Anglo-Saxon Settlements: Place Names and Village Life

Teacher		**Class**	Year 4
Subject	History	**Topic**	Anglo-Saxon settlements
Date		**Room**	
Lesson length	60 minutes	**Country**	United Kingdom

Pupils learn why Anglo-Saxons settled and how villages worked. They plan and map their own Saxon village.

Curriculum links

- Anglo-Saxon invasions, settlements and kingdoms: place names and village life [1]

Learning objectives

- Students will explain why Anglo-Saxons came and where they settled.
- Students will describe village life and how houses were built.
- Students will link settler groups to place names and kingdoms.

Success criteria

- I can say where Anglo-Saxons settled and why they came.
- I can describe homes and life in a Saxon village.
- I can match Essex and East Anglia and use -ham or -ton.

What students already know

Ask: Who ruled Britain before the Anglo-Saxons? Listen for Romans. Ask what Romans left behind when soldiers left.

Key words

settlement	a place where people choose to begin a community [8]
kingdom	a country or area ruled by a king or queen [8]
village	a small group of homes where families farm and work together, giving food, warmth and shelter [3]
wattle and daub	sticks covered with mud to make walls of a hut [3]
Angles	one group from Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark who settled in the east [6]

Materials

- Slides 1-12
- Video clip 1 Houses and Settlements (0:00-4:16) on slide 6
- Video clip 2 Place-Name Clues (0:00-1:59) on slide 8
- large sugar paper
- felt tips
- small farm-animal counters
- sheet with faint outlines of three houses and a field

Before the lesson

- Load Slides 1-12 and test Video clip 1 (0:00-4:16) and Video clip 2 (0:00-1:59) with sound.
- Prepare large sugar paper, felt tips and small farm-animal counters for pairs.
- Print support sheets with faint outlines of three houses and a field.

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Lesson outline

0–5 min **Starter** 5 min · Whole class

To hook pupils with the settler challenge and recall Roman Britain.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 1 Anglo-Saxon Settlements and Slide 2 Today we will objectives.
2. Show Slide 3 Big idea and read: When Romans left, Anglo-Saxons made Britain home.
3. Use the hook: point to an empty space and say the settler challenge.
4. Take 3 quick ideas on what a family needs to survive winter.

STUDENTS DO

1. Look at Slides 1-3 and listen to the challenge.
2. Turn and talk to a partner about one thing a new village needs.
3. Share one idea with the class.

Say: You have just landed in the east with nothing but tools and animals. Where do you put everything so everyone survives winter? Today we will learn why Anglo-Saxons came, where they settled, and what village life was like.

Ask: Who ruled Britain before the Anglo-Saxons? (The Romans, until the last soldiers left by AD410 [6].) · What does a new family need first: water, shelter or food? (All three, but water and shelter first to survive.)

Check understanding: Hands up for one need for a new village. If answers are vague, point to river, woods and shelter and ask which helps most.

Support: Offer choices: water, wood or high ground, and let pupils point. **Stretch:** Ask pupils to say which need matters most on the first night and why.

Use: Slides 1-3

5–15 min **Teaching** 10 min · Whole class

To explain why Anglo-Saxons came and who settled where.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 4 Who settled where and explain the Angles in the east and north and Saxons in the south.
2. Teach that they were a mix of tribes from Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands, the three biggest were the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes [6].
3. Teach that they came as warriors to fight the Picts and Scots in the north, and also peacefully to find land to farm and build new homes [12].
4. Show Slide 5 Where would you settle and take a class vote for river, hill or woods.

STUDENTS DO

1. Listen, look at Slide 4 and repeat Angles and Saxons.
2. Vote on Slide 5 for river, hill or woods and give a reason.
3. Repeat the link: Angles lived here, so we call it East Anglia.

Say: The last Roman soldiers left and Britain had no strong army to defend it [12]. Some Anglo-Saxons came to fight, many came peacefully to farm because their homelands in northern Europe often flooded [12]. They first settled in the eastern parts of Britain, in what is today Kent, Sussex, Essex and East Anglia [12].

