

# VIKING SHIELDS



The battlefields of the Viking Age were terrifying places where a warrior faced hails of arrows and multiple attackers armed with all manner of deadly weapons.

Not all Vikings had access to armor, and even the best armor of the era would not stand up to many direct hits. Therefore the shield was perhaps the best tool the Viking carried. The shield was both a defensive and offensive weapon.

Once decorated, it conveyed the user's identity or loyalty, and was sometimes painted with runes or symbols to bring victory!



The Viking shield was round and primarily made of wood, with a bowl shaped 'boss' made of iron at the center. This boss provided protection for the warrior's hand that gripped the shield directly behind it with a single grip.



Archaeologists have not found much evidence for complete shields, although parts of the fittings have been found, like the central boss.



Circular shields were up to a metre across and made of a single layer of planks fitted together. There was a central hollow iron boss to protect the hand, a handle (grip) riveted to the back, and bindings on the rim, sometimes made from leather.





Some of the pictures of shields in Viking art show simple pinwheel and spiral designs.



The kite-shaped shield was introduced from around 1000 AD. You can see this represented on the bayeux tapestry, which records the events of 1066. The designs on the shields on the tapestry include crosses, patterns made up of dots, and quite a few strange looking creatures.



# Viking shield designs





# Year 4's challenge

We would like you to design a Viking shield. You can use choose a circle or a kite shape and include as many different colours as you like. You can draw and colour your shield or make one.

TIP: use the back of an old cereal box or any cardboard in your house to make a shield.

We look forward to seeing your creations!  
Miss Goswami, Mrs Jenkins and Mr Murray