appears to have had a sound financial policy. There were many coins in England during Edward’s reign and they all came from the same source.
* Income came from two sources. Shire-reeves ‘farmed’ their areas and accounted twice a year, at Easter and Michaelmas.
* They handed the amount due less their expenses. Collection points were probably London and Winchester.
* The system was more sophisticated than in most other states because Edward’s kingdom was relatively large and wealthy.
* The second source of income was the king’s estates. In theory, the whole kingdom was the king’s estate: in practice, his personal estates (home farms) were the royal demesne.
* In fact, the powers that Edward enjoyed were very similar to those exercised by William the Conqueror.

**The economy**

* England was almost entirely agricultural in the mid-eleventh century. At that time, Europe was going through a warm, dry spell.
* Edward’s reign fell at the beginning of this period and the first half seems to have been affected by bad weather. From 1054, the weather seems to have improved.
* This would have encouraged economic development as production and profits rose. Cash was ploughed back into new buildings, such as mills.
* Trade increased, which encouraged both the growth of towns and foreign contacts.

**2: The last years of Edward the Confessor and the succession crisis**

**The house of Godwin**

* Godwin, Earl of Wessex, was a powerful figure. The value of his estates has been put at £4,000, three times greater than either of the other two earls and not far short of the king’s at £5,000.
* In 1042, he backed Edward the Confessor when the throne became vacant. The king wanted to guarantee the continued support of the earl.
* Edward made Godwin’s eldest son, Swegn, an earl in 1043 and Harold, the second eldest, almost immediately afterwards. Both earldoms were partly created out of Mercia.
* In 1045, Edward married Godwin’s daughter Edith.
* In the same year, Beorn, Godwin’s nephew was created an earl, which meant that the Godwin family now controlled four out of the six earldoms.
* Godwin took command of royal forces on a number of occasions and served under Edward in 1048.
* In the following year, he led forces, with his son Tostig, against Viking raiders.
* Godwin died in 1053, but his eldest surviving son, Harold succeeded him in Wessex.
* His brothers, Gyrth and Leofwine were created Earl of East Anglia and the area around London and in 1055, another brother, Tostig, became Earl of Northumbria.
* In 1063, Harold conquered Wales and in 1065, dealt with the Northern insurrection by agreeing to the deposition of his brother Tostig and his replacement with Morcar.
* The Godwins continued to hold their land of the king and charters usually bore the names of both the earl and Edward.

**Why was there a succession crisis?**

* By the 1060s, it was obvious that Edward was not going to produce an heir.
* The chaotic situation that had developed from 1035-42 was likely to be repeated. Edward needed to appoint an heir.

**3: The rival claimants for the throne**

**The claim of Edgar the Aethling**

* In the 1050s, Edward the Confessor invited the Aethling, Edward, the son of Edmund Ironside and grandson of Aethelred the Unready, to returnk to England.
* Aethelred had been king from 978 to 1016. His son Edmund had ruled for a few months before his death also in 1016.
* Edward ‘the Exile’ was living in Hungary and eventually returned in 1057, only to die soon afterwards.
* His son Edgar was about five years old at the time and was the last direct descendant of an English king.
* He was proclaimed king on 14th October 1066 but later submitted to William of Normandy. He died in 1126.

**The claim of William of Normandy**

* William of Poitiers, writing in the 1070s, claimed that Edward nominated William of Normandy as his heir in 1051.
* There is no English corroboration of this claim. It is unlikely that Edward would have named the 23 year old William as his heir and the description of the event is unconvincing.

**Harold Godwinson’s embassy to Normandy**

* Norman sources also claim that in 1064-5, Harold was sent to Normandy to arrange the succession. There are no English sources that confirm this.
* The Norman sources also disagree about the details of the visit.
* William of Jumièges claims that Harold was sent to swear fealty but was captured on route by Guy of Ponthieu and released through William of Normandy’s good offices.
* He was forced to swear fealty to William in exchange for his freedom. He promised to support William’s claim to the English throne.
* Subsequently, he decided to break his oaths (to William and to God) and seize the throne.
* William of Poitiers gives a far more detailed version of the events. He claims that Harold was chosen by Edward because of his rank and because his brother and nephew had been given as hostages.
* Harold promised to work for William in England and would make Dover and other towns available as bases for William’s troops.

**Other possible explanations**

* An alternative version of events is that Harold was in France and that the oath was no more than a restatement of the long-standing relationship between England and Normandy.
* Oath-taking was a very serious matter to the English and Harold would have been very well aware of the consequences of breaking his word.
* Another possible explanation is that Harold was touring the continent raising support for his own potential accession.
* Edward was physically active in late 1065: there is no evidence that he was close to death or that he needed to arrange for the succession.
* England was peaceful in the months after Harold’s likely return. Trouble only broke out in the autumn with the deposition of Tostig.

**The claim of Harald Hardrada**

* A third claimant to the English throne was Harald Hardrada, the King of Norway.
* He claimed that Harthacnut (King of England 1040-42) had agreed that the throne of England would pass to the King of Norway. There is no evidence of any such agreement.
* Hardrada was an adventurer who had fought in Russia and the Byzantine Empire. He could easily have decided that the conquest of England was a risk worth taking.
* He was a famous and successful warrior and may have believed that, with 15,000 men, he could unite Norway and England.
* To most people, Harald must have appeared to be a more serious threat at the time.
* He had much larger battle-hardened forces and could land in the North of England which was comparatively unprotected.
* Harald was also supported by Tostig, who had defected after being replaced as Earl of Northumbria.
* A second potential Scandinavian claimant was Svein of Denmark, who was descended from a relative of King Cnut.
* He was approached by Tostig when the latter was on his way into exile in 1065.

