

SO YOU WANT TO BE A
VIKING?

TEACHER NOTES

This series of learning activities uses this great book, full of fun, facts and humour, to give opportunities for children to get immersed in historical enquiry, applying many cross-curricular skills. The skills and content covered are targeted at KS2 pupils.



LEARNING SEQUENCE 1 DESIGN A SWANKY SWORD

Discussion starters:

- Why do we decorate things?
- What message might a 'blinged up' sword give to the enemy?

PART 1

Read pages 28– 31 to find out about Viking weaponry. Focus on the sword as the most desired item.

Look at the key parts: **BLADE** and **HILT**.



Teacher notes written by Heather Wright, Reading Rocks
Based on the book *So you want to be a Viking?*
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PART 2

FURTHER RESEARCH

Ask children to consider how we know what a **VIKING SWORD** was like. Use the following links to show swords that have been discovered.

Encourage children to understand this is one type of **A HISTORICAL SOURCE**. What can we learn from these items?

- https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.
- https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=64698&partId=1
- <https://www.yorkshinemuseum.org.uk/collections/collections-highlights/the-cawood-sword/>



PART 3

On page 30, we learn that the blade of the sword should be 65–80cm. Use large paper or wallpaper to create to-scale blade designs. Children can use metre rulers or tape measures to be accurate.

Now children should add a hilt that they think will balance the weight of the blade.

Time to bling it up. Using ideas from page 31 and the further research, children can create their own sword designs, unique to them.



PART 4

Page 31 tells us that swords often had names and **MAGIC RUNES**.

Use the **RUNES GUIDE** on page 93 to translate your sword name and add a magical phrase to the design.

RUNE

**MAKES
THE
SOUND**

F N P F R < H T
f/v u/w/o/y th a r k/g h n

I T S ↑ B M T Y
i/e a s t/d b/p m l R



The letters are made of straight lines, making them easy to inscribe into stone.



LEARNING SEQUENCE 2

VIKING MATHS

Discussion starters:

- How do you think the Vikings paid for items?
- How expensive do you think armour would be?
- Which item do you think would be worth the most?



PART 1

Show children the price list on page 32. What do you notice about the unit of measurement for the cost of the sword?

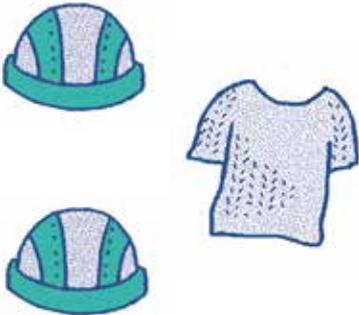
Notice it is 1.7kg. Model how to convert this into grams. You may want to practise a few conversions before you play any of the below games.

PART 2

This activity lets children practise using $<$ $>$ and $=$. Print and cut out the item sheets and set a challenge. What could you put in the empty side of this equation?

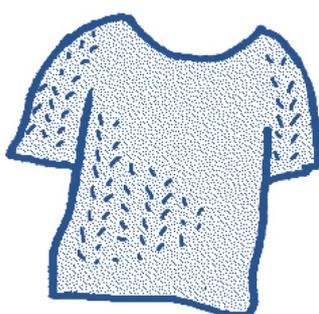
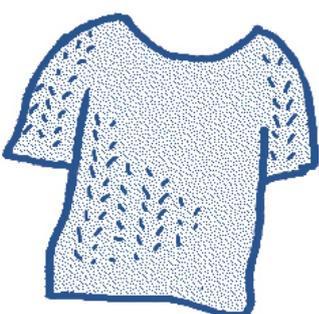
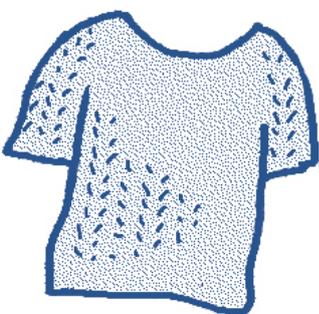
	$<$	
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Up the challenge by adding more items to the left:

	$>$	
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There are so many challenges you can set with this, allowing children to add, compare and create kg to g conversions.