Worked example: Essex hides the settlers: Essex comes from the East Saxons, because different peoples settled in different areas and gave their names to places we know today [5]. The Angles, Saxons and Jutes took over and settled in different areas [8], so Angles link to East Anglia.

Ask: Why did many Anglo-Saxons come peacefully? (To find land to farm and build new homes [12].) · Which settlers gave their name to Essex? (The East Saxons, who settled in different areas and gave names to places [5].) · Where did they settle first? (In the east: Kent, Sussex, Essex and East Anglia [12].)

Check understanding: Mini whiteboards: write Angles or Saxons for Essex. If mixed, re-model Essex = East Saxons [5].

Support: Leave Angles-Anglia and Saxons-Sussex colour-matched and point while saying names. **Stretch:** Ask pupils to explain without looking why East Anglia has Angles hiding in it.

Use: Slides 4-5

15–25 min **Teaching** 10 min · Whole class

To show what Saxon homes were made from and what -ham and -ton mean.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 6 and play Video clip 1 Houses and Settlements (0:00-4:16).
2. Show Slide 7 Life in a village and explain wattle and daub as sticks and mud.
3. Show Slide 8 and play Video clip 2 Place-Name Clues (0:00-1:59) for -ham meaning home and -ton meaning farm.
4. Summarise what a village gave families and what rotted away.

STUDENTS DO

1. Watch both clips and spot what homes are made from.
2. Chorus -ham means home and -ton means farm.
3. Tell a partner one reason why houses rotted away.

Say: Most lived in villages and farms because these provided food, warmth and shelter [3]. Homes were made from natural materials and tended to rot over time, so no original Anglo-Saxon settlements are left today [3]. Buildings were used for housing as well as workshops [3]. Listen for -ham for home and -ton for farm.

Worked example: Wattle is woven sticks like a fence, daub is mud and straw pressed over it. Ordinary houses were short-lived and built of timber, with fences or slight ditches round them [4]. Household goods were largely made of textile, wood and leather, which rot easily [4].

Ask: What were most Saxon homes made from? (Natural materials like wood, wattle and daub, which rot over time [3].) · What did a village give families? (Food, warmth and shelter [3], with buildings for housing and workshops [3].)

Check understanding: Thumbs up if you can name wattle and daub. If unsure, hold up sticks and mud actions again and repeat.

Support: Show a picture of wattle panels and label wattle as sticks and daub as mud. **Stretch:** Ask what would survive after 500 years and what would disappear, and why.

Use: Slides 6-8, Video clip 1 (0:00-4:16), Video clip 2 (0:00-1:59)

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25–50 min **Main activity** 25 min · Pairs

To plan a Saxon village that could feed and shelter families.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 9 Your task and explain: match, draw homes, farm and hall, add one -ham or -ton name.
2. Model a quick plan: river for water, huts together, field, workshop, fence round the edge.
3. Give out large sugar paper, felt tips and small farm-animal counters.
4. Circulate, ask where food, shelter and work happen, and check place-name links.

STUDENTS DO

1. In pairs, draw houses, farm, hall or workshop and a fence on sugar paper.
2. Place animal counters, label food, shelter and work places.
3. Add one -ham or -ton name and match Essex, Sussex and East Anglia to Angles or Saxons.

Say: You have just landed in the east with tools and animals. Draw fields, houses, a workshop and a fence so everyone survives winter. The Anglo-Saxons first settled in the east in Kent, Sussex, Essex and East Anglia [12]. Label houses, farm, workshop and fence, then add your own -ham or -ton name to the map.

Worked example: My model: I put the river at the bottom for water. I draw three wooden huts of wattle and daub near the middle for shelter. I draw a big field for crops, a workshop for making tools, and a fence round all of it. I place animal counters in the field and by the huts. I call it Foxham to show home, and I label where food, shelter and work happen.

