

Module 8: The Early Middle Ages

Topic 2 Content: Second Wave of Barbarian Invasions

Introduction



Click each star on the map to explore various migratory groups of the Middle Ages. Click START to begin.

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Region Selection



Click on each star.

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Magyars



Magyars

The Magyars were a nomadic group from western Asia who were superb horseback riders. During the Middle Ages, the Magyars conquered the plains of Hungary before moving on to western Europe and descending into the Italian Peninsula. Eventually, the Magyars settled in the Carpathian Basin and established a Christian kingdom around 1000 A.D. (C.E.). This Kingdom of Hungary served as a bastion against further invasions from the east and south, especially against the Turks.

Image: Miniature of the entrance of the Hungarians into the Carpathian basin

Click on each star

North Sea

Black Sea

Constantinople

ROMAN EMPIRE

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Muslims



The Muslims struck from Africa. From there, they controlled the Mediterranean Sea and upset trade. The Muslims were excellent sailors. They attacked settlements on the Atlantic, in the Iberian Peninsula (modern-day Spain), along Mediterranean coasts, and as far inland as Switzerland.

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Vikings



Click on each star

VIKINGS

A Germanic people called the Vikings were by far the most terrifying group of invaders. They invaded Europe between 800 and 1000 A.D. (C.E.). Also referred to as Norsemen or Northmen, Vikings came from an area of northern Europe called Scandinavia, which today encompasses the modern countries of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Seeking adventure, riches, and new avenues of trade, these Norse raiders easily defeated local armies as they sacked villages and towns from France in the west to Iceland in the north, and even as far east as Russia. The Viking settlement at the mouth of the Seine River would be named Normandy.

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Image: Danes invading England

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Vikings Continued

An interactive map showing Viking invasion routes from Scandinavia to Ireland, the British Isles, and the North Sea. A red star marks a location in the North Sea, and a text box is overlaid on the map.

Click on each star

VIKINGS Continued

The Vikings' secret weapon of invasion was their shipbuilding expertise. Their ships offered strength and sea-worthiness, making them the best of the time period, and allowing Viking sailors to cross the Atlantic Ocean and reach Newfoundland in North America hundreds of years before Christopher Columbus made his successful voyage from Spain. In addition, Viking ships were designed to travel shallow and narrow waterways. Fortresses located far inland from large seas were normally immune to invasions by ships until the Vikings sailed easily to their front gates.

A black and white illustration showing a large fleet of Viking longships gathered in a river, with a city in the background.

Image: 19th century portrayal of Viking ships besieging Paris

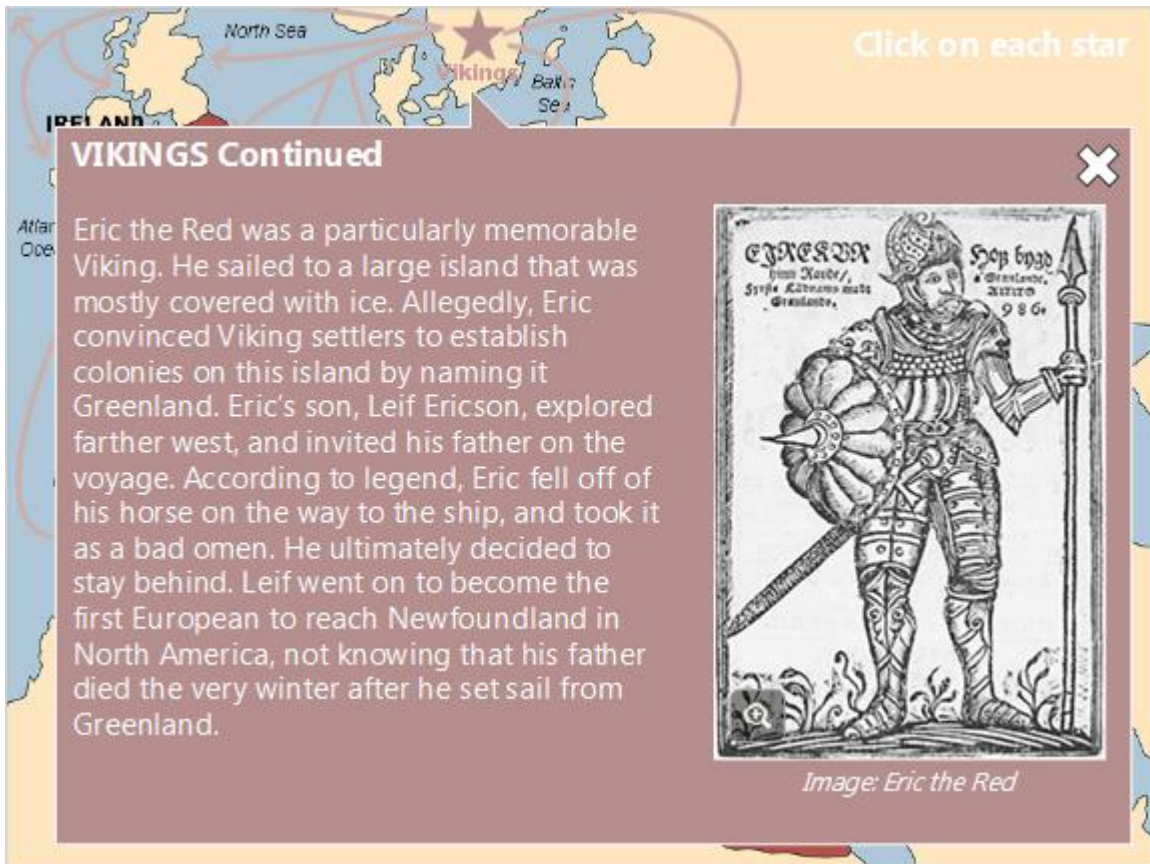
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Vikings Continued



The image shows an interactive map of the North Sea and Baltic Sea regions. A red star is placed over the North Sea, and a text box titled "VIKINGS Continued" is open. The text box contains a paragraph about Eric the Red and a small illustration of a Viking warrior. The text box has a close button (X) in the top right corner. The map in the background shows the North Sea, Baltic Sea, and parts of Ireland, the British Isles, and Scandinavia. A red line indicates a Viking route from Scandinavia to the North Sea. A text box in the top right corner of the map says "Click on each star".

VIKINGS Continued

Eric the Red was a particularly memorable Viking. He sailed to a large island that was mostly covered with ice. Allegedly, Eric convinced Viking settlers to establish colonies on this island by naming it Greenland. Eric's son, Leif Ericson, explored farther west, and invited his father on the voyage. According to legend, Eric fell off of his horse on the way to the ship, and took it as a bad omen. He ultimately decided to stay behind. Leif went on to become the first European to reach Newfoundland in North America, not knowing that his father died the very winter after he set sail from Greenland.




Image: Eric the Red

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