

## Who was more prepared to win?

	King Harold and the Anglo-Saxons	Duke William and the Normans
Type and size of army	Fyrd; around 7000	Mixture of trained <b>mercenary</b> forces from Normandy and Western Europe; around 7000
Specialist soldiers	Housecarls and <b>thegns</b>	Knights, trained from the age of three, riding horses that were trained to kick and bite in battle.
Weaponry and armour	Double-handed axes, pikes, large circular shields; Housecarls had armour; peasants used pitchforks, farming equipment, and weapons and armour taken from fallen soldiers.	Bows, large tear-shaped shields that covered from chin to knee, pikes, armour
Battle style	<b>Shield wall</b> formation: interlocking round shields to prevent enemy soldiers from penetrating the line; use of double-handed axe. Most soldiers were foot soldiers or <b>infantry</b> . King Harold was positioned in the centre of his troops on foot as Anglo-Saxons did not use horses in battle.	Various: infantry attacked on foot, archers were used to wear down the enemy. Troops were organised into divisions: each division commander used a system of flags to communicate so they could change tactics in battle. William rode a horse. Knights on horseback carried <b>lances</b> and made up the <b>cavalry</b> .
Position in battlefield	Positioned at the top of Senlac Hill	Arrived at the battleground first. Chose a site at the base of Senlac Hill, on an old Roman road which ran over the top of the hill. There was marshy land on either side so the road itself became the battlefield. It was an important road – Harold had to use it to get to William, and William had to use it to get to London. It was a site that would change the course of English history.
Previous experience in battle	King Harold was an experienced general and had successfully fought against the Welsh and Vikings.	Duke William had conquered many areas around Normandy and as far afield as Sicily.
State of the army	King Harold had marched his army north in four days to face Harald Hardrada on 25 September. He then marched his army south, arrived in London on 6 October, and left London on 11 October to face William. His army was exhausted.	William had landed at Pevensey on 28 September. The Normans erected a castle and then made their way along the south coast, burning villages as they went. They arrived in Hastings and had several days to rest and prepare for the battle with King Harold and the Anglo-Saxons. William brought plenty of horses and supplies so the army could refuel before the battle.
Extra support	King Harold was a popular king amongst most Anglo-Saxons and had the support of the Witan and some of his brothers.	Duke William had the support of the young King Phillip I of France. He also had the Papal Banner from the Pope in Rome (and therefore the support of God).

### Norman Warfare

The Normans used a variety of tactics in order to win battles. Knights on horseback, called cavalry, were trained from the age of 3, and the horses were trained to kick and bite. Archers were also used frequently. The army was divided into divisions, and flags called gonfanon were used to signal manoeuvres on the battlefield. The Norman army was made up of professional soldiers who spent many hours practicing.

### Timeline: Build-up to the battle, 1066

11 Aug	28 Sept	6 Oct	11 Oct	13 Oct
William ready to launch an invasion from Normandy	William lands at Pevensey; King Harold marches south	King Harold and the remnants of his army reach London	King Harold leaves London, choosing not to wait for 30,000 reinforcements, and marches to meet William	King Harold reaches the South Downs

# The Battle of Hastings: Tactics

King Harold was in York, recovering from the Battle of Stamford Bridge, when he heard about William's invasion fleet landing in Pevensey. Harold's armies were exhausted from long marches and the battles with the Vikings.

### Harold's decision:

Harold's difficult decision as to whether to launch a surprise attack on William or allow his soldiers to rest was soon decided for him. Harold heard news that William and his Norman forces were attacking villages on the south coast and were making their way to London. So Harold left immediately and marches his tired army south to confront the invading Normans.

