

Before 1066 England was very wealthy. It was ruled by **Edward the Confessor 1042-1066**. The most powerful family were the Godwins but the king also had close ties with the Normans in France after he spent his childhood in exile there. The North of England had a large Viking population. When Edward died **5th January 1066** it was unclear who would be king. There were **four main contenders**.

Key Battles	Key people-the Contenders to the Throne
<p>The spring and summer of 1066 were spent preparing large armies. <b>King Harold Godwinson</b> waited for William on the south coast. However, <b>Harald Hardrada</b> arrived first, defeating King Harold's me Edwin and Morcar at the <b>Battle of Fulford Gate</b>. Harold led his army on a speed march across the length of the country, arriving at York in four days, catching the Vikings by surprise and defeating them at the battle of <b>Stamford Bridge</b>. <b>Harald Hardrada and Tostig</b> were both killed. Three days later <b>William</b> landed at Pevensey and built a castle there. Harold marched his army all the way back south, meeting William on the road near Hastings.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Edgar Atheling</b> was King Edward's great nephew and closest male relative. However he was only 14 when Edward died and was not chosen as the heir.</li> <li><b>Earl Harold Godwinson</b> was the most powerful man in England and had served as sub regulus (deputy king) for many years. Harold had the support of all of the English nobles and the Witan, except his brother Tostig. They had fallen out. <b>Harold was crowned as king on the 6th January 1066.</b></li> <li><b>Duke William of Normandy</b> was King Edward's distant cousin. Edward had close ties to the Normans through his mother and (according to William) promised William the throne during the 1051 dispute. William was a successful and brutal warrior, having proven himself in many military campaigns. When Harold became king he began to prepare an invasion force. He later is known as <b>William the Conqueror</b>.</li> <li><b>King Harald Hardrada of Norway</b> was a powerful Viking with a large and successful army. He claimed that as Edward had no sons a son of the previous king should be chosen. The previous king was the <b>Viking Harthacnut</b> who (according to Harald) promised the throne to Harald's father <b>Magnus</b>. Harald Hardrada had only the support of the exiled <b>Tostig Godwinson</b> but was determined to seize the throne by force. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Edwin, and Morcar</b> were supporters of King Harold Godwinson and then Edgar Atheling.</li> <li><b>Hereward the Wake</b> led a rebellion against King William.</li> <li><b>Tostig Godwinson</b> was Harold Godwinson's younger brother. He had fallen out with his family and had joined Harald Hadrada's army in the hope he would defeat his bother Harold.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

**The Battle of Hastings**

Harold's army was exhausted following their journey south. He had 7000 men, mostly peasant militia (Fyrd) but with a core of professional Housecarls. They formed a strong shield wall on top of the hill and had the advantage position but William's army were fresh and well trained. He also had 7000 men with infantry, archers and 2000 elite knights on horseback. The fist Norman attacks up the hill failed. However the Normans used a **feigned retreat** to lure Harold's men down the hill where they could be killed. By 4pm, after heavy casualties on both sides, the shield wall was broken and Harold was killed. According to legend, Harold Godwinson was killed by an arrow in his eye. The legend of Harold being hit in the eye comes from the **Bayeux Tapestry**, which shows Harold's death. The Bayeux Tapestry is one of the world's most famous pieces of medieval art, showing the legendary tale of the Norman conquest of England through seventy metres of astonishing 11th century embroidery. It was commissioned by Bishop Odo, William's brother to congratulate William on his victory in England.

How did William establish Control	The Domesday Book
<p>William still was not king. There was an attempt to crown Edgar Atheling but, after William burnt the countryside around London, Edgar surrendered.  <b>William was crowned king Dec 25th 1066.</b>                      William tried to secure his rule by building <b>Motte and Bailey castles</b> all over England but still faced rebellions from all over the country and even his own Norman earls!</p> <p>In 1068 <b>Edgar Atheling, Edwin and Morcar</b> led a rebellion in the North, killing the Norman Earl. William responded with the <b>Harrying of the North</b>. He destroyed all buildings, animals and food. In the winter, <b>100,000 people died of starvation.</b></p> <p><b>Hereward the Wake</b> led a guerrilla war in the marshy fenlands of East Anglia. The marshes meant William could not use his army effectively. After many failed attempts to capture Hereward's base at Ely, Hereward was betrayed by some monks and William defeated the rebels.</p> <p>William also established control by giving land to people loyal to him and getting earls to '<b>swear fealty</b>'- a oath or promise of loyalty to him. This was the <b>Feudal System</b>. William gave some land to the Norman barons. In return they provided the King with Knights. The knights were given land by the barons and the knights gave land to the <b>villeins/ peasants</b>. Everyone had to swear loyalty to the man who gave them land and if you broke the promise, you would lose the land. William made sure that each Baron's land was dotted around the country so it wouldn't be easy for them to band together and try and overthrow the King. Everyone had to promise to support the King above everyone else.</p>	<p>William needed money if he was going to remain powerful. He could get money either by selling the crops that were grown on his land or by making people pay <b>taxes</b>. He needed to find out who should be paying him taxes and how much they should pay. He sent out teams of officials to collect the information. He also sent people to check that entries were correct to avoid people lying. The people called it the <b>Domesday Book</b> because "Domesday" means '<b>Day of Judgement</b>'. The Domesday Book contains some interesting information about the area around Pevensey and Hastings – fifteen manors were attacked so badly that they were described as "waste" (as in waste land) by the men sent out to gather information for the Domesday Book. This gives a clear indication of how badly the coastal area of Sussex between Pevensey Bay and Hastings was affected by the Norman invasion.</p>

