Key Individuals

Edward the Confessor: king from 1043-66. He did not make it clear who should be king after him.

Harold Godwinson: the biggest landowner in England, supported by the Witan (the council of the most powerful people in the land

Harald Hardrada: Viking King of Norway, whose grandfather had been a king in England. A fearsome fighter, supported by the Scots

William of Normandy: Supported by the Pope and promised the throne by Edward and Harold

Battle of Stamford Bridge
Harold marches North to defeat Hardrada in Yorkshire

Battle of Hastings
Harold marches another 300 miles to fight William in Hastings on the South coast.

Weapons and warriors

Knight - a fighter on horseback
Archer - uses a bow and arrows
Housecarl - uses an axe to fight
Fyrd - farmers who were called up to fight for Harold

Normans:
William's men were knights and archers

Saxons:
Harold's men were housecarls and the fyrd

Bayeaux Tapestry

A tapestry that tells the story of William's victory in the Battle of Hastings. It is a very important primary source.

Made by Bishop Odo, William's half brother soon after the battle.

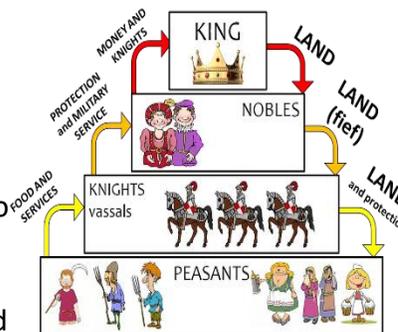Shows Williams preparations, the weapons that both sides used and Harold's death.

The Tapestry gives lots of historical detail, but can historians trust it?

How did William control the people?

Feudal system

Land was divided up and given to people in exchange of taxes and loyalty to the king. Everyone had to swear to be loyal to the person above them. Peasants had to work for their lord they were not free to move to a different place

Feudal Pyramid of Power

Domesday book

William found out exactly what everyone in the kingdom owned so that he knew how much to tax them.

Harrying of the North

People who rebelled against the new king were punished very harshly. Their villages and crops were destroyed.
William did this to show the people that he was and tough and would be cruel to anyone who went against him