

Pioneer Helmet

The Wollaston Helmet, also known as the Pioneer helmet is one of only six Saxon helmets, from the 7th and 8th centuries, ever found in England.

This incredible object can tell us a lot about Saxon society and religion because of where it was found and what (or who) it was found with.

Follow the activities below to discover the amazing secrets of this helmet and all about the Saxons.



Additional resources

To learn more about the helmet, the Saxons and their stories, visit our [Home Learning Hub](#) page on our website and watch the videos on our [YouTube channel](#).

Fascinating Facts

A rare treasure

This incredible helmet is nearly 1,400 years old and is one of only six Saxon helmets ever found.

It is a key to unlocking the history of the Saxons. Just by looking at this helmet and what it was found with, we can learn about what the Saxons believed in.

A helmet fit for a...?

This helmet was found alongside pieces of a human skull and a leg bone, a sword, a knife and a hanging bowl. So, we think that this may be the grave of a high-status Saxon warrior. A feather was also found underneath the skull of the warrior, which could be a sign that a pillow was placed there.

But why were all these things buried with this Saxon? Well, many Saxons before and during the 7th century were pagans which means that they believed in lots of gods and goddesses, and in an afterlife to which they could take their possessions. Saxons were not always pagans though, and some converted in to being Christians later on.

Can you see an animal?

Look closely at the top of the helmet. Can you see a boar on top? A boar-crested helmet is mentioned five times in the Saxon Saga Beowulf, in which the brave hero Beowulf fights off monsters including the evil Grendel.

Saxons believed that the goddess of protection, Frigg, would ride into battle on the back of a wild boar. Therefore, if a warrior was wearing a helmet with the symbol of Frigg on top, they would be protected when going into battle.



Activity Pages

Battle of the Gods

Some of the Saxons were pagan and believed in lots of different gods. Create your own gods and make Top Trump cards for them.

Draw a picture of your god or goddess, give it a name, decide on 6 categories and values for each. Then let battle commence. Who will be top god?

The image shows three identical blank Top Trump cards arranged horizontally. Each card has a rounded rectangular shape with a red border. At the top left, there are two small boxes: the first is labeled 'Name' and the second is labeled 'God of'. Below these is a large empty rectangular space for drawing a picture of the god. At the bottom of each card, there are six rows, each with a category label on the left and a small empty box on the right for a value. The categories are: Strength, Wisdom, Defence, Popularity, and two empty rows.

Create your own helmet

Design your own helmet, and then think of a name for it.

You could name your helmet after where it was found or after the person it belonged to.

