Why Did England Pay Silver to the Vikings?

The Silver Price · KS2 History · Years 3 to 6

Name _____

Class _____

Date _____

1 The silver penny sums

MATHS LINK

One pound was 240 silver pennies. Fill in the empty boxes. *Hint for 48,000: 48 × 24, then add four zeros.*

Pounds	1	2	10	10,000	16,000	48,000
Year	–	–	–	991	994	1012
Silver pennies	**240**					

Challenge. In 1018, England paid 72,000 pounds, and London paid 10,500 pounds more. **a.** How many more pounds did England pay in 1018 than in 991 (10,000 pounds)? _____ pounds. **b.** What was the 1018 total for England and London together? _____ pounds.

2 Three times at London

CHRONOLOGY

Number the six events **1** to **6** in the order they happened. Write **1** for the earliest.

☐	**A.** Sweyn, king of Denmark, comes with a large fleet; in the end London gives in, and Æthelred sails to Normandy.
☐	**B.** In 991, the Vikings beat an English army on the east coast, and King Æthelred pays 10,000 pounds.
☐	**C.** Cnut's men dig a deep ditch and drag their ships past London Bridge, but London holds out twice.
☐	**D.** Ninety-four ships come to London and try to set the town on fire, but the people of London fight them off.
☐	**E.** After Cnut wins a great battle and Æthelred's son dies, Cnut becomes king of all England.
☐	**F.** England's leading men wait in London until 48,000 pounds is paid.

3 Words and names to know

VOCABULARY

Write the letter of the correct meaning next to each word or name. Use each meaning once.

1 penny	_____	**A** what the English called the Vikings from Denmark
2 Danes	_____	**B** a group of ships sailing together
3 Danegeld	_____	**C** where King Æthelred sailed across the sea to his wife's family
4 fleet	_____	**D** a small silver coin showing the side of the king's face and his name
5 Normandy	_____	**E** Sweyn's son, who became king of all England in 1016
6 Cnut	_____	**F** a later word meaning Dane-money, the silver paid to the Vikings

4 Why the price kept going up

CAUSE AND EVIDENCE

1. When King Sweyn came in 1013, he did not want silver. What did he want? _____
2. Today, far more pennies with Æthelred's face are dug up in Scandinavia than in England. Why are so many found there?

3. People later gave Æthelred a nickname that means *badly advised*. Did paying the Vikings work? Give one fact from the film to support your answer.

5 When, where, and how sure we are

ENGLISH LINK

a. Underline the **fronted adverbial** in each sentence from the film. It tells you *when* or *where*, and a comma follows it.

- In workshops here, people made small silver coins called pennies.
- In 991, the Vikings beat an English army on the east coast.
- Three years later, ninety-four ships came to London itself.
- That autumn, Cnut won a great battle.

b. The film says: "Many of them were *probably* paid to Vikings." Why does it say *probably* instead of saying that all of them were Danegeld?

c. The film says: "Think about what advice you would have given him." Write one sentence of advice for King Æthelred using *should*, *could* or *would*.

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Answers and teaching notes

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Answers

1 · The silver penny sums. Pennies = pounds × 240. 2 pounds = **480** · 10 pounds = **2,400** · 10,000 pounds = **2,400,000** (the film says "nearly two and a half million") · 16,000 pounds = **3,840,000** (16 × 24 = 384, then add four zeros) · 48,000 pounds = **11,520,000** (48 × 24 = 1,152, then add four zeros; the film says "more than eleven million"). *Years 3 to 4: first three columns only.* **Challenge: a.** 72,000 – 10,000 = **62,000 pounds**. **b.** 72,000 + 10,500 = **82,500 pounds**.

2 · Three times at London. In order: **1** B (991, east coast battle and 10,000 pounds) · **2** D (994, 94 ships at London, fought off) · **3** F (1012, 48,000 pounds paid in London) · **4** A (1013, Sweyn comes, London gives in, Æthelred sails to Normandy) · **5** C (1016, Cnut's ditch at London Bridge, London holds out twice) · **6** E (autumn 1016, Cnut wins a great battle and becomes king of all England). Down the sheet the boxes read **4, 1, 5, 2, 6, 3**.

