



# Who were the first English people?

It's hard to imagine now, but there was a time when the British Isles were completely empty of people. Over the last few thousand years, waves of people have come to our islands, for many different reasons. Some came for violence and plunder, others to invade, while many hoped to find a better quality of life.

In this chapter, you will learn about some of these different groups of people, but first of all you will find out:

- how to approach Thematic History
- who the Celts, Romans, Anglo-Saxons and Vikings were, and why they came to the British Isles.

# What is 'Thematic History'?

## Learning objectives

- Understand how to learn about the past through themes.
- Know the key chronology for this topic.

## What do you think?

What has attracted people to migrate to the British Isles over time?

### Theme 1: Political History

I focus on how countries are governed – from emperors and kings to prime ministers and presidents. I focus on how countries are ruled, and laws that are passed, rather than people's lives.

### Theme 2: Social History

I look at the lives of everyday people: how they lived, worked and died. I look at the effect that governments have on people's lives, but I don't look at the personalities running the country.

### Theme 3: Military History

I study war over time, and the history of fighting: how battles were fought, the types of weapons and tactics used, and how these have changed over time. I learn about different wars.

### Theme 4: Economic History

My expertise is to do with money and trade over time. I look at how governments and people have traded with each other, from the Silk Road to the internet. I look at factors such as unemployment, taxes and the reason why economies sometimes collapse.

Figure 6.1: Historians discussing different types of history.

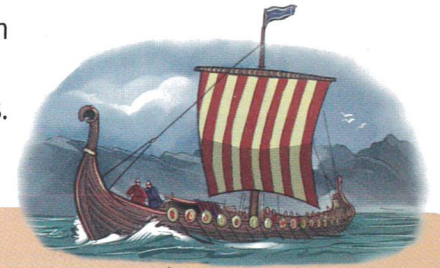
History is a fascinating topic, but so much has happened in the past, and so much evidence has been left, that it can sometimes be difficult to make sense of it. One of the best ways to do this is by looking at themes in history. This means focusing on one aspect of the past and following it over the course of hundreds or thousands of years, rather than looking at everything that happened to everyone in the same time period, which would be completely overwhelming. Figure 6.1 shows some examples of the kinds of themes that historians look at.

## Your turn!

- 1 Make a concept map showing the four different themes of history in Figure 6.1 – political, social, military and economic. Explain what each of them is and include a symbol for each – for example, coins for economic history.
- 2 In this section, you will be learning about the history of migration over time. You will look at how and why people have travelled to Britain, and what their lives were like once they reached Britain. What theme, or themes, do you think this topic belongs in? Explain your answer in a paragraph.

# Migration to Britain over time – an overview

Studying thematic history involves covering a much wider time span than in non-thematic topics. For example, the topics you have covered on the Norman Conquest and the Black Death spanned only a few decades, while in this topic you will be looking at changes over thousands of years. Therefore, it's important to have a good grasp of the chronology.



## Invaders or settlers?

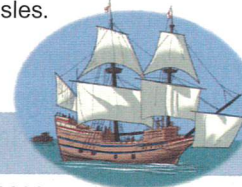
**800,000 BC**  
First humans arrive in the British Isles.

**500 BC**  
Arrival of the Celts from Europe.

**AD 43–410**  
**Romans** arrive and rule for hundreds of years.

**AD 450**  
Arrival of **Angles** and **Saxons** from Denmark and Northern Germany.

**AD 800**  
First **Viking** raids begin. In 1016, a Viking, Canute, becomes king of England.



## Migration to escape religious persecution

**1620**  
**Mayflower** arrives in the 'New World' (modern-day USA), with Puritan settlers from England.

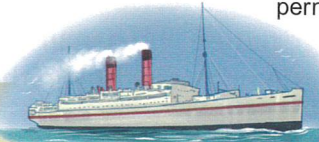
**1572**  
St Bartholomew's Day massacre in France – leads to **Huguenots** arriving.

**1290**  
After decades of discrimination, the **Jews are expelled**. They are not permitted to return until 1656.

**1066**  
**Normans** conquer England. First **Jews arrive from Europe**.



## Economic migration



**1845–52**  
**Irish potato famine** leads to widespread migration of Irish families into the UK.

**1948**  
**SS Empire Windrush** arrives from the West Indies. This is seen as the start of modern-day mass migration into the UK.

**1968**  
'**Rivers of Blood**' speech. Enoch Powell, a Conservative politician, makes a very controversial speech about immigration.



## More recently

**2016**  
**The UK votes to leave the European Union**. Many state that immigration was a main reason for wanting to leave.

**2012**  
**London Olympics**. Immigrants such as Mohamed Farah win medals for Great Britain. The opening ceremony celebrates the arrival of immigrants. Has Britain learned to accept immigrants?

Figure 6.2: Key dates in the history of migration to the British Isles.

## Your turn!

- 5<sup>th</sup> 1 What do the following key words mean? Write a definition of each: BC, AD, decade, century, chronology.
- 5<sup>th</sup> 2 Using Figure 6.2, make your own timeline from the events in bold. This will help you to get an overview of the period.
- 5<sup>th</sup> 3 Name the centuries in which each event on your timeline happened (for example, 1066 was in the 11th century).
- 6<sup>th</sup> 4 Look back through the book and some of the other topics you have studied – for example, the Norman Conquest or the Black Death. Using different colours, add any key events that you think might be relevant onto your timeline.