**The rising against Tostig**

* In the spring of 1065, Harold led a raid into South Wales after English traders had been attacked.
* The Welsh may have been reacting to rough treatment from Tostig, Harold’s brother.
* This appears to have been of a rift between Harold and Tostig. On 5 October, Northumbrian thegns attacked Tostig’s headquarters in York and killed most of his men.
* The rebels nominated Morcar the brother of Edwin, Earl of Mercia, as his successor.

**Why was Tostig so unpopular?**

* He was a West Saxon and had introduced many West Saxon laws. Taxes had risen steeply.
* He had murdered local magnates and seized property. Churches had been robbed.
* The rebels had almost certainly been encouraged by Edwin and Morcar of Mercia and possibly by Harold.
* Harold was sent to negotiate with the rebels and agreed that the laws of Tostig would be cancelled.
* Edward demanded that they lay down their arms, but they refused unless Tostig was dismissed and exiled.
* Edward considered crushing the rebellion by force, but the combined strength of Mercia and Northumbria made this impossible.
* He was forced to accept the rebels’ terms. The key factor was the behaviour of Harold and the Godwin family, who refused to support Tostig.
* Tostig fled abroad to Scandinavia.

**Possible reasons for the actions of Harold**

* Loyalty to Edward: the rebellion was against Tostig and not Edward.
* Desire to get rid of Tostig: he was believed to be responsible for his own plight.
* Opportunity to further the ambitions of Harold: Tostig’s removal would make his accession to the throne much easier

**The death of Edward the Confessor**

* Edward died on 5 January 1066. Harold Godwinson was by his bedside and claimed that he had been nominated by the dieing king.
* The Witan met the following day and accepted the decision and Harold was proclaimed king. He was crowned immediately.
* The decision to elect Harold was quite legal as far as the English were concerned.
* Harold was the most powerful man in the kingdom and had been a loyal supporter of Edward.
* William of Normandy objected because he claimed that Harold had sworn on holy relics to support his claim to the throne.
* Harold said that he had not known about the relics and had been misled by William.
* Whatever the truth of the matter, Harold knew he was facing invasion.
* He ordered the English fleet to patrol the Channel and kept forces in the south of England.

4: The Norman invasion

# Reasons for the battle of Gate Fulford

* Harald Hardrada set sail for England in September 1066 and was reinforced by Tostig, who brought soldiers and ships.
* Tostig hoped to recover his earldom of Northumbria, or even more, if Harald became king.

# The battle of Gate Fulford

* On 20 September 1066, they were confronted by the earls, Edwin and Morcar.
* The English attacked first, but were outnumbered and suffered heavy casualties.
* Edwin and Morcar escaped, but Harald and Tostig were able to capture York.
* King Harold was waiting for the expected invasion from Normandy. He owned estates in Sussex and wanted to be on hand to defend them.
* The English navy had been patrolling the Channel all summer, but William had been delayed.
* At first, he had not been able to attract many supporters; they began to arrive when he was granted a papal banner to carry with him.
* William also offered rewards in land and cash for service against Harold.
* He was also delayed because the wind was in the wrong direction; he could not get across the Channel
* By early September, the English navy had stopped its patrol, just as the wind changed.
* The forces that King Harold had kept in the south were sent back to their villages to start the harvest
* When Harold received news of Gate Fulford, he marched north to face Harald and Tostig.

# The battle of Stamford Bridge

* Harold Godwinson stormed north in a brilliant forced march, covering 190 miles in four days.
* He completely surprising Hardrada who was camped at Stamford Bridge on the river Derwent, on 25 September.
* In another long and bloody battle, Harold Godwinson won a total victory over Hardrada’s Viking force.
* The most feared warrior in Christendom was killed, along with Tostig and most of his army. Only 24 of the 300 ships were required for the remainder of the Viking army leave in.

# The battle of Hastings

* While Harold was resting his exhausted and depleted army in the north, the wind changed direction.
* William was able to cross the Channel and landed unopposed at Pevensey on September 28th.
* William was lucky. Norman sources show him praying and pleading for the wind to change.
* The army of loyal followers, mercenaries and opportunists he had bribed, cajoled and persuaded to join him would not stay in one place indefinitely.
* Next year was another year and circumstances could be very different. It was now or never.
* So when the wind changed, he led his men across the Channel with great haste.
* He knew the Saxon coast lay undefended and his spies had told him of Hardrada’s invasion. It was a great risk, but a calculated risk.
* Because Harold Godwinson had to disband his fleet and southern army on 8 September, William landed unopposed.
* Harold could no longer provision the troops and the harvest was long overdue.
* This, historians argue, was the essential difference between the Anglo-Saxon Fyrdand William’s forces.
* The majority of the English army (the Fyrd) was made up of farmers who could be called on to fight when necessary.
* The nucleus was the huscarls, the body guards of the king and the earls.
* Many of William’s followers were mercenaries, who had been bribed with the promise of land and booty.
* But the result was the same; the south coast of England was now totally undefended.
* From Pevensey, William moved to Hastings, where he knew the port afforded shelter for a possible rearguard action.
* Then he laid waste to the surrounding countryside, partly to preserve his own supplies, partly to draw Harold into battle.
* A set-piece battle was the only way William could conclude the campaign.
* It was in Harold’s interest to delay, to starve William out and allow doubt and fear to sink into the thoughts of the few thousand Norman troops in a foreign land.

# Why did Harold move quickly?

* Perhaps he was hoping to emulate the success of the Stamford Bridge campaign, perhaps he was stung by the attack on his own people in Wessex.
* He may also have planned on bottling up William along the coast, preventing him from breaking out with his mounted troops and rampaging far and wide across Sussex.
* He reached London on October 6th and remained only until October 11th. Many of his foot-soldiers and archers were still moving south, from York.
* His stay in London was not long enough to gather the many thousands he had at his disposal.
* He did not wait to remobilise the 14,000 of the Fyrd from the shires of all England.
* Forcing the pace again, he arrived on the South Downs on the night of 13 October; his men must have been exhausted.

