

Reading old documents

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles was begun by monks living in the time of King Alfred. It is a document that is like a diary but each entry in the document is for a year and not a day. Here are some entries for the years 625 to 644.

- 625 *Justus the Archbishop of Canterbury made Paulinus the bishop of Northumbria.*
- 626 *Paulinus baptised Eanflaed the daughter of King Edwin. The king ordered that a large stone church should be built at York to replace a small wooden one.*
- 627 *Paulinus baptised King Edwin. Archbishop Justus died. Paulinus made Honorius Archbishop of Canterbury at a service in Lincoln.*
- 628 *King Penda fought Cynegils and Cwichelm at Cirencester then made peace with them.*
- 633 *Penda and Cadwallon killed King Edwin at Hatfield Chase. Edwin had reigned for seventeen years. Penda and Cadwallon went through Northumbria attacking and killing people. Paulinus took Edwin's widow, Aethelburgh, and travelled by ship from Northumbria to Kent. Archbishop Honorius made Paulinus bishop at Rochester.*
- 634 *Bishop Birinis held a Christian religious service in the kingdom of Cynegils.*
- 635 *Bishop Birinis baptised King Cynegils at Dorchester.*
- 636 *In Dorchester Cwichelm was baptised. He died later that year.*
- 639 *Bishop Birinis, at Dorchester, baptised King Cuthred.*
- 640 *King Eadbald who ruled Kent died. He had been king twenty four years.*
- 641 *Penda killed King Oswald of Northumbria. Cenwath became the king of the West Saxons. He reigned for three years less than twenty four. Oswin became king of the Northumbrians. He reigned for twenty eight years.*
- 644 *Bishop Paulinus died.*

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Age range

- Years 3/4 (SP4/5).
- Years 5/6 (SP6/7).

Resources

Copies of the worksheet. Maps of England (optional with older students).

Using the worksheet

The information provided in the worksheet has been simplified from the text of *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* to make it easy to read. Even so the passage has been selected to show some Anglo-Saxon names which may be difficult to pronounce. Also the way of recording kings' reigns by referring back in time and using the device of knocking years off a larger number have been retained to make the text more authentic. Although *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* was started by monks in the reign of King Alfred (871 to 899) they had to find information about earlier times and write it down. This section comes from a time over two hundred years before Alfred's reign. You may wish to tell the students about this or simply use it as a diary of events.

Younger students

The students should work on the following questions. They are straight forward questions. The questions for older students involve a little more thought. You may wish to use them with your more able students.

Questions (and answers)

1. Who made Paulinus bishop of Northumbria? (Justus).
2. Who was Eanflaed? (Daughter of King Edwin).
3. When and where was Honorius made Archbishop of Canterbury? (627, Lincoln).
4. When did King Edwin begin his reign? (616).
5. Why did Paulinus and Aethelburgh travel by sea and not by land when they went to Kent? (To avoid being attacked by Penda and Cadwallon).
6. How long was Paulinus bishop at Rochester? (11 years).

Outcomes

The students can:

- Extract information from a source.
- Perform simple calculations on information from a source.

Older students

The students should work on the following questions. You may wish to use some of the questions for younger students with some of your less able older students. Some of these questions ask the students to comment on the information and infer things from it just as historians do. The older students could use maps of England to find out where the events took place.

Questions (and answers)

1. Do you think Cwichelm was a king? (Yes. The others mentioned seemed to be either kings or bishops. As he was fighting with King Penda he too was probably a king).
2. What do you conclude about King Penda from the information on the sheet? (He was a violent king who wanted to take over other kingdoms).
3. Who do you think probably baptised Cwichelm? (Birinis. He baptised the other kings at Dorchester).
5. How many years did King Cenwath reign? (21).
6. When did King Oswin's reign end? (669).

Outcomes

The students can:

- Extract information from a source.
- Perform simple calculations on information.
- Can make inferences from the source.