

## Teaching notes

This is a resource originally designed to be the first lesson on Anglo-Saxon England. Pages three and four contain the student worksheets. A PowerPoint accompanies this resource (subscribers only).

### Starter ideas:

You could start by brainstorming what your students remember from year 7 or primary school:

- who were the Anglo-Saxons?
- can they name any rulers?
- what type of society was it?

After this, or as a settling task, students could be asked to come up with working definitions for

- Government
- Anglo-Saxon
- Monarchy
- Peasants

### Main activities

There are two card sorts in this resource. For each, students are to be asked to:

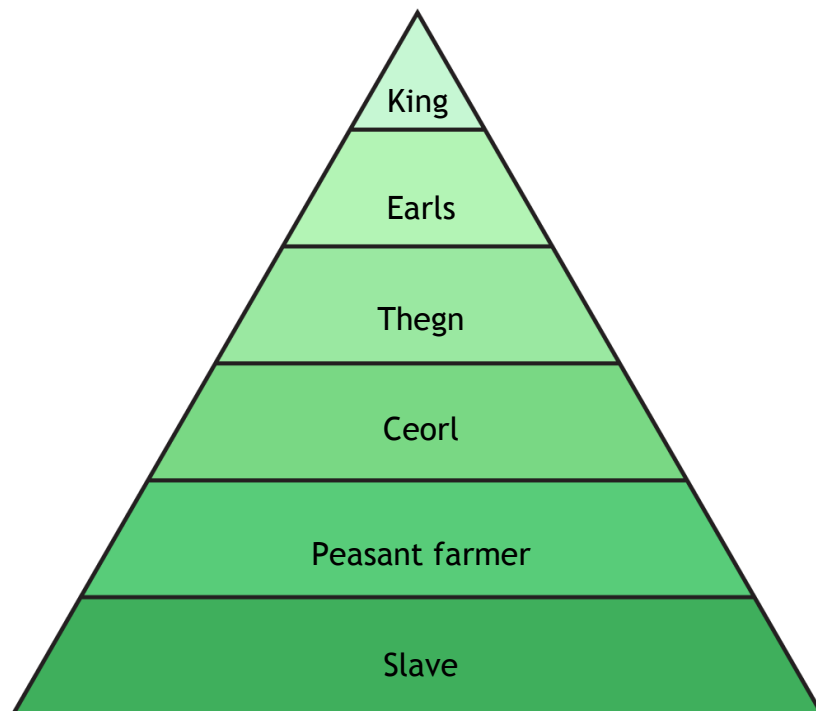
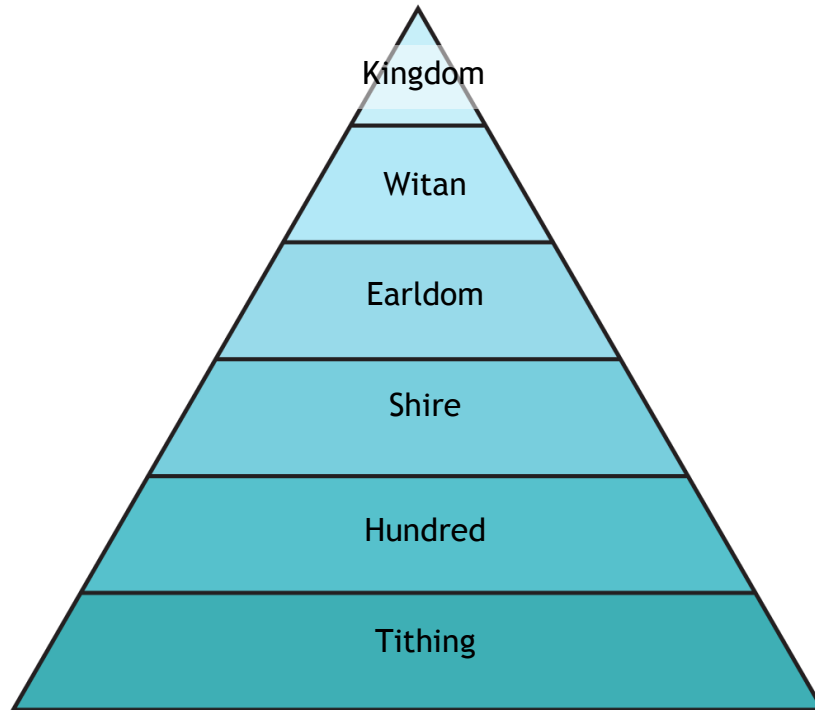
- Sort the cards to **match** the area of government/type of person with its definition.
- Sort the cards again to show the **order of importance**.
- Make a **triangular diagram** to show the hierarchy in their notes.

