

ANDREW  
JENNINGS

AGES  
10-11

COMPREHENSION NINJA



# COMPREHENSION NINJA WORKBOOK



## Learning at Home

Non-Fiction comprehension activities  
to support the National Curriculum

BLOOMSBURY

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NINJA  
WORKBOOK**

**AGES 10–11**

**ANDREW JENNINGS**

# INTRODUCTION

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To Christopher Hole, thank you for the inexhaustible level of quality you have brought to the  
Comprehension Ninja series and beyond. Your subject knowledge, skills and experience have  
been essential in developing the highest quality non-fiction texts, that are engaging, inspiring  
and informative for the reader.

Reading comprehension is all about understanding what you are reading – and being able to show that you understand.  
This Comprehension Ninja workbook will help your child master the foundations of reading comprehension by focusing on  
three key aspects:

- **Skimming** and **scanning** a whole text to locate information efficiently.
- **Retrieving** the correct information from the text in eight different ways.
- **Vocabulary** awareness and the **effect of word choices**.

This book contains seven curriculum-linked texts, each followed by a set of questions to check whether your child has  
understood the text. There are eight question types to develop your child's comprehension skills:



For texts 1 - 4, the activity pages feature one question type per page so your child can focus on building up their  
comprehension skills one at a time, while texts 5 - 7 look a bit more like a test, with two pages of mixed questions.  
**This book includes the following topics: the Battle of Hastings, Barack Obama, dinosaurs, climate change,  
Ancient Mayan civilisation, plants and gaming consoles.**

## HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

### STEP 1 – READ THE TEXT CAREFULLY

Encourage your child to read the whole text carefully before they start trying to answer the questions. You can help them  
with any words or phrases they don't know. As an extra activity, you could ask your child to read the text aloud to you.

### STEP 2 – PICK OUT KEY WORDS AND INFORMATION

Picking out key words and headings will help your child to quickly locate the information they need to answer  
the questions. Encourage your child to underline key information as they read the text, such as:

- **Nouns** – names of people, places and objects.
- **Time** – dates and periods of time.
- **Numbers** – amounts, statistics, percentages and figures.
- **Vocabulary** – important topic vocabulary or words they are unsure of. They could look these up online or in a  
dictionary to find out what they mean.

Your child should also look out for titles and headings, which will help them understand the structure of the text.

### STEP 3 – IDENTIFY KEY WORDS IN THE QUESTIONS

Encourage your child to identify key words in the questions so they know what they're looking for to find the answer.  
For example, in a text about the seaside:

**Question:** What might you find in a rock pool?

**Key words:** rock pool

'Rock pool' is the clue needed to answer the question.

### STEP 4 – SKIM AND SCAN THE TEXT

Once your child has identified the key words in the question, they can try to remember where in the text the answer can be  
found. This might be as simple as remembering whether it was at the beginning, middle or end of the text, or thinking about  
which section the key information was in.

Your child can then **skim read** the whole text to find the section they need. When they've found it, they should **scan** the  
section to find the relevant sentences. They then read those sentences carefully to find the answer.

Invite your child to work through all the questions and give them lots of encouragement along the way. The answers can be  
found at the back of the book.

# 1 THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS

The Battle of Hastings is one of the most famous and bloody battles in British history. On the morning of 14 October 1066, two armies prepared to fight for the throne of England. Nearly a thousand years later, the impact of that battle is still felt.

## The build-up

When Edward the Confessor, the Anglo-Saxon King of England, died in 1066, he left no clear heir to his throne. Three contenders for the crown emerged: Harold Godwinson, Earl of Essex; Harald Hardrada, King of Norway; and William, Duke of Normandy in France. When Harold Godwinson was named king, he expected some opposition. Predicting an invasion from France, he gathered his troops in the south of England, poised for the attack. News soon arrived, however, that Harald Hardrada and his Viking army were on their way to the north of England. The troops quickly relocated and took the Vikings by surprise. Harold's quick response meant that the Vikings were defeated at the Battle of Stamford Bridge, near York, where Harald Hardrada was killed.

As Harold Godwinson's army was recovering from the battle, news arrived that William and his troops had arrived in the south of England. It was as Harold had originally expected – but his army was no longer ready. Nevertheless, the troops hurried south to meet the Norman invaders.

## The battle

William's huge fleet of around 700 ships had landed at Pevensey Bay, in Sussex, on 29