

educator's guide

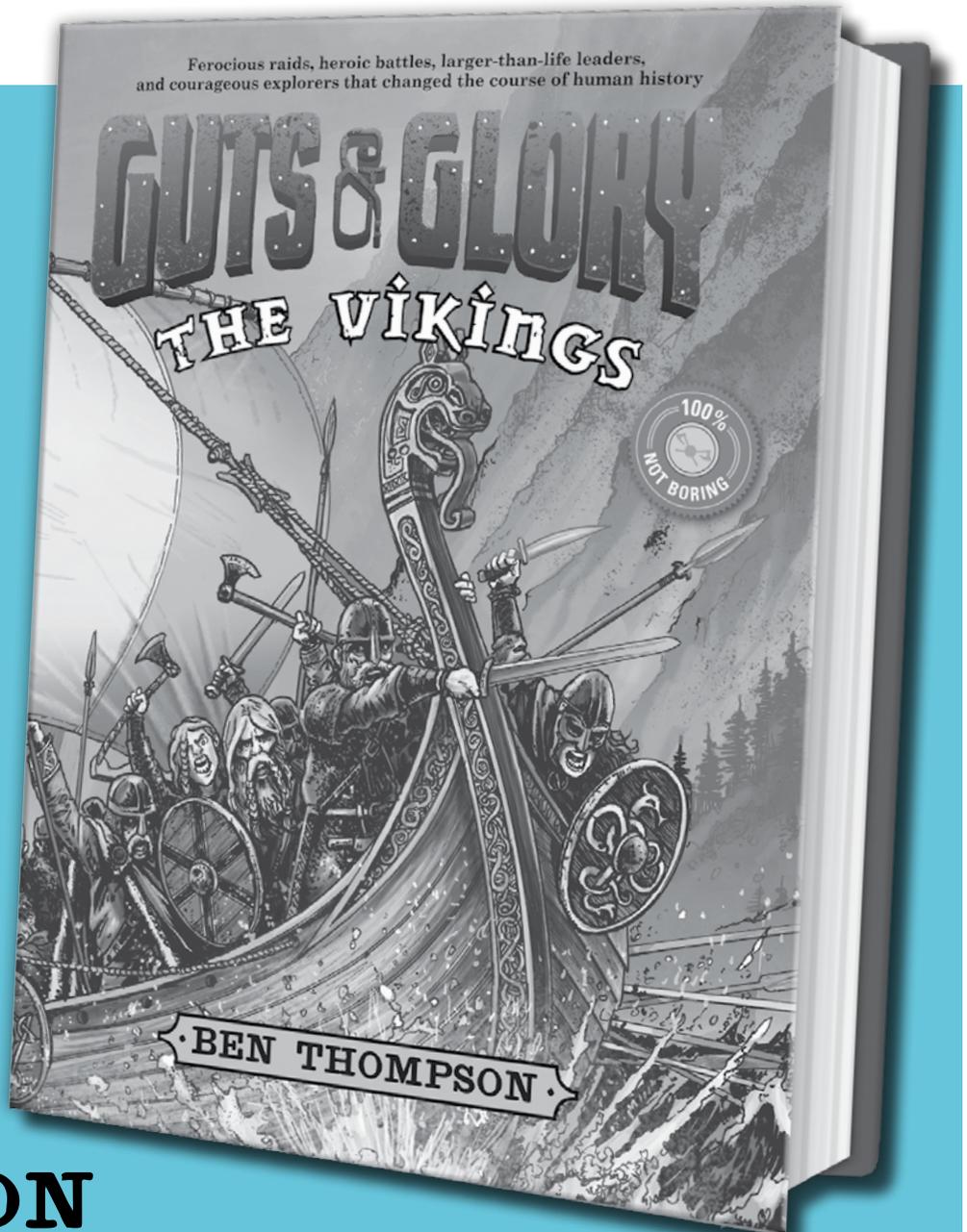
GUTS & GLORY

THE VIKINGS

Curriculum connections

- ❖ Social Studies
- ❖ Mythology

Ages 8 - 12



By

**BEN
THOMPSON**

COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

Guts and Glory: The Vikings is appropriate for ages 8–12 as a supplemental history and English text. The book is engaging and written in a style that even kids who supposedly dislike history will find themselves repeating stories from within these pages. It is also an excellent example of a non-fiction mentor text researched through dozens (if not hundreds) of primary sources. The Common Core State Standards presented here are English/Language Arts examples from the sixth grade; teachers should visit corestandards.org to apply their own grade-level equivalents. The subheadings and numerical references will help users easily locate the coordinating standards for specific grade levels.

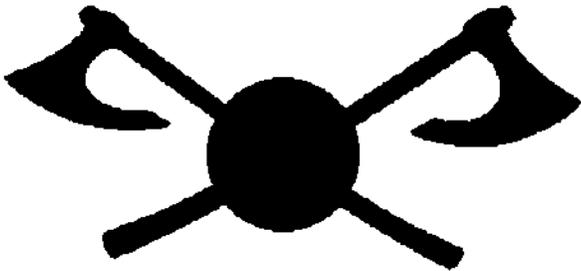
Literacy in History/social studies:

RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

RH.6-8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.



English Language arts: Reading Informational text

RI.6.2

Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

RI.6.5

Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.

RI.6.8

Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

INTRODUCTION

- Describe what happened on the island of Lindisfarne. How did this usher in a new time period?

AUTHOR'S NOTE

- List three modern allusions that are made to the Vikings. Why did they have such an impact on the cultures around them? Where does most of the information about the Vikings come from? Why is it notoriously hard to find valid information? List three reasons why it is important to study them.

CHAPTER ONE: THE VIKING WARRIOR

- Create a list of gear that a typical Viking warrior used and wore. How were these materials often superior to the materials of their opponents?
- Who were the *berserkirs*? How did they inspire the modern word berserk?
- List the amazing things the women Vikings did while they traveled and raided with their men.