## Answers

Areas of government		Types of people	
The Kingdom	The country as ruled by the King.	King	God's representative on Earth. A respected law-maker. Could raise an army.
Earldoms	An area of the country ruled by an important man who was close to the king.	Earl	An important man who was close to the king and ruled an area of the country.
Hundreds	In some parts of England, a 100 hides of land. Each hide carried obligations (military service and taxes).	Peasant farmer	Someone who rented land and worked it for himself and his family. He also had to do a set amount of work for the local lord. If he did not do this he might lose the right to his land.
The Witan	Council of the most important earls and archbishops (church leaders). They advised the King.	Thegn [Thane]	A local lord, holding more than five hides of land, often living in a manor house with a church: the aristocracy and warrior class of Anglo-Saxon England.
Shires	Areas of the country that had courts to try people and had to provide the King with troops for the fyrd (peasant army).	Slave	He could be bought and sold. Slave ownership was a normal part of Anglo-Saxon society.
Tithings	A group of 10 households.	Ceorl [Churl]	A peasant who was free to work for any lord but was not tied to specific land.

**Interactive versions** of these matching and sorting activities accompany this resource (for subscribers only). These work well to go over the work on an interactive whiteboard before students write up their notes.

### Hierarchy answers



## Background

- In Anglo-Saxon England there were very few people; roughly 2 million.
- Life was generally very hard.
- Life expectancy was just 31 years old with around a quarter of children dying before they were 5 years old.
- Almost everybody farmed the land in order to grow what was needed to live on.

This doesn't mean that it wasn't an organised, hierarchical society! Use the card sort to understand how government and society were structured in Anglo-Saxon England.

## Task 1

- a. Sort the cards to **match** the area of government with its definition.
- b. Sort the cards again **in order of importance**.
- c. Use the information on the cards to create a **triangular diagram** in your notes showing the hierarchical structure of government.

## Card sort 1: Types of government

The Kingdom	The Witan	Council of the most important earls and archbishops (church leaders). They advised the King.	The country as ruled by the King.
Earldoms	Shires	Areas of the country that had courts to try people and had to provide the King with troops for the fyrd (peasant army).	An area of the country ruled by an important man who was close to the king.
Hundreds	Tithings	A group of 10 households.	In some parts of England, a 100 hides of land. Each hide carried obligations (military service and taxes).

### Task 2:

- a. Sort the cards to **match** the type of person with its definition.
- b. Sort the cards again to make a **hierarchy** of the structure of society with the most important person at the top
- c. Use the cards to create a **triangular diagram** in your notes to show the hierarchical structure of Anglo-Saxon society.

### Card sort 2: Types of person

King	Thegn	Someone who rented land and worked it for himself and his family. He also had to do a set amount of work for the local lord. If he did not do this he might lose the right to his land.	God's representative on Earth. A respected law-maker. Could raise an army.
Earl	Slave	He could be bought and sold. Slave ownership was a normal part of Anglo-Saxon society.	An important man who was close to the king and ruled an area of the country.
Peasant farmer	Ceorl	A local lord, holding more than five hides of land, often living in a manor house with a church: the aristocracy and warrior class of Anglo-Saxon England.	A peasant who was free to work for any lord but was not tied to specific land.

### Task 3: answer either question a or b.

- a. Describe **two** features of the social system of Anglo-Saxon England (4 marks).
- b. Describe **two** features of the government of Anglo-Saxon England (4 marks).

#### Helpful tips!

A feature is something distinctive or characteristic.  
Keep your answer brief - you should aim to write for a maximum of five minutes.  
Include **two** points with some extra information about each of them.