

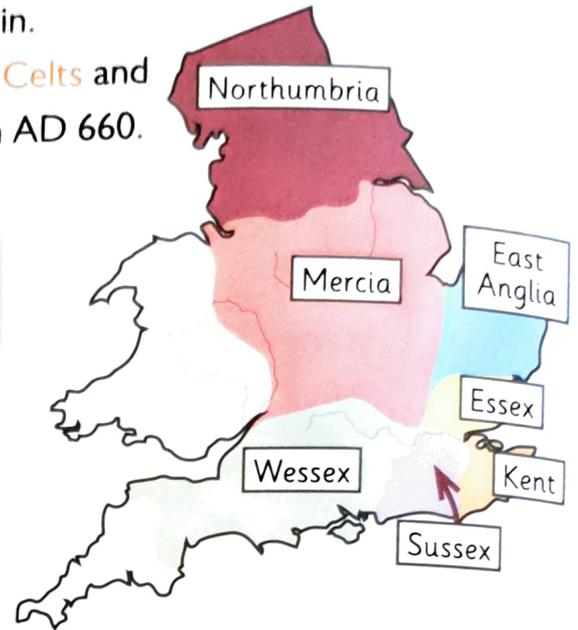
The Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms

Timeline



By AD 660, the Anglo-Saxons controlled most of Britain. Only **Wales**, **Scotland** and **Cornwall** were still ruled by **Celts** and **Britons**. The map shows the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in AD 660.

Look at the map. Which Anglo-Saxon kingdoms do you think were the most powerful? Why?



In early Anglo-Saxon times, **Kent** was a very powerful kingdom. But as time went on, the larger kingdoms of **Mercia** and **Wessex** became more powerful.

Mighty Mercia

Mercia was the most powerful kingdom during much of the Anglo-Saxon period. **Offa** was the king of Mercia from AD 757 to AD 796. He was a great warrior who fought and won many battles against other kingdoms.

Offa is famous for building Offa's dyke, a defensive barrier made of earth, which ran along the border between Wales and Mercia. Some of it is still there today.



Why do you think Offa's dyke was built?



Some people think that Offa's dyke was built to protect Mercia from the Welsh, but others think it was built to show other kingdoms how powerful Mercia was.

The winners from Wessex

In AD 802, Egbert became king of Wessex. He was a successful king who made Wessex a powerful kingdom. By AD 825, he'd won control of Sussex, Essex and Kent. In AD 829, he invaded Mercia and defeated the new king, Wiglaf. Wiglaf got his throne back a year later, but Wessex kept some of the land it had won and Mercia was never as powerful again.

In AD 829, Egbert had control of London and Canterbury. These places contained the buildings Egbert needed to make his own coins.



This is a picture of one of those coins. Egbert's face is in the centre. Around the edge it says 'Egberht Rex', which means King Egbert.

Why do you think it would have been useful for Egbert to be able to make his own coins?

Power struggles

There was a lot of fighting between the kingdoms in Anglo-Saxon Britain. Occasionally, the Anglo-Saxons all joined together to fight against their shared enemies. But they mostly fought for power between themselves.

These are the remains of some weapons that the Anglo-Saxons would have used for fighting.

The axe is decorated with gold and copper, while the sword is decorated with silver. This shows us that these weapons were probably owned by someone rich or powerful.



Fights between the Anglo-Saxons were hard to break up...

The Anglo-Saxons settled into rival kingdoms, which were always fighting for land and power over Britain. They only occasionally joined forces to fight against an enemy.