On pages 20-21 paraphrase (put into your own words) the key information from these sidebar notes:

Topic:	Key information:
Warriors and...Poets?	
What's in a Name?	
Ulfbeht Steel	
The Prequel	

The Viking era began around AD 800. Summarize the following information as you read what life was like while the Vikings were getting their domination on:

Place:	Leaders:	Key Facts:	Inventions:
Tang Dynasty China			
The Maya			
The Byzantine Empire			
The Abbasid Caliphate			
The British Isles			
The Frankish Kingdom			

CHAPTER TWO: NORSE MYTHOLOGY

- List at least five elements of modern stories that first appeared as part of Norse Mythology. Why do you think so much of Viking culture has survived?
- Describe your five favorite details from the Norse creation myth.
- How did the mythology change after many of the Vikings converted to Christianity?
- Create a graphic organizer or illustration that shows your understanding of Valhalla and the Norse gods who run the show in Viking religion.
- Create a venn diagram that compares a myth you know with one of the Norse myths.

CHAPTER THREE: TURGEIS THE DEVIL

- Why was Turgeis the Devil a particularly rotten embodiment of nasty?
- What did they do to Armagh? Why did they target that place?
- Is he known for anything worthwhile? Why?
- How did the Vikings become integrated into Irish society? How do historians know this?
- What is Wolf the Quarrelsome best known for?

A summary is a short statement (often just a sentence or two) that describes the most important information in a text. It focuses on the big ideas, not the smaller details.

Write summaries for each of these text boxes:

McVikings	
Warrior-Kings	
The Viking Age	

CHAPTER FOUR: THE VOYAGE OF HASTING

- How did a Viking leader name Hasting become remembered as an epic invader?
- Who was Bjorn Ironside, and besides his great name why is he remembered?
- Why was the historic attack on Muslim-held Spain not quite what the Vikings imagined it would be?
- What did the duo do in Nekor (present day Morocco)?
- What trick did Hasting try in Rome? How did it work out?
- Describe what happened while heading home to Denmark in 861 in the Strait of Gibraltar.
- How were the men greeted at home? Why?

CHAPTER FIVE: KIEVAN RUS

- Find a key quote that best describes what Rurik did as he pillaged.
- How did Rurik get a pass into the important city of Novgorod? What unexpected event then happened?
- What Slavic city did Rurik take next? Why?
- What was Greek fire? Why was it a particularly nasty weapon?
- Who tried to rebel against Rurik? How did it turn out for them?
- What was the Kievan Rus? How would you describe the leadership dynasty that Rurik left behind?
- Summarize and list key locations where Rurik expanded his power from *jarl* to *tsar*.

CHAPTER SIX: THE VIKINGS AT HOME

- How did typical Vikings spend their time at home? What jobs did they have?
- What types of food did they eat? And which would you be least likely to taste?
- Describe Viking homes.
- Explain how Viking girls and women were treated during this time period. How was it in many ways advanced compared with other cultures of the same time period?
- Which of the Viking games do you think would make the best reality show? Why?
- What was a *félag*? Why was it important to the Vikings?

Summarize the information from the following text boxes in two sentences or less:

The Danevirk	
I Gotta Go to that Thing	
Hack Me Off Some Silver	
The Tooth Fairy	

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE GREAT HEATHEN ARMY

- What are the magical elements in the story of The Great Heathen Army? How do they make it difficult for historians to decipher the truth?
- Where do historians believe Ivar the Boneless's weird name came from?
- Summarize what the Vikings did when they landed in York and met King Aella. How was his death particularly gruesome?
- How did Ivas expand the empire? How did Saint Edmund become a Saint?

CHAPTER EIGHT: BRITAIN FIGHTS BACK

- Find a key quote that best summarizes how Alfred ended up with a “great” nickname.
- Who was Alfred? How did he end up in a swamp? How did he inspire citizens to fight?
- In Wessex, how did King Alfred spank the Viking Guthrum? How did Alfred spare him?
- Explain how a wedding helped Alfred's cause.
- Create a drawing that shows how Alfred the Great defeated his old enemy, Hasting. What did Hasting have to do for his family?
- How did Alfred defeat an attack in 893 in Mercia?



CHAPTER NINE: HARALD FAIRHAIR

- Why is Harald famous in history?
- List three of the best details about how Harald Fairhair’s ancestors came to an end.
- How did he deal with Gandalf?
- Who was Gyda and how did Harald transform himself to earn her favor?
- How was he an epic warrior but also fair? What did he demand as a ruler?
- Summarize the ten year war and its ultimate result.
- Why were there so many descendants of this king? Why was he remembered?
- Why did it take so long for the Vikings to found Iceland?

CHAPTER TEN: GUNNHILD MOTHER OF KINGS

- Explain how Viking women ran the show while their husbands were away.
- Summarize the importance of Gunnhild, Mother of Kings.
- How did she help her husband with competing heirs to the throne?
- How did she lose power? How did she gain it back?
- List the ways that Gunnhild became a political wrangler after her husband’s death.
- How did her brother sell her out?
- Who were the Shield-Maidens? What are they best known for? Who led them?
- What could a Viking maiden who loathed the idea of marriage do for a career?
- Who were Lagertha and Hervor?

- Why do you think Viking women wielded considerably more power and influence in their lands than their counterparts across the world?

CHAPTER ELEVEN: THE SIEGE OF PARIS

- Describe the terrifying site on November 25, 885. If you were a resident, what would you do?
- Find a key quote that best exemplifies Count Odo and Bishop Joscelyn’s response to Sigfried, leader of the Viking flotilla.
- What were the strengths and weaknesses of Paris as they faced the Vikings?
- Why were the catapults the Vikings used particularly effective? What was the second wave of attacks like?
- Explain how the Parisians defended themselves and reacted to the damages.
- How long did the Vikings maintain their siege? Why didn’t it work?
- What did Charles the Fat do once he finally arrived? How did this decision become his ultimate undoing?

Paraphrase (put into your own words) the information from the following text boxes:

The Capetians	
Charleses in Charge	
Charles the Fat	

CHAPTER TWELVE: HROLF THE WALKER

- What did the Vikings do to the lands now known as France and Britain during this time period?
- Why do historians have a difficult time with the story of Hrolf? What is their best guess about this man's identity? Why was he famous?
- What deal did Charles the Simple offer Hrolf the Walker? What was the result?
- Describe Count Robert's approach to ruling the newly minted *Terra Normannorum* (Normandy). What effect did it have?
- How did he expand his power and influence?
- Who was his most famous descendent?

Take notes on these two text boxes in this graphic organizer:

	Who:	When:	What happened:	Result:
Godfrid's Raid				
Alain Twisted-Beard				

CHAPTER THIRTEEN:

EGIL SKALLAGRIMSSON

- List at least three reasons that Egil Skallagrimsson is remembered to this day.
- Describe Egil and explain why modern doctors believe he may have suffered from Paget's disease.
- How did he inspire several families to try to kill him and his kin?
- Summarize what happened in the kingdom of Courland.
- What did he do to Queen Gunnhild's brothers who were sent to murder him and his brother?
- Why did Egil offer his and his 300 men's axes to Alfred the Great?
- What did he do when he went home with his swag?
- Describe how he handled the slight on his wife Asgerdr's inheritance. How did it end?
- How did a poem save his life? What does this tell you about Viking society?

CHAPTER FOURTEEN:

SAINT OLGA OF KIEV

- List the accomplishments of Saint Olga.
- Describe what happened to Olga's husband, Igor, when he got his greed on.
- Explain how Olga reacted to Mal's marriage proposal through his ambassadors.
- Detail how Drevlyn's finest warriors ended their careers with a bath.
- How were birds the final demise of Mal's people and property?
- List the reasons why Olga was canonized.
- Describe her last act of trickery that saved not only her city but a future king.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: ERIK THE RED

- Describe Erik the Red and his famous temper.
- What event ended Erik's peaceful domestic period with his wife, Thjoldhild?
- Summarize Erik's episodes with the Viking court system or "Things."
- What happened to the first colonists of Iceland?
- Describe hunting on Greenland for Erik.
- Why do you think Erik lied to Iceland residents? What was the result of his epic ability to tell tall tales?
- What did the settlers export? What other resources did they have?
- What type of jarl did Erik turn out to be? Who was his more famous son?

CHAPTER SIXTEEN: THE VARANGIAN GUARD

- Describe Constantinople in your own words.
- Write a job description for the Varangian Guard.
- Who was Phocas? Describe his power plays.
- Explain how Basil made a poor choice on his first military move with the Bulgars. What alliance did he make?
- How did Basil keep control in a city that had betrayed him?
- How did he keep the Varangians loyal? How were these troops organized and ready?
- What did the Viking women think of these dudes? Why?
- Describe how Basil got revenge, at last, on the Bulgars.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: CHRISTIANITY COMES TO HEATHENDOM

- Describe how Olaf Crowbone converted Norwegians Viking-style.
- Summarize in only a few sentences Olaf's early history.
- Why was he remembered as a great Viking?
- List the most important elements of the Battle of Maldon.
- Why did Olaf think that converting to Christianity made a great power move?
- How did he convince most of the citizens to convert? Where and how else did he influence conversion?
- What was his end? Why?

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: THE VIKINGS DISCOVER AMERICA

- Who was the first Viking to see North America? What did he do?
- Why did Leif Eriksson only visit North America once if it was so obviously awesome?
- Why were the explorers so stoked to find a grape vine? Why wasn't that enough to keep them coming back?
- What did the Native Americans think of the Vikings? What about Leif's sister, Freydis?

CHAPTER NINETEEN: THE DECLINE AND FALL OF ETHELRED THE UNREADY

- What did King Ethelred decide to do about the Viking marauders once and for all? How did that go over?
- Describe Sigrid the Haughty's approach to proposal.
- How was Knut prepared for his future as a Viking warrior?
- Summarize Svein and Knut's visit to England with their warrior pals.
- Why did civil war break out in England during this time?
- After Knut rid himself of anyone who might be a problem, what was his rule known for? How is this ironic?
- Why did he refer to himself as "King of All the English, and of Denmark, of the Norwegians, and Some of the Swedes"?

