

# Vikings Work Pack – Week 2



Page	Activity
1	Viking Travel Information Sheet (Reading activity)
2	Viking Longships
3	Design and Create a Viking Longship

## Viking Travel

Vikings were excellent boat builders as well as first class sailors, navigating by watching the movement of the sun and observing landmarks and seabirds.

We know what their ships looked like because many Vikings were buried with their worldly goods, and sometimes this included their boat. The Gokstad ship was unearthed in a burial site south of Oslo and is now in a museum. Tree-ring dating has shown that this ship was built towards the end of the ninth century. It is 23 metres long and made of curving, overlapping oak planks (clinker built) that would skim the waves.

Viking ships were like large open rowing boats and could be up to 28m long and 4.5m wide, which is why they are often called 'longships'. Longships were fast and easy to row. Because they were narrow they cut through the water easily (like racing yachts), and because they were long the bow wave was well ahead of the stern wave, which made high speeds possible.

They would, generally, carry about 60 men, who took it in turns with the 30 oars. The mast was easy to put up and down if they needed to use the sail. Because of the shape of the ship they could not carry much sail so they had to sail when the winds were at their best. In Spring, the easterly winds helped them sail to Britain, Iceland, Greenland and America. Westerly Autumn winds carried them back to Norway and Denmark.

1. How did the Vikings navigate the sea?
2. Why are Viking ships called 'Long Ships'?
3. How many men would the long ships carry?



# Viking Longships

The Vikings built fast ships for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. These ships were 'dragon-ships' or \_\_\_\_\_. The ships were long and narrow, this meant they could travel quickly which was important in surprise attacks and get-aways.

Viking longships could sail in \_\_\_\_\_ water. So they could travel up \_\_\_\_\_ as well as across the \_\_\_\_\_. In a raid, a ship could be hauled up on a beach. The Vikings could jump out and start fighting, and then make a quick getaway if they were chased.

A Viking ship had one big square \_\_\_\_\_ made of woven wool. In some ships, the mast for the sail could be folded down. When there was not enough wind for the sail, the men \_\_\_\_\_ with long wooden \_\_\_\_\_. This meant they weren't \_\_\_\_\_ on the wind, therefore the oars were the main source of power. To steer the ship, one man worked a big steering oar at the back right hand side it was called the \_\_\_\_\_, which is where we get the word \_\_\_\_\_ from.

Shields were tied over the oar holes when the ships were in port. The shields were very important for protection in battle.

The introduction of the sail made it possible for the Vikings to \_\_\_\_\_ very long distances across the Oceans to places as far away as America and Africa.

However, it wasn't as easy as it sounds, even for a seafaring people like the Vikings; the Longships often capsized if the wind was blowing from the beam (the side) and it is thought that almost half of those ships that set sail for Greenland and Iceland were lost due to bad weather.

A dragon-ship had room for between 50 and 60 men. Most of the men would be \_\_\_\_\_ with a few steering and \_\_\_\_\_. The men slept and ate on deck. There was some space below deck for stores, but no cabins.

At the curved front end of the ship was a carved wooden figurehead. \_\_\_\_\_ on ships were meant to scare enemies.

Rowing	sea	dependant	travel	navigating
starboard		raiding	war	rowed oars
steer-board		rivers	sail	longships
		shallow		

# Build Your Own Longship!



Look at pictures of Viking long ships and try building your own! You can use any material you like (such as paper, cardboard, clay, play dough).

Draw your model below 😊