**14 October 1066**

* + The battle began to 9.00 and lasted until darkness, which was about 5.45.
  + It began with volleys of arrows fired by the Normans, which had little effect the English were behind a shield wall on top of a hill.
  + Next came an attack by spearmen and then a cavalry charge. These were met with missiles: axes, stones and wood.
  + William was unhorsed three times and had to raise his helmet to prove he was still alive. If he had been killed, the Normans would have collapsed.
  + At some point, the Normans appeared to run away and the English charged after them.
  + This gave William the chance he had been waiting for. His cavalry was able to surround the English when the shield wall was broken up.
  + Harold and his brothers Gyrth and Leofwine were all killed.

# Why did William win the battle of Hastings?

# Problems for Harold

* Facing a double-invasion put an enormous strain on Harold’s reserves.
* Harold had to keep his armies and fleet mobilised from May through to September, itself a notable feat.
* He managed to remobilise and defeat Hardada in a lightning strike, a brilliant campaign. He had an army of an equal size to William’s at Hastings.

# Harold’s mistakes

* Harold’s mistakes played into William’s hands. His men, severely weakened in number and in spirit by the two battles in the north, did not have a chance to rest before meeting William.
* Edwin and Morcar were still marching south when Harold was at Hastings. Harold could have drawn upon thousands more troops. It was in his interest to delay, to starve William out.
* He did not, hoping to surprise William’s men out foraging and to exact revenge for the damage done to his lands in Wessex. It was a personal matter between the two of them.

# Generalship

* Harold was out-generalled. His rapid return south and forced march from London to Hastings (58 miles in three days) exhausted his men further.
* He perhaps planned on trapping William on the coast, but William had already moved up. Harold, not William, was taken by surprise.
* The casualties amongst the Housecarls at Gate Fulford and Stamford Bridge told when the peasants broke the shield-wall and ran down onto the Norman cavalry.
* The archers left behind could not counter William’s bowmen. Harold was not imaginative enough to adapt to the feigned retreats.
* He could neither seize the moment for a general charge nor command his troops to remain on the hill until nightfall when they could slip away and raise another army for another battle.

# William’s luck

* William was lucky. The wind had changed at the right moment for him. He faced an English army complacent with success but depleted by two battles.
* But William worked hard for his luck. He had prepared an army which was supremely fit and well equipped.
* He shipped over horses and archers by the thousands in specially designed boats.
* He drove his men on and organised it all down to the last arrowhead. On landing at Pevensey he built a wooden castle using ready-made timber and another at Hastings so that his retreat was covered.
* His spies informed him of Harold’s approach. His tactics of wasting Harold’s private lands had paid off.
* He had his chance for the one big battle to decide the kingdom against his old adversary.
* Finally, William had God on his side. The advantage of the Papal banner must have been great.

**2: William I in power: securing the kingdom, 1066-87**

# 1: Establishing control

**The submission of the earls**

* William had won a decisive victory at Hastings, but he had yet to win the kingdom.
* Edgar ‘Aethling’ was immediately put forward as the new king.
* William’s marched through Kent, Berkshire and Winchester to isolate London.
* Edwin, Morcar, Edgar Aethling and his sister, Edith, all surrendered to William at Berkhamstead in early December.
* He was crowned on Christmas Day in Westminster Abbey, 1066 with all the full coronation rites of an Anglo-Saxon king.

**Rewarding followers**

* William had promised rewards to the men who came with him to England. The easiest way of doing that was land.
* William kept 25% of English land for himself and gave 25% to the Church for supporting the invasion.
* The remaining 50% was given to his most important supporters. These became his tenants-in-chief.
* The tenants-in-chief were generally the earls, archbishops, bishops, abbots and barons of Anglo-Norman England.
* The main tenants-in-chief numbered only eleven; they were granted nearly a quarter of England.
* Most of these had played a part in the history of Normandy in the period 1040-1066.
* The eleven included the king’s two half-brothers, Odo of Bayeux and Robert of Mortain, and his cousin, William fitzOsbern.

**Establishing control on the borderlands**

* They were granted vast areas of land from Kent to Chester. Kent was important because of the risk of invasion. Chester was on the borders with Wales
* Robert of Mortain also received Cornwall and fitzOsbern the Isle of Wight.
* Roger of Montgomery, William of Warenne and William of Briouze received parts of Sussex. This was also a possible invasion area.

# Anglo-Norman earldoms

* The old Anglo-Saxon earldoms of Wessex, Mercia, East Anglia and Northumbria were either divided up very soon after William’s coronation, or abolished
* Harold, king of England and earl of Wessex, was not replaced; instead, Odo, bishop of Bayeux and William’s half-brother, was made earl of Kent.
* William fitzOsbern, a cousin and life-long companion to the Conqueror, was made earl of Hereford and lord of the Isle of Wight.
* These posts were granted very soon after Hastings, for it was Odo and William fitzOsbern who were governors of England on the king’s triumphant return to Normandy early in 1067.
* The earldom of Mercia lapsed after the murder of Edwin in the wake of the 1071 rebellion.
* The rebellions also led to the creation of the smaller earldoms of Cheshire and Shropshire sometime before 1077, again as defensive measures.

**The Marcher earldoms**

* + Wales was a particular risk and Marcher earldoms were created of Hereford, Shrewsbury and Chester. FtzOsbern, Montgomery and Hugh d’Avranches got the titles.
  + These men were precisely the men who had supported William most in his duchy before the Conquest and now they received their reward.
  + William never gave land to anyone in one block; there was always the risk that they might cause trouble in the future.
  + All his tenants-in-chief had land spread across England.