CHAPTER TWENTY: THE NORMAN CONQUEST

- List the reasons why Harald Hardrada thought he should get to be king.
- Of the three claims to the throne, who had the most epic war story on his side? Describe it.
- What are some of the most important accomplishments of King Harald III?
- Summarize in gory detail the "three-way ultimate death match" between Harald Hardrada, William of Normandy, and King Harald Godwinson.
- What was the outcome? What lasting results can be traced to this one event?

CONCLUSION

Summarize in three sentences or less what happened to the Vikings and their culture.

PROJECTS

History/Research

Conduct further research on any one figure or battle discussed in the book. Use a graphic organizer to evaluate that online resources are valid and reliable before you begin to take notes. Then, create a poster, pamphlet, or electronic resource (like a Wiki page or Tumblr feed) about your topic.

Writing

Retell one of the Viking myths or one of the episodes of a Viking battle in one of these forms:

Fairytale

Letters home

Graphic novel

Short story

Geography

Create a two or three-dimensional map that shows the expansion and influence of the Vikings.

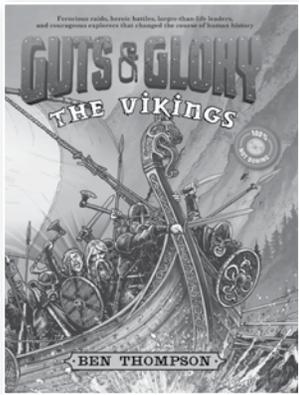
Art

Sculpt, draw, paint, or otherwise create a piece of art inspired by the Vikings. Describe your piece of work and what influenced the colors, shape, size, texture, and media in a two paragraph artist's statement. Help readers find direct links between the information you learned and the art you created.

GUTS & GLORY

THE VIKINGS

about the book



GUTS & GLORY: THE VIKINGS

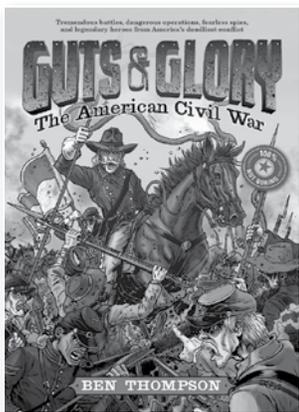
HC 978-0-316-32056-6

Also available in
downloadable audio and
eBook formats

From battle-axe-wielding tribes plundering the greatest cities of Europe to powerful kings and queens ruling their dominions with iron fists, the Vikings were some of the most feared and fearless figures in European history. Find the bravest heroes, the most menacing villains, and some unbelievably awesome facts and myths inside this action-packed overview that will amaze kids with tales of a people so incredible...it's hard to believe they were real.

History buff and popular blogger Ben Thompson's lively storytelling style brings the Vikings back to life in this second book in the exhilarating Guts & Glory series!

also by BEN THOMPSON



GUTS & GLORY: THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

HC 978-0-316-32050-4

Also available in
downloadable audio and
eBook formats

“Entertaining. . . . What brings these events to life, particularly for reluctant readers, is Thompson’s spirited, conversational narration.”

—*Booklist*

“Thompson’s passion for his subject is infectious. . . . An easy, breezy series opener that should help create a few new history buffs.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

“Action-packed. . . . A rousing introduction to this defining conflict that makes the history appealing and relatable.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

about the author



Ben Thompson is the author of *Guts & Glory: The American Civil War*. For more than ten years, he has been producing humorous, history-related material, including articles for publications such as *Military Times* and for organizations like the American Mustache Institute. Ben currently owns four swords (if you count a letter opener shaped like Glamdring the Foe-hammer) and can jump over most garbage cans in one leap. He invites you to visit his website at gutsandgloryhistory.com.



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