

## Card sort: Change and continuity after the Norman Conquest

<p>1. A great number of new monasteries and abbeys were built, as well as several new cathedrals.</p>	<p>2. The 'hue and cry' method of alerting the community to a crime continued to be used, as did the groups of ten men organised in tithings.</p>
<p>3. Church courts were introduced to deal with clergymen who had broken the law. They were generally given lighter sentences than laymen (people who didn't work for the Church).</p>	<p>4. Catching criminals was a community responsibility. People raised the 'hue and cry' to draw attention to a crime, and then everyone had to join in the hunt for the criminal or face a fine. Men over the age of 12 had to join a tithing - a group of ten men who were responsible for bringing one another to court if they broke the law.</p>
<p>5. The Witan, a 'meeting of wise men' was consulted whenever the King had to make an important decision. He invited important noblemen and clergymen (not always the same people) to seek their advice. The Witan also helped decide who the next king would be if the succession was in doubt.</p>	<p>6. Norman French was spoken by the nobility and clergy. It was rare for anyone of power or wealth to speak English. French was the language of the king's court and local legal courts.</p>
<p>7. Villages had new lords from Normandy or other regions around France. The villagers and the lords couldn't often understand each other if they didn't speak English <i>and</i> French.</p>	<p>8. The death penalty was only rarely used. <i>Wergild</i> was a more common form of punishment, by which criminals paid compensation to the victim or the victim's family. The worse the crime, the more money they had to pay.</p>
<p>9. More and more children were given fashionable names like Roger, Matilda, and William.</p>	<p>10. Forest laws were introduced so that the King and his trusted followers could have the best woodland to themselves. No-one else could hunt in these forests, or even cut down wood. Sometimes villages were destroyed to create these forests.</p>
<p>11. Names with endings like <i>-ulf</i>, and <i>-wine</i> were popular. Common female names included Edith and Gytha.</p>	<p>12. Slavery was dying out. Villeins had more freedom than slaves but still had to work on their lords' land for two or three days a week.</p>

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**13.** Trial by combat was introduced alongside trial by ordeal. The accused criminal and the person who accused him fought each other. The loser, if he wasn't killed, was hanged. This was because God had shown his guilt by allowing him to lose in combat.

**14.** The Church owned around a quarter of the land in England. There were many abbeys and monasteries where nuns and monks prayed, grew crops and produced chronicles.

**15.** Changes were made in the Church to stamp out corruption, including the banning of simony (when jobs in the church were sold rather than given to the most suitable people) and pluralism (when church officials had more than one job at once).

**16.** The system of local government remained: the term 'shire-reeve' evolved into 'sheriff' and the King continued to issue writs to be followed in each county.

**17.** Tenants-in-chief held land on the King's behalf. There were clear agreements on how many soldiers they had to provide the King if needed: the more they held, the larger the army they had to supply.

**18.** Earls could become very powerful. There were six earldoms. Wessex, Mercia and Northumbria were the largest, and if the earls of these areas joined together they were at least as powerful as the King and could challenge his authority.

**19.** Accused criminals were sometimes put on a trial by a jury of men they knew who listened to both sides of a case. If the jury couldn't decide, trial by ordeal was used instead: it was believed that God would show His judgement when the accused undertook a gruelling physical challenge, such as plunging his/her hands into boiling water.

**20.** Society was based on a strict hierarchy. The King was the most powerful. The rest of society, in order of their wealth and status, was made up of the King's tenants-in-chief, also known as barons, knights and villeins.

**21.** When the King needed advice he sought it from his court - an inner circle of trusted advisers. These included high-ranking men of the Church such as bishops and archbishops, as well as his most powerful tenants-in-chief.

**22.** There was a well-established, efficient system of local government. The King appointed shire-reeves in each county to carry out his written instructions ('writs').

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**23.** Earls owned their lands and were expected to protect their people. They advised the King and had to provide him with soldiers if needed.

**24.** What we now call Old English was spoken by most people - rich and poor alike. In some parts of the northern and eastern England, Scandinavian dialects were in use, because of the greater Viking influence there.

**25.** Towns were uncommon and relatively small. Only around 10% of the whole population of England lived in towns.

**26.** New towns were developing near the new centres of power, especially around castles.

**27.** Society was based on a strict hierarchy. The King was the most powerful. The rest of society, in order of their wealth and status, was made up of earls, thegns, ceorls, peasants and slaves.

**28.** Earldoms were given to those who had given the King the most military support (i.e. supplied the most soldiers) for the Battle of Hastings. The earldoms themselves were redistributed to make up ten different areas, making them smaller and poorer.

**29.** The death penalty was used for serious crimes, and for those who kept offending. New punishments were introduced to deal with people who broke the law by hunting in the King's forests: two fingers were chopped off for the first offence, and those who reoffended were blinded. If a Norman was attacked, the whole region where it happened had to pay a fine known as a *Murdram*. Fines still had to be paid for smaller crimes.

**30.** The two most important clergymen in England were the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. They had equal status and controlled the Church in their different areas.

**31.** Slavery was common. Every aspect of a slave's life was under their lord's control, such as how much they worked or who they could marry. Some became slaves as a punishment. Some could buy their way out of slavery.

### Teaching notes

This card sort can be used in a variety of ways.

Students could:

- Work out which cards describe life in England before the Conquest (1066 or just before) and which describe life in England around 20 years later, around the time of William I's death. For your reference, the correct answers are:

#### Just before the conquest:

4,5,8,11,14,18,19,22,23,24,25,27,30,31

#### 20 years after the conquest:

1,2,3,6,7,9,10,12,13,15,16,17,20,21,26,28,29

- Categorise the cards according to different aspects of life represented: local government, the Church, crime and punishment, everyday life, etc.
- Place the post-conquest cards on a continuum of change and continuity, using information from the pre-Conquest cards to justify and explain their placement.
- Group the post-Conquest cards showing the most change according to why they changed (William's specific decision, effect of the lords, etc.)
- Group the changes according to importance, to William, to ordinary Saxons (i.e. what helped William keep control the most, or what had the biggest impact on everyday life).
- Use the cards to help them evaluate William's reign.