**Reasons for the building of castles**

* William consolidated his hold on his newly conquered kingdom by building castles.
* These were erected at the very beginning of his campaign even before the battle of Hastings, and were virtually unheard of in England.

# Motte and Bailey castles

* These early castles were rather like small wooden stockades. The timber tower was placed on top of a large earth mound, the motte.
* Next to the motte was the bailey, or outer compound, again with a timber fence.
* The bailey had stables, a chapel, a forge and living space; the small garrison of mounted soldiers could retire to the tower on the motte in any times of danger.
* Motte and bailey castles could be erected quickly and simply.
* William brought with him ‘kit castle’ which his carpenters put together after the landing at Pevensey, within the walls of the old Roman fortress.
* His right-hand man, William fitz-Osbern, earl of Hereford and lord of the Isle of Wight, built a stone keep at Chepstow, dominating the River Wye and the Severn estuary.
* William himself began the stone keep at the Tower of London (the White Tower).
* After William’s of the North during the rebellions of 1068-70, he built castles in Exeter, Warwick, Nottingham, York, Lincoln, Huntingdon and Cambridge.
* These castles were deliberately sited in English towns, often in the place of English housing.
* Castles were used to garrison soldiers, but also to overawe the English..
* Outside the towns, castles were situated to control the surrounding countryside, either on river crossings, or on the hills.
* On the Welsh borders, a chain of castles was built to watch over the mountain passes.

**2: Causes and outcomes of Anglo-Saxon resistance, 1068-71**

Rebellions and frontier problems

* William felt confident enough to return in triumph to Normandy early in 1067 with the leading Anglo-Saxons as hostages.

**The revolt of earls Edwin and Morcar in 1068**

* In 1068, Earls Edwin and Morcar, and Edgar Aethling escaped from William’s court and fled north.
* In January 1069, the Norman earl Robert of Commines was burnt to death in the bishop’s house in Durham.
* Rebellion spread to York, where the Norman garrison came under attack. William marched north.
* He defeated the rebels outside York and pursued them into the city, massacring the inhabitants and bringing the revolt to an end.
* He built a second castle at York, strengthened Norman forces in Northumbria and then returned south.
* In the summer, a fleet of 240 ships led by the sons of Swegn, King of Denmark, landed at the Humber and marched on York.
* Swegn was the nephew of Canute and Earl Godwin, and had been king of Denmark since 1047.

**Edgar the Aethling and the rebellions in the North, 1069**

* Swegn’s sons seized York; their success encouraged revolts in Dorset, Somerset, Staffordshire and Cheshire.
* The king of Scotland, Malcolm Canmore, allied himself to Edgar Aethling by marrying his sister, Margaret.
* William now faced the possibility of a Scandinavian kingdom in northern England or a separate kingdom created for Edgar, the last prince of the royal House of Wessex.

**Hereward the Wake and the rebellion at Ely, 1070-71**

* In the summer of 1070, Swegn himself landed in East Anglia, and occupied the Isle of Ely.
* He was joined by a Lincolnshire thegn named Hereward (the ‘Wake’), and the earls Edwin and Morcar. Together, they looted and burnt Peterborough Abbey.
* William bought off the Danes who left, leaving the English rebels to fend for themselves.
* When William advanced on Ely, Morcar surrendered, Edwin fled north and was murdered by his own followers, and Hereward disappeared.
* Early in 1071 there was a final outbreak of rebel activity in the area. Edwin and Morcar again turned against William.
* Edwin was quickly betrayed and killed; Morcar reached Ely, where he and Hereward were joined by exiled rebels who had sailed from Scotland.
* William arrived with an army and a fleet to finish off this last pocket of resistance.
* The Normans managed to construct a pontoon to reach the Isle of Ely, defeated the rebels at the bridgehead and stormed the island.
* Morcar was imprisoned for the rest of his life; Hereward was pardoned and had his lands returned to him. That was the end of English resistance

**3: The legacy of resistance to 1087**

# The ‘Harrying of the North’

* In 1069-70, William reacted with brutality. He marched north with seasoned troops from Nottingham to York, devastating the countryside as he went and slaughtering all the adult males.
* He burnt York and, after Christmas, set about a systematic destruction of Yorkshire.
* What his troops inflicted on the people was so terrible that it was remembered by chroniclers over fifty years later.
* Corpses rotted on the roads, refugees fled in terror, disease and famine inevitably ensued.
* Over 80% of the wasteland recorded in Domesday Book was in Yorkshire.
* Large areas of land were depopulated, villages left deserted, farms empty, and this was fifteen years later. Yorkshire must have been a desert in 1070.
* From Yorkshire, William pushed his troops across the Tees in the teeth of the winter and on, into Cheshire, across the Pennines.
* He took the town, subdued Stafford and was back in Winchester before Easter, 1070.
* The Vikings, seeing their English allies defeated, accepted a bribe and left the Humber.

**Changes in land ownership**

* William I established very quickly after the Conquest the principle that ‘all land belongs to the king’.
* He had, after all, conquered the country. Of all the land surveyed in Domesday Book in 1086, the king directly owned a fifth.
* The notion of freehold disappeared; all land was ‘held’ (not owned) either directly from the king (by a tenant-in-chief) or from a tenant-in-chief.
* Each landholder formed a link in the chain that led ultimately to the king. This altered the structure of English society.
* There was a network that reached out from the king at the centre to everyone.
* This social structure was held together by the taking of oaths and was linked to military service.
* It is known as ‘feudalism’. It was over a period of several generations.

**How William I maintained royal power**

* William I always maintained that he was the rightful heir to Edward the Confessor but the reality of his kingship was based upon military conquest.
* He and his son were always careful to preserve Anglo-Saxon laws (chiefly because the Normans had none of their own).
* They used the wealth of England to raise armies to extend their power over England.
* William I initially kept English earls and leading churchmen in power, but by the time Domesday Book was completed, virtually all the ruling class of pre-Conquest England had been replaced.
* William was successful in controlling England. He only spent 25% of his time in England from 1066 to 1087.

**4: The revolt of the Norman earls (1075)**

* In 1075, there was a revolt by some of William’s Norman lords including the sons of his most trusted earls.
* The rebellion was led by Ralph de Gael, the earl of Norfolk.
* He was a Breton, whose father had held a position at the court of Edward the Confessor and gone on to assist William in his conquest of England.
* Ralph recruited Roger de Bretuil, earl of Hereford, son of William fitzOsbern who had been killed in battle in 1071.
* The plot seems to have been formed at the wedding feast of Ralph to Roger’s sister in Norfolk.
* William had refused to allow the marriage, but the two had got married even so.
* The two men were also angry that William’s sheriffs were interfering in the earls’ affairs.
* Ralph, as a Breton, was encouraged by Bretons and Philip of France.
* Philip wanted to undermine William who he regarded as a serious rival. Ralph also appealed to Denmark for help.
* Earl Waltheof of Northumbria, the only surviving English earl, also took part
* The revolt did not get very far, Lanfranc, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was acting as William’s regent during his absence in Normandy and urged the king to remain in the duchy.
* Earl Roger was bottled up in Herefordshire and Odo of Bayeux and others forced Ralph to retreat to Norwich, where he left his wife in command whilst he fled to Brittany.
* Another great Danish fleet arrived, led by Cnut, son of Swegn Estrithsson, but it was too late.
* The Vikings sailed up the east coast looting and pillaging before departing for home.
* William returned to England at Christmas, 1075. The Breton rebels were blinded and murdered and Roger de Breteuil banished from Herefordshire and imprisoned.
* Ralph lost all of his estates and fled to safety in Brittany. Waltheof was arrested and executed in 1076.
* This was the last rebellion against William in England.

**3: Norman England, 1066-88**

**1: The feudal system and the Church**

**The feudal hierarchy**

* The king was at the top of the feudal hierarchy. Next came the tenants-in-chief. Below them were the knights.
* The tenants-in-chief did not own the lands given to them after the conquest. They held it on condition that they provided soldiers for the king.
* Tenants had to perform **homage** to their lord; in return, he offered them his protection. The link was sealed by an oath.
* Below knights were peasants, who worked on the knight’s land (**labour service**) and farmed their own plot.
* If tenant broke his oath, he was liable for **forfeiture** of his estate. The land would revert to the lord or king.

The knights

* The tenants-in-chief listed in Domesday Book, along with their connections with the king and their titles.
* There were thousands of knights who formed the next level of the Norman aristocracy and who replaced the Anglo-Saxon thegns in the villages of England.

Knight-service

* These men owed ‘knight service’ to their lord. He in turned owed military service to William.
* Knight-service included keeping the proper military equipment for fighting and being ready to fight when called.
* The king expected the archbishops, bishops and abbots to pay for their land in providing armed troops.
* Knights received land from tenants-in-chief, just as they had done from William, the land was used to pay for the maintenance of their equipment.

**The Church in England**

* The Church was drastically affected by the Conquest. A new Norman-French aristocracy replaced the English bishops and abbots.
* Some of the English dioceses were altered and many new cathedrals, abbeys and monasteries were built in the period 1066-1100.

# Reform of the church

* In 1070, Stigand, the Bishop of Winchester and Archbishop of Canterbury, was removed from his offices. Other bishops went at the same time
* When Ealdred of York died in September 1069, he was replaced by Thomas of Bayeux Thomas of Bayeux.
* By 1080, Wulfstan of Worcester was the only English bishop left; all the others were either Norman or French.
* The new bishops were hard-working, intelligent and, utterly loyal to the Conqueror and his goverment of England.

# The Dioceses

* Some the cathedrals of the Anglo-Saxon dioceses were moved by the Norman bishops.
* The new Norman pattern was to base the dioceses upon cities, rather like the new, smaller, earldoms.
* The dioceses affected included Lichfield, to Chester and then to Coventry; Sherborne to Old Sarum (Salisbury); Selsey to Chichester; Elmham to Thetford and then Norwich; Dorchester to Lincoln and Wells to Bath.
* These dioceses were then divided into archdeaconries and the archdeaconries subdivided into rural deaneries.

# Archdeacons

* William appointed archdeacons in English dioceses; by 1089 they were almost everywhere.
* The archdeacon was in charge of discipline and presided over the diocesan courts.

# Parishes and priests

* The Parish was the smallest unit of Church administration with its own church and clergy. Domesday Book records around 2000 churches. There must have been many more.
* Many churches were built after the Conquest. The great majority of parish priests continued to be of English descent.

**Archbishop Stigand**

* Stigand was appointed to Archbishop of Canterbury in 1052. The appointment, however, was not recognised by Rome.
* In England, his position was regarded as doubtful because the previous archbishop (Robert of Jumieges) had fled the country.
* In 1058, Pope Benedict X sent him a pallium in 1059, Benedict was deposed.
* The pallium was a badge of office of a bishop or archbishop.
* After the death of King Harold II, Stigand made his submission to William the Conqueror.
* William insisted that the Archbishop should accompany him on his return to Normandy.
* At King William's request, in 1070, Papal Legates were sent to England and brought charges against Stigand.
* He was accused of taking the Archbishopric during the lifetime of Robert and used his pallium.
* He had received his own pallium from an anti-pope and that he had retained the Bishopric of Winchester after his appointment to Canterbury.
* Stigand was condemned, deprived of his offices and imprisoned at Winchester, where he died in 1072.

Archbishop Lanfranc

* At the head of the new foreign bishops and abbots was a new archbishop of Canterbury, Lanfranc, an Italian from Pavia.
* Lanfranc was already famous as a lawyer and a teacher. He was a monk at Bec and was abbot of St. Stephen’s, Caen, at the time of his appointment to Canterbury.
* He was one of the closest advisors of the Conqueror and often acted as regent for William in his absences in Normandy.
* His role as a great statesman continued until his death in 1089, after he had helped to establish William II on the throne.

# The Primacy

* Lanfranc established Canterbury as the primate in England, over and above the other archbishopric, York.
* The king initially supported Thomas of Bayeux in York but backed Lanfranc and at the Council of Winchester in 1070.
* Lanfranc was seen as primate in England and he asserted his rights over Scotland and Ireland, as primate of all ‘Britain’.

# The Councils

* Lanfranc used great council meetings to maket these changes in the new, Anglo-Norman church.
* Stigand was deposed at the council of 1070. Councils were held in 1072 (Winchester), 1072 (Winchester and Windsor), 1075 (London), 1076 (Winchester) and at least three other councils in the period after that, to 1087.
* Laws banning clergy marriages, compulsory celibacy for priests and the moving of cathedrals to the cities were passed at the Councils.
* The parish served by a single priest in a single church was set up as the basic organisation of the Church.

The Church and the Law courts

* Lanfranc created church courts in England in 1076. This had royal sanction.
* Before the Conquest, religious pleas had been heard in the Hundred courts by bishops and archdeacons.
* From 1076, they were heard in episcopal (bishops) courts free from all lay interference.
* Episcopal courts (or synods) were not new in the English or Norman church. Lanfranc ordered regular synods to be held in each diocese.
* The agreed with ecclesiastical courts, but did not want his authority threatened.
* When Odo of Bayeux proposed to withhold his knights from the king and to intervene in papal affairs but William arrested him as earl of Kent.
* William kept him imprisoned until he lay on his deathbed in 1087.

**The extent of change to Anglo-Saxon society and the economy**

A military state and a new social structure

* Norman society and the feudal system was geared towards war and fighting.
* The system of knight-service was created out of the necessity to occupy and reinforce the Norman Conquest.
* The need for efficient troops led to a quota system; those troops garrisoned the new castles and put down the rebellions.
* English society before 1066 was not geared towards war.
* In 1065, when Tostig was expelled from Northumbria, Harold avoided war, choosing to expel his own brother.
* Normandy before 1066, by contrast, had witnessed continual warfare from the moment William succeeded to the duchy in 1035.
* The rise to power of the duke was the story of his triumph in battles, skirmishes, sieges and counter-sieges over a twenty-year period.
* Norman society developed military services and the oath-taking relationships that bound that society together.
* After 1066, they exported these conventions to England and imposed them in order to make the Conquest successful.

**Changes to the economy**

* Agriculture formed the bulk of the English economy at the time of the Norman invasion.
* Twenty years after the invasion, 35% of England was arable; 25% was pasture; 15% was woodland and the remaining 25% was moorland and fens.
* Most of the smaller landowning nobility lived on their properties and managed their own estates.
* Agricultural land on a estate was divided between some fields that the landowner would manage and cultivate directly, called demesne land.
* The majority of the fields would be cultivated by peasants, who would pay rent to the landowner either by labour on the lord's demesne or by cash or produce.
* The English economy was not a subsistence economy and many crops were grown by peasant farmers for sale to the early English towns.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_England_in_the_Middle_Ages#cite_note-DyerP14-1)
* The Normans did not significantly alter the operation of the manor or the village economy.
* The biggest change in the years after the invasion was the rapid reduction in the number of slaves being held in England.
* The new Norman aristocracy proved harsh landlords.  Anglo-Saxon peasants became unfree workers, or serfs.
* They were forbidden to leave their manor and seek alternative employment.

### Trade, manufacturing and the towns

* Although mostly rural, England had a number of old, economically important towns in 1066.
* A large amount of trade came through the Eastern towns, including London, York, Lincoln and Norwich
* Some towns, such as York, suffered from Norman sacking during William's northern campaigns.
* Other towns, such as Lincoln, saw the widespread demolition of houses to make room for new castles.
* The conquest also brought significant economic changes with the arrival of the first Jews to English cities.
* William I brought over wealthy Jews from Rouen in Normandy to settle in London. They carried out financial services for the crown.
* In the years immediately after the invasion, a lot of wealth was drawn out of England in various ways by the Norman rulers and reinvested in Normandy.
* William retained the English method of minting coins locally with dies produced in London.
* He produced coins of a very high standard, which lead to the use of the term ‘sterling’ as the name for the Norman silver coins

**2: Norman government**

# Changes to government after the Conquest

* The powers of the king of England were well established by 1066.
* The king was the chief lawmaker in the realm, the supreme military commander and the maker of foreign and domestic policy.
* William I made no great changes to this function of kingship; it was in his interest, as the legal heir to Edward the Confessor (so he claimed) to continue as before.

# The coronation service

* The anointing and the coronation were the means by which the new king legitimised his rule.
* This was especially important to William, who had seized power by victory in battle.
* The coronations of Harold, William I and his son William II used the same coronation service.
* The coronations were witnessed by many hundreds of people and accompanied by great feasting afterwards.
* For William I, the aspect of continuity in the coronation service was vital.
* He was the true heir to Edward the Confessor, designated by him and crown only after a brief period of usurpation by Harold Godwinson.

# Laws and customs

* The Normans in the first generations after the Conquest created no new law codes. Instead, it was the usual blend of Norman and Anglo-Saxon traditions.
* William I was very keen to ensure that, as he was the legal heir to Edward the Confessor, traditional English laws and customs be preserved.
* The method of trial by ordeal had long been used on both sides of the English Channel, as had inquiries by means of witnesses or by the production of charters as evidence.
* Ordeal by fire and water was common in Anglo-Saxon England but judicial combat became the usual method of proof in both criminal and land cases.
* In addition to this traditional method of ordeal, the use of the jury to give a verdict upon oath became increasingly frequent under William I.
* One early law that was revived was ‘murdrum’; if a dead body was discovered, there would be no punishment of the community if it could be proved to be English.

**The king’s household**

* The king’s household lay at the heart of Anglo-Norman kingship.
* This was his household, the inner core of the court, which included a wider circle of society invited to attend special events.
* The household composed of the king’s family, domestic servants, priests, secretaries and clerk and men of military experience who formed the king’s bodyguard.
* It was also composed of a wider, more official body of men, the royal administrators, earls and bishops who sat on the royal council and discussed matters of state.
* As the king and his household moved around the country, they were joined by the local lords of the area, so that the household was constantly changing.
* The royal household had three functions:
* a judicial, legal body
* a military nerve-centre of the crown
* a private, domestic function

# The chancery and the chancellor

* The royal household in Anglo-Saxon and the Norman worlds were roughly similar.
* The existence of a chancery and chancellor were quite new to the Normans.
* Under Edward the Confessor a body of royal clerks wrote up the documents and appended the great royal seal.
* No such office or clerks existed in Normandy before 1066. The first named Anglo-Norman chancellor was Herfast, in 1069, followed by Osmund, Maurice and Gerard, chancellor in 1087 at the end of William I’s reign.
* The first three all went on to become bishops but, until they did so, remained officials of the royal household.

# The Writs

* The royal clerks wrote the writs of Edward the Confessor. The writ was a short sealed document with a standard greeting, which communicated commands and grants from the king’s household.
* It was a letter for publication of royal grants and privileges. Nothing like it existed in Normandy.
* William adopted writs and continued to use them. The very early writs issued by William were in Anglo-Saxon before becoming Latin after 1070.
* The use of the writ is a sign of continuity from Anglo-Saxons to Normans.
* William was keen to use any English traditions if they would help him govern successfully

**The limited use of earls under William I**

* In Anglo-Saxon England, the earls had had tremendous power. They had governed their earldoms with only limited supervision from the king. Each earl controlled a compact area.
* William was not prepared to allow that. He wanted and needed to be in control.
* The estates of the great Norman barons were dispersed to prevent any one mounting a challenge to the king.
* There were barons who were given special responsibilities; the Marcher lords were to defend England from Welsh attacks.
* In Kent and Sussex, William’s closest friends and supporters were given land to prevent possible invasions.
* Elsewhere, earls were no different from any other landowner; the revolt in 1075 showed that William was prepared to deal with anybody.

**The role of regents**

* William was often abroad in Normandy. He only spent a quarter of his life after 1066 in England.
* He considered England to be the most secure part of his growing empire.
* In 1067, he left England to return to Normandy and appointed two regents: men whom he could trust to govern in his absence.
* One was his half-brother, Odo, Bishop of Bayeux; the second was William fitzOsbern, the earl of Hereford.
* In 1073, Odo served again an in 1075, it was Richard fitzGilbert and Willam de Warenne, the earl of Surrey.

**The office of sheriff**

* A central government with a writing office issuing royal commands and grants was nothing if the royal will could not be carried out by an officer in the locality.
* The Normans found England already divided into shires and saw no reason to change this.
* The smaller Norman earldoms that grew out of the great Anglo-Saxon earldoms were based increasingly around the shire-town, beginning with Chester and Shrewsbury.
* The royal official responsible for the king’s will in the shire remained the sheriff; again, the Normans saw no need to change this.
* The Shire-reeve or sheriff (reeve was an English term for an official) was responsible for law and order in is county.
* The functions of the sheriff after 1066 were threefold:
* to manage the royal estates in the shire,
* to collect the royal taxes and
* to supervise royal justice in the shire.
* These functions remained unchanged from Anglo-Saxon government.

# The shire courts

* The shire courts were the focal points of royal justice under the Normans just as they had been under Anglo-Saxon kings.
* The shire court usually met twice a year, at Easter (March/April) and Michaelmas (October).
* The meetings were public events, attended by earls and bishops, the sheriff and freemen of the shire.
* Legal cases were heard regarding land and family disputes, outlawry and crime; taxation and royal dues were discussed.
* It was in the interest of all the great landowners of the shire to be present.

# The hundred courts

* The meetings of the shire courts were special occasions. Much of routine business in the shires was conducted through the hundred court.
* The division of Anglo-Saxon shires into hundreds remained the same after 1066 and the hundred had no Norman precedent in the duchy before 1066.
* The court was under the jurisdiction of the sheriff, but was presided over by his deputies.
* It met more frequently than the shire court, and was the lowest public court in the land.
* It dealt chiefly with local land disputes and policing issues regarding murder charges and local law and order.

**The ‘forest’**

* In Anglo-Saxon times there had been special woods for hunting. Norman forests were much larger and backed by legal mandate.
* The new forests were not necessarily heavily wooded but were protected and used by the king. Forest law was ‘harsh and arbitrary, a matter purely for the King's will’.
* Forests were expected to supply the king with hunting grounds, raw materials, goods and money.
* Revenue from forest rents and fines became extremely important and forest wood was used for castles and royal ship building.
* Several forests played a key role in mining, such as the iron mining and working in the Forest of Dean and lead mining in the Forest of High Peak.
* Many monasteries had special rights in particular forests, for example for hunting or tree felling.

# Domesday Book

* Domesday Book was so-called because its verdicts were just as unanswerable as the Book of the Day of Judgement.
* It was written in Latin, on parchment, and includes 13,400 place names on 888 leaves.
* It was written by one man, probably a native Englishman, or at least someone familiar with the place names.
* No other country in the world has produced such a detailed historical record from so far back in time.
* The Domesday Book is a record of a conquered kingdom but it is a testament to the survival of that kingdom in almost every aspect.

# Why was Domesday Book created?

* Its purpose was three-fold: financial, military and legal. It illustrates how William governed his kingdom during his final years.

# Finance

* Domesday Book provided the king with an exact record of the local contribution to the king’s geld, the Danegeld. This was the general tax levied on the entire population.
* England was a rich and prosperous kingdom and it is clear that the Norman kings would milk the country dry if they needed to.

# Military

* A second purpose of the survey was military. It was carried out at a time of crisis in William’s government of England.
* For the first time since 1072, he faced possible invasion from Scandinavia.
* In the winter of 1085 he raised a massive army to deal with the threat, and billeted the army on the people of England.
* He needed to pay for this army and he needed to find out who his army commanders and soldiers actually were when he required them.
* Domesday Book, though arranged by Anglo-Saxon shires, focused upon the chief landholders in those shires.
* These were the tenants-in-chief - the bishops, earls and barons in the new Anglo-Norman order, totally replacing the Anglo-Saxon ruling class in the twenty years since 1066.
* To reinforce this information, William summoned all the major landholders to Salisbury in August, 1086.
* He made them swear a special oath of allegiance to him. This was the Oath of Salisbury and bound his men to him by personal loyalty.

# Legal

* The third purpose of Domesday Book was legal. In the twenty years following the battle of Hastings, almost all of the Anglo-Saxon ruling class had been dispossessed.
* The king needed to find out just who held the lands in his new kingdom. The information needed to be confirmed and written down.
* In many areas, there were long-drawn out disputes and legal hearings still unresolved in 1086.
* William wanted to see all disputes settled so that England would be peaceful.
* Domesday Book was, in this way, a great judicial inquiry.

**How was Domesday Book produced?**

* The Norman administration used Anglo-Saxon customs and procedures. The Domesday Book could not have been made without such established practices of local government.
* William’s commissioners used the many financial and legal documents housed in the great abbeys and churches of his kingdom and the Danegeld lists already drawn up by his own government in recent years.

**3: The Norman aristocracy**

**Culture and language**

* Before 1066, English culture was distinct from the rest of continental Europe. All documents were written in English.
* The conquest brought England into contact European ideas, particularly in religion, language and literature.
* Contact with Scandinavia, which had developed over three hundred years, was cut almost completely.
* The great mass of ordinary people spoke English, but French spread as a second language.
* French was used by the merchant middle class as a language of business, especially when it traded with the continent.
* Latin became the languages of government and legal judgements. All government documents were written in Latin
* Anglo-Saxon literature came to an end and literature written in England was in Latin or Anglo-Norman.
* The Normans brought their cultural habits with them. They were wine drinkers.
* The Normans brought their own names; William and Richard and Robert replaced Ethelred and Godwin.
* The English Church, which had been largely independent of Rome, became more closely linked to the Catholic Church.

**Bishop Odo of Bayeux**

* Odo, was the half-brother of William of Normandy. He was appointed bishop of Bayeux by William in 1049.
* Odo was a key supported of William in 1066. One Norman chronicler claims that Odo of Bayeux contributed 100 ships to William's invasion fleet.
* He fought at Hastings was given the title of Earl of Kent and the castle at Dover.
* Odo was granted manors in thirteen counties which gave him an income of over £3,000 per year, making him the richest tenant-in-chief in the kingdom.
* In 1067, William appointed Odo as regent while he spent time in Normandy.
* For the next fifteen years Odo he was second in power to William in England. Odo of Bayeux dealt with the Revolt of the Earls in 1075.
* In 1082, there were heard complaints about Odo's rule, while William awas in Normandy.
* Odo was arrested and charged with misgovernment and oppression. He was found guilty he was kept in prison until the death of William in 1087.

**4: William I and his sons**

**William I and Robert**

* Robert Curthose (short legs) was the eldest son of William I. He was dissatisfied with the share of power allotted to him and quarrelled with his father and brothers fiercely.
* In 1077, Robert suggested to his father that he should become the ruler of Normandy and Maine.
* William refused and Robert rebelled and attempted to seize Rouen. The rebellion failed and Robert was forced to flee to Flanders.
* William attacked him in 1080 but his mother persuaded the two men to end their feud. The truce lasted until 1083.

**William’s death and the succession**

* William died as a result of a riding accident in 1087. Just before he died William decided that William Rufus, rather than his older brother, Robert Curthose, should be king of England.
* He was crowned by Lanfranc, the Archbishop of Canterbury, on 26 September, 1087.
* The following year some Norman barons, who held land on both sides of the Channel, led a rebellion against William Rufus.
* The leaders were Odo of Bayeux and Robert of Mortain, William I’s half-brothers of William I and Richard Fitz-Osbern.
* The plan was to reunite England and Normandy. They also believed Robert to be weaker than William II, who was already unpopular.
* Robert Curthose did nothing to rally his supporters and most Normans in England remained loyal.
* William II won some over with bribes. He then army successfully attacked the rebel strongholds at Tonbridge, Pevensey and Rochester. The leaders of the revolt were exiled to Normandy.
* Robert did not land in England as he had promised and the rebellion fizzled out.