PART 3

For this challenge, children turn over an **AMOUNT CARD** and use **ADDITION** and **SUBTRACTION** (with a little conversion thrown in) to find out what combinations of armour they can afford to buy.

Print and cut out a set of amount cards for each pair of children. Lay them out on the desk turned upside down. In pairs, children take turns to pick an amount.

Children should make sure they are working in one unit of measure before they start adding up.

Children could note a calculations on a dry wipeboard or on the **SHOPPING LIST SHEET**.



PART 4

Read pages 36–39 together to find out about **VIKING BOATS**. Find out the measurements of **DRAKKARS** and **SNEKES**.

Take the learning outside. Use trundle wheels or large tape measures and chalk to draw out the shape of each boat.

You might even fancy 'sitting' the right number of oarsmen in the boat to see how much room they had to row.



AMOUNT CARDS

Print and cut out a set of these amount cards for each pair of children.

0.1kg

400g

0.5kg

800g

1.8kg

0.6kg

1200g

0.7kg

350g

SHOPPING LIST SHEET

How much silver have you got?

..... 9
=
..... kg

What will you buy?

Total spent:

Change:

How will you look with the armour you've bought?

LEARNING SEQUENCE 3

BE A VIKING SKALD

Getting Started:

Introduce Sigurd the Skald to the class on page 10.

Read page 66–67 aloud to your class. Ensure all children understand the words: **CONVEY**, **FRAY**, **FATE** and **SEVERED**.

Look at the pattern of **RHYMING COUPLETS**.



STEP 1

Group or pair children up to practise a poetry performance.

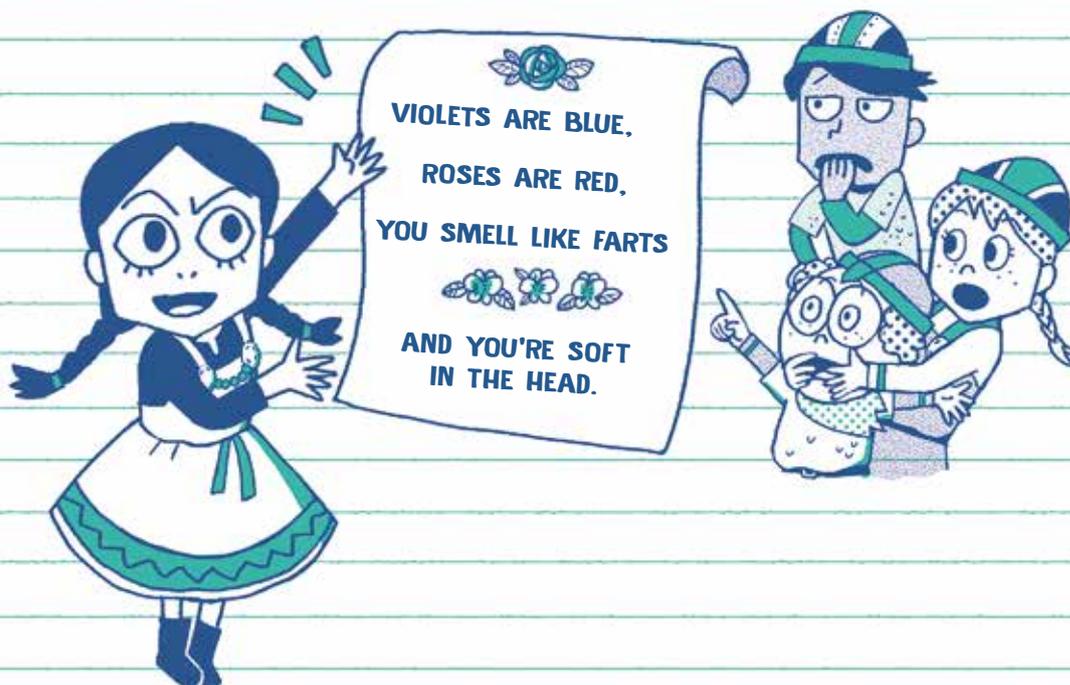
Model how to annotate the poem for pauses, emphasise, voice and volume changes to express meaning.

Encourage children to add actions to support recall and to convey the poem meaning to an audience.

STEP 2

Perform to other groups or to the whole class.

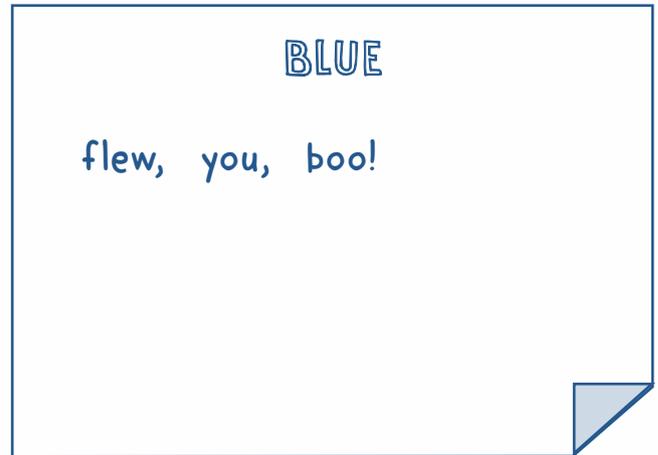
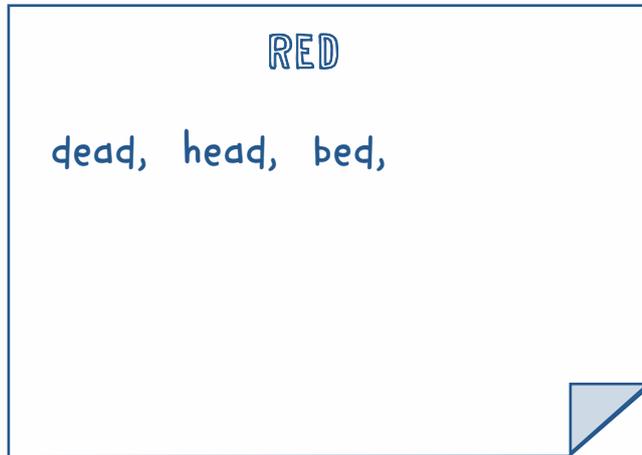
Encourage the audience to give feedback with positives and steps to improve.



STEP 3

Get children in the poem writing zone by creating **MINI INSULT POEMS**.
See the example on page 27.

Together list lots and lots of words that rhyme with **RED** and **BLUE**.
An online rhyming dictionary can be useful here.



Use these to help create a funny 4 line poems starting with 'Roses are red' or 'Violets are blue', switching them the fit the best rhyme for line 4.

STEP 4

Up the challenge by using pages 70–73 as inspiration for a rhyming couplet poem.

These pages share the **STAGES OF A CHARGE**.

Focus on the **COMMANDS** as starters for the poem lines:
e.g. Polish your armour, pray to the gods...

Ways to make the rhyme work:

- play with the order of words
- use a synonym that rhymes
- look in a rhyming dictionary

It may start a bit like this:



LEARNING SEQUENCE 4

SHIP-SHAPE DESIGNS

Getting Started:

Take a look at page 36–37.

Discuss the features of the **BOAT** and what children think the purpose of each is.

Why do children think the Vikings chose a dragon as a **FIGUREHEAD**? What feelings and images does it conjure up?



PART 1

Hunt through the pages of the book to see all the boats and their figureheads. Some are fully drawn; some are silhouettes in the background.

You can find them on pages: 21, 37, 39, 50, 56, 57, 81 and 88.

What do children notice about them?

PART 2

FURTHER RESEARCH

Ask children to consider how we know what a **VIKING LONGBOAT** was like. Use the link below to explore a Viking longboat.

Click on the prow to see a real boat **FIGUREHEAD** that was on a boat found by archaeologists in Norway. Encourage children to understand this is one type of historical source.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/ztyr9j6/articles/zy9j2hv#z96f34j>

PART 3

Get designing. Children should complete the prow of the boat with their own scary, intimidating dragon figurehead. The scarier the better!

You may like to create these designs in 3D using papier mache on a balloon to start the shape.

MY FRIGHTENING FIGUREHEAD

Complete the prow of the boat from the dotted line.

