

Teaching notes

This activity is a sorting task to be completed in groups, to facilitate discussion before studying the events of the conquest after Hastings. Predictions could be made about how William might have solved certain problems.

After the narrative of the conquest itself has been explored, students can then use a timeline to identify the moments of:

- greatest level of threat to William's position
- when there was the most peace and stability
- when William showed the best leadership skills.

Students should develop their understanding of which problems were apparent in 1066, how completely they were solved in the remainder of William's reign, and which new problems presented themselves by 1087 (AOs 1 and 2).

Analysis grid

Strengths (of William and the Normans)	Weaknesses (of William and the Normans)
Opportunities (things in England that could help William)	Threats (things in England that could challenge William)

William's problems: SWOT analysis

Local government was well-organised and efficient. Land was divided up into hundreds and shire-reeves (sheriffs) to carry out the King's orders.	Many people in the north were of Danish descent and were likely to support invasions by the Danes.
The Normans were experienced castle-builders. Motte and bailey castles could be built quickly and provide protection for soldiers.	The King did not have many soldiers in England (probably around 7,000). The population of England was about 2 million.
Many noblemen had been killed at the Battle of Hastings, but most landowners were still alive.	England was a Christian country and many parish churches had recently been built. The Normans were also Christian and William was on good terms with the Pope.
The king of Scotland had been known to offer shelter and protection to rebel noblemen.	Some of Harold's sons were still alive.
The most important earls in England - Edgar the Atheling, Edwin and Morcar - were still alive but accepted William's right to be king.	They were opposed to owning slaves on religious grounds, but slavery was still common in England.
Stigand, the Archbishop of Canterbury, had been loyal to the Saxon royal family. The Pope disapproved of him being Archbishop.	One of the King's trusted tactics when faced with rebellions was to 'lay waste' to the lands of rebels: killing livestock and destroying farmland.
The King and his noblemen now had land on both sides of the English Channel.	William had promised to give English lands to Normans who fought for him at Hastings.
The Welsh had frequently carried out border raids on English towns. Harold had recently crushed some raids.	Some rebels realised that the Isle of Ely in East Anglia was easy to defend but difficult to attack.
The English did not have a ready-made army. To defend England, Edward the Confessor had spent money on the navy instead.	