### Factors that influences the outcome of the Battle?

Harold's Mistakes	Williams leadership and tactics	To Summarise!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>King Harold hurried to face William: he could have waited for between 20-30,00 extra troops from the South-West, but he chose to go straight to Hastings.</li> <li>Harold fought alongside the Normans in 1064, and was aware of their tactics but still used the old Anglo-Saxon techniques of the shield wall.</li> <li>Harold chose to fight on foot rather than horseback, so it was difficult for him to communicate with his troops or give orders in the battle.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both William and Hardrada decided to invade at the same time.</li> <li>The weather delayed William's invasion this gave him the benefit as Harold had defeated the Viking before he arrived.</li> <li>William chose to delay his invasion, this demoralised Harold's soldiers.</li> <li>The double invasion occurred during harvest season, which led to desertions (people running away) from the fryd.</li> <li>William gained a Papal Banner so his soldiers believed they had God's blessing to fight and if they died, they went to heaven. This boosted morale.</li> <li>William chose the site of the Battleground.</li> <li>William took his time invading, he ensured that he had made all the preparations necessary.</li> <li>William's troops were highly organised into divisions with a system of communication.</li> <li>William was on horseback so had more control of his troops and could be more responsive.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both William and Harold made extensive preparations for war and both assembled large armies and navies.</li> <li>The Battle of Stamford Bridge was a convincing victory for Harold but Harold's army arrived at Hastings exhausted.</li> <li>The Battle of Hastings was a very closely fought encounter.</li> <li>The Normans used archers and cavalry, while the English relied on foot soldiers and hand-to-hand fighting.</li> <li>William won the Battle of Hastings due to a combination of superior tactics, better leadership, the flexibility and discipline of his troops as well as a little luck.</li> <li>By winning the battle, William cleared the path to become King, but he had much more work to do to fully secure the English kingdom as his own.</li> </ul>

### What do I need to know:

- The events and outcomes of the Battle.
- The strategy and luck on both sides
- The location of the Battle.



### Key Words:

- Conroi
- desertion
- Demoralised
- Feigned retreat
- gonfanon
- Senlac Hill

# The Battle of Hastings: Events

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3



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How secure was William as King of England?

The battle started a 9.00 am.

The archers walked up to Senlac Hill and fired a volley of arrows.

Some of the Norman infantry charged up the hill but were blocked by the housecarls.

The Anglo-Saxons' main form of defence was the shield wall.

Housecarls overlapped their circular shields and this was a very effective way of defending their position.

After the first Norman attack failed, a section of the Norman army ran away from the Norman line.

Members of the Fyrd ran after them but became stuck in the marshy land at the bottom of Senlac hill. The Normans turned and slaughtered the Anglo-Saxons who chased them. This tactic became known as the feigned retreat it slowly drained the shield wall of Anglo-Saxons.

**Midday:** There was a break in the fighting to allow both sides to remove their dead and wounded.

William changed his tactics and moved his archers from the front of the battlefield to behind the infantry. The change in position of the archers meant that, rather than flying over the heads of the horsecars, their arrows hit the Anglo-Saxon army squarely and caught them by surprise.

William ordered his cavalry to charge which led to heavy casualties on both sides. Harold's troops managed to stay in formation but the Normans deployed their feigned retreat again. Both sides suffered heavy losses and William ordered his knights to dismount and attack on foot. At the same time his archers fired their arrows and the knights and infantry charged at the Anglo-Saxons.

4pm:

By this time the Anglo-Saxon shield wall was beginning to disintegrate and the Normans began to attack and break through the sides of the wall. The remaining housecarls fell into a defensive position around Harold. It was at this time that King Harold was killed. Seeing his death, the fyrd broke ranks and fled.

- William won the Battle of Hastings on the 14<sup>th</sup> October 1066.
- However, he was not in control of the rest of England.
- The country was full of angry Anglo-Saxons, many of whom were still loyal to the King William had just killed.
- Two powerful Anglo-Saxon earls, Edwin and Morcar, had not been at Hastings, and there were still significant English forces ready to oppose William.
- 25<sup>th</sup> December 1066: William is crowned King of England.