Ask: Where will you get food, water and wood? (Field for crops, river for water, woods for firewood and building wood.) · Why put a fence round the village? (To mark the edge and protect animals and homes, like fences or slight ditches [4].)

Check understanding: Stop at 15 minutes: pairs point to food, shelter and work. If missing, add a label before continuing.

Support: Give a sheet with faint outlines of three houses and a field to finish and label. **Stretch:** Ask pupils to add arrows to show how food, water and wood move round their village.

Use: Slide 9

50–60 min **Plenary** 10 min · Whole class

To secure the timeline, seven kingdoms and place-name links.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 10 From Romans to Saxons and peg the order: AD410, AD450, 500s-600s, 600s-800s.
2. Teach that the Anglo-Saxons established seven kingdoms - Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Essex, Kent, Sussex and Wessex [8].
3. Show Slide 11 Think, pair, share: Why do so many town names still sound Saxon?
4. Show Slide 12 Quick quiz and take answers as exit check.

STUDENTS DO

1. Read the timeline aloud and say what changed after AD410.
2. Think, pair, share why town names still sound Saxon.
3. Answer the quick quiz on whiteboards.

Say: The last Roman soldiers left Britain by AD410 and the Anglo-Saxon age lasted from about AD410 to 1066 [6]. Settlers came from around AD450 [6], there were many battles, and over time they took control of most of Britain [12]. No single king ruled over all the Anglo-Saxons [8]. Many native Britons remained where they were or moved west to Wales and Cornwall [12].

Worked example: Timeline read-aloud: About AD410 last soldiers leave, about AD450 Angles, Saxons and Jutes arrive by sea, 500s-600s villages grow in the east, 600s-800s seven kingdoms. Much of our evidence comes from archaeology such as burials, grave goods, treasure hoards and building remains [6].

Ask: How many kingdoms were there and can you name two? (Seven: Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Essex, Kent, Sussex and Wessex [8].) · Why do town names still sound Saxon? (Because Angles, Saxons and Jutes settled in different areas and gave names to places [8][5].)

Check understanding: Whiteboard quiz on Slide 12. If errors, revisit Slide 4 and Slide 7 before finishing.

Support: Leave the kingdom list and -ham and -ton meanings on the board to copy. **Stretch:** Ask pupils to name two kingdoms from memory without the list.

Use: Slides 10-12

Common mistakes

Mistake	How to spot it	How to fix it
Pupils think one king ruled all the Anglo-Saxons.	They say king of England ruled from the start.	Stress that no single king ruled over all the Anglo-Saxons [8] and practise all seven kingdoms [8].
Pupils think Saxon houses were stone and still stand.	They draw castles or stone streets.	Remind them most homes were made from natural materials and rotted, so no original settlements are left [3], and ordinary houses were short-lived timber [4].
Pupils call Anglo-Saxons Vikings or one single tribe.	They say Viking village or one boat of same people.	Teach they were a mix of tribes from Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands, the biggest were Angles, Saxons and Jutes [6], and Saxon is not Viking [3].

Support

- Use colour-matched word cards and picture labels for Angles, Saxons, wattle and daub.

Stretch

- Explain which village jobs mattered most for winter survival and why.

- Give faint village outlines and sentence starters for explanations.
- Add movement arrows and a -ham or -ton name with a reason.

For the LSE or teaching assistant

Support pairs in main task with outline sheets and counters; prompt pointing to food, shelter and work and help with Essex and East Anglia matching.

Check for understanding

Question	Answer
Where did Anglo-Saxons first settle?	In the east: Kent, Sussex, Essex and East Anglia [12].
What were Saxon homes made from and why are none left?	Natural materials like wood, wattle and daub, which rotted over time [3].
Which settlers link to Essex and East Anglia?	East Saxons to Essex and Angles to East Anglia, as peoples gave names to places [5].

Sources

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