



HISTORY BITES

LITTLE NIBBLES OF HISTORY

Why did William the Conqueror die in France not England?

On September 7th 1087 William the Conqueror died in Rouen, but why Rouen?

Even though he had conquered England, he was also Duke of Normandy and he had to spend more time in France protecting his kingdom in Normandy than he did here. In fact, it's reported that at one point he spent five years out of the country. He seemed to be continually fighting, just to keep control of his kingdom of Normandy.

Once he had won the Battle of Hastings, he came up with a radical change and developed what grew into what we now call, the Feudal system.

Basically, he controlled England by being ruthless and this is the important bit, he bribed his soldiers.



He did this by giving them profitable lands, and in return they had to supply him with soldiers when he needed them. He then expected them to control their areas as ruthlessly as was needed, and that is exactly what they did.

This was initially resisted by uprisings across the country, but William and his barons mercilessly put them all down.

Then, for the first time ever, to make certain he knew who owned what, he created a record of all the land owned in England. You may have heard of it; it was called the Domesday book.

So why was he in Rouen, and why wasn't he buried in England?

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Why did William the Conqueror die in France not England?

Well, in 1087, at the age of 59, having ruled England for twenty-one years and Normandy for thirty-one, he was once more in France. He had gone there this time to recover three towns that Phillip, the King of France, had taken. Again, there were a series of vicious battles. By July that year he was attacking the French town of Mantes, when he collapsed, they all thought he was suffering from heat exhaustion. They were wrong, it was more serious than that, so William decided to go back to his French capital at Rouen. Unfortunately, his condition continued to worsen, begging those there to pray for him, he confessed his sins and sought pardon from God. He gave his treasure to the churches and the poor, "so that what I amassed through evil deeds may be assigned to the holy uses of good men." Gifts also were sent as penitence to the clergy at Mantes so that they might restore the churches William's army had burned.

He was surrounded by bishops, abbots, monks, and physicians but not his eldest son, Robert, as four years earlier he had joined with king of France. Neither, was his half brother, Odo, the bishop of Bayeux, who was currently in prison for treason. On his death bed William forgave them both. Odo was released and Robert, became the Duke of Normandy. Interestingly it was to his younger son, William, that he gave the throne of England.

Then, the conqueror of England died, in France!

To tell your children about the Battle of Hastings, William's invasion of England and how he won, we have published a musical

1066

The Battle of Hastings.

Click on <https://www.educationalmusicals.co.uk/product/1066/> which takes you to the show, where you can read two pages of our wonderful script and hear two of the catchy songs.



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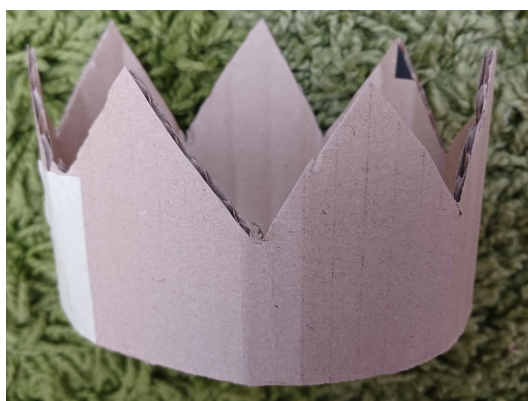
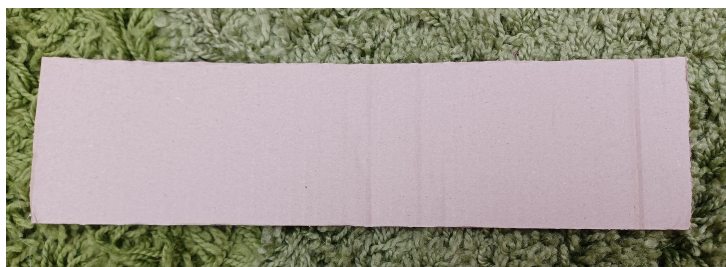


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2 lesson. CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

ROYAL CROWN



LESSON 1

1. Cut out a long strip of brown cardboard and measure until it fits around the head.

2. Now cut triangles out of this to create points.

3. Fix this together with a strip of masking tape, ensuring internal corrugation of the cardboard is running from top to bottom, this will mean the card will form into a circle nicely.

4. Now paint yellow, or even better, gold if you have it!

LESSON 2

1. Use glue sticks to attach different colour metallic sweet wrappers to your now dry crown, you can make it as ornate as you like, even using felt tip pens etc.



2. Wear your crown like a true monarch!