3 · Words and names to know. 1 penny = **D** · 2 Danes = **A** · 3 Danegeld = **F** · 4 fleet = **B** · 5 Normandy = **C** · 6 Cnut = **E**.

4 · Why the price kept going up. 1. He wanted **England** (to be king of England). **2.** Because many of them were probably paid to the Vikings (as Danegeld) and taken back across the North Sea. **3.** Accept *no* (or a qualified answer) backed by a film fact: the ships kept coming back; the price rose from 10,000 pounds (991) to 16,000 (994), 24,000 (1002), 36,000, 48,000 (1012) and 72,000 (1018); and in 1013 Sweyn came to take England itself.

5 · When, where, and how sure we are. a. In workshops here, · In 991, · Three years later, · That autumn, **b.** Because coins could also cross the sea through trade, loot, or paying soldiers, so we cannot be certain how every single penny got there. **c.** Accept any sensible sentence using a modal verb, for example: *You should build ships and guard the river, because if you pay the Vikings they will come back for more.*

Plenary. Ask: *How did London's story change across the three times the Vikings came?* (First time, 994: London fought off 94 ships. Second time, 1013: London held out while Æthelred was inside, but gave in when the rest of the country submitted. Third time, 1016: London held out against Cnut's siege twice, before paying for safety after Cnut won a great battle elsewhere.)

Curriculum links

History. National Curriculum KS2 History: *the Viking and Anglo-Saxon struggle for the Kingdom of England to the time of Edward the Confessor* (non-statutory example: *Danegeld*). Skills: chronology from 991 to 1018 (Question 2), cause and consequence (Question 4), and using archaeological evidence (coin finds in Scandinavia, Questions 4.2 and 5b).

Maths. Multiplying by 240, place value into the millions (Year 6), and addition/subtraction with 5-digit numbers (Question 1).

English. Fronted adverbials followed by a comma (Year 4 statutory, Question 5a); adverbs of possibility and modal verbs (Year 5 statutory, Questions 5b and 5c).

Where each question comes from in the film

Question	Part of the film	The film says
1	The First Time; The Second Time; The Third Time	"A pound was two hundred and forty pennies, so that was nearly two and a half million small coins"; "sixteen thousand pounds"; "In 1012, it was forty-eight thousand pounds … more than eleven million pennies"; "In 1018, England paid seventy-two thousand pounds, and London paid ten thousand five hundred more"
2	All three parts	"In 991, the Vikings beat an English army on the east coast"; "three years later, ninety-four ships came to London itself"; "In 1012, it was forty-eight thousand pounds, and England's leading men waited in London"; "The next year, Sweyn, the king of Denmark, came with a large fleet"; "His men dug a deep ditch and dragged their ships past the bridge"; "Cnut became king of all England"
3	All three parts	"small silver coins called pennies"; "the English called them Danes. That is why this money was later called Danegeld, which means Dane-money"; "came with a large fleet"; "Æthelred sailed across the sea to Normandy, where his wife's family lived"; "Sweyn's son Cnut"
4	The Second Time; The Third Time	"This time he did not want silver. He wanted England"; "People later gave Æthelred a nickname that means badly advised"; "far more pennies with Æthelred's face are dug up in Scandinavia, across the North Sea, than in England. Many of them were probably paid to Vikings"
5	All three parts	Fronted adverbials from all three parts; "Many of them were probably paid to Vikings"; "Think about what advice you would have given him"

This sheet is careful about

The numbers and the word Danegeld. The payment figures (10,000; 16,000; 24,000; 36,000; 48,000; 72,000 plus 10,500 from London) come from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. In the 990s and early 1000s the Chronicle calls these payments *gafol* (tribute); *Danegeld* is a later term, so the film says "was later called Danegeld". The 1018 payment under Cnut went to pay off his own fleet rather than to buy off raiders.

Names kept simple. The film calls Æthelred's nickname "a nickname that means badly advised" (Old English *Unræd*, poor counsel, punning on *Æthel-ræd*, noble counsel) without using the modern word "Unready", which misleads pupils into thinking he was simply unprepared. Æthelred's son (Edmund Ironside) is referred to simply as "his son" to keep the cast of names manageable.

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