

Practical activity ideas

Note for the teacher - If your children need to review their learning, you can use these activities to support them.

Anglo-Saxon crime profiles

The resources needed for this activity include paper, pencils, crayons and coloured pens.

Activity: Children will design crime profiles for infamous criminals from the Anglo-Saxon period, detailing their crimes, the type of trial they are awaiting and their punishment if found guilty. They can use their imaginations to create their own criminals!

Podcast series

The resources needed for this activity include paper and pencils. To record the podcast (if appropriate and in line with school policy), an iPad/tablet/similar device can be used.

Activity: Children can produce a short podcast episode discussing different aspects of crime and punishment during the Anglo-Saxon period. They can include interviews, sound effects and music to make their episodes engaging.

Trial by Ordeal of cold water

The resources needed for this activity include a large bucket or bowl of cold water and two floating objects (small piece of wood, counter, feather etc.) and two sinking objects (small pebble) and a box.

Activity: Choose a child to be an accused criminal. Explain to the children that Anglo-Saxons believed that the water, being pure, would accept an innocent person and reject a guilty one. The accused needs to choose an object from the box without looking. The child then drops the object into the water. If the object floats, they are innocent; if it sinks, they are guilty.

The “wergild” bargaining game

The resources needed for this activity include a list of crimes and their wergild (fine) values.

Activity: Split the class into pairs. Within each pair, one person is the perpetrator, and the other is the victim. The victim secretly chooses a crime (e.g., theft, assault, etc.) that the perpetrator has committed against them. The pair must then negotiate the amount of wergild the perpetrator will pay the victim to compensate for the crime. Once they have agreed on the amount, they can swap roles so the perpetrator becomes the new victim, and the activity can be repeated.

