

KS3 History

Lesson 1 of an enquiry of 6 lessons

Landowning and the Feudal System

Enquiry: How much did England change during the Norman Conquest?

Ms Dawson



On Christmas Day 1066, William of Normandy was crowned King of England, but he still did not have control of the country. He was a foreign invader who had killed a popular English King. When he conquered England, he brought with him 10,000 Normans. The population of Saxons was around 2 million, so William needed to come up with ways to control the country.



One of the ways that William decided to do this was by developing the **feudal system**. England was already organised into a strict **hierarchy** under Anglo-Saxon rule. It had the King at the top, followed by the **nobles** who were wealthy and powerful and owned land, and then the **peasants** at the bottom. William developed this existing system so that he and his Norman nobles could control the country.



When William conquered England and took the throne, he claimed all of the land in England as his. He needed to keep his supporters loyal to him, so he took land away from the Saxon nobles who had fought against him at Hastings and gave it to his trusted Norman nobles. These nobles would then swear loyalty to William and manage the land and local population for him.



Comprehension Questions

1. Who was crowned king of England in 1066?
2. Why did William need to think of ways to control the country?
3. What did William develop in order to control the country?
4. How did William gain the loyalty of his supporters?

Challenge: How did William's feudal system build on the existing Anglo-Saxon hierarchy?

Sentence starter: William's feudal system used some features of the Anglo-Saxon hierarchy because...

However, he developed...



Each group in the hierarchy was responsible for the group below and had to obey the group above. As the monarch, William was at the top of the system and used it to control the whole country. He loaned out land to nobles in exchange for loyalty.



After William, came the nobles. The nobles received land from William and in return, the nobles promised their support and swore an oath of loyalty to William. They were responsible for the **knights** who were below them on the system, and one of their jobs was to supply knights to William's army.



The knights were below the nobles on the feudal system. They received land from the nobles in return for their promise to serve in William's army for 40 days a year. They also helped the nobles to run and farm the land, but Knights were not farmers. The farming was done by the peasants who lived on the land that the knights controlled.



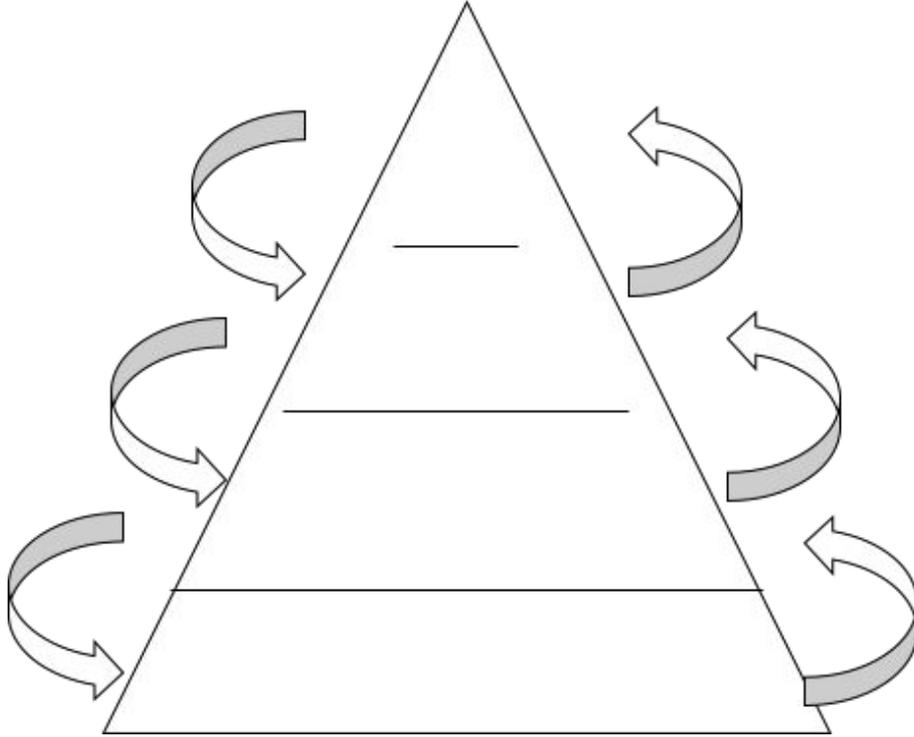
The peasants worked on the land and paid taxes to the knights and nobles. In return, the knights and barons kept the peace and protected the peasants. The peasants got a place to live and work but were treated poorly under the feudal system. However, things hadn't been better for them under the Anglo-Saxon hierarchy. They had also owned no land and been forced to work very hard under the Anglo-Saxons.



This system helped William to control the population and gave him a constant supply of money from **taxes**. By 1087, almost all of the land in England was owned and run by Norman nobles.



Consolidation diagram



Extension Question

How great were the changes that the Normans made to landowning and the Feudal System in England?

Sentence starters:	Key words
<i>In some ways the changes were great because...</i>	-Hierarchy
<i>To explain this further...</i>	-Control
	-Peasants
<i>However in some ways the changes were not that big because...</i>	
<i>To explain this further...</i>	



Glossary

Feudal System: A system which exchanged land for loyalty.

Hierarchy: A system which organises society with those considered the most important at the top, and those considered least important at the bottom.

Nobles: Those who have land and wealth.

Peasants: Those with no land and little money, who farm the land.

Knights: Professional soldiers. They owned some land and fought for the King.

Taxes: Money collected from the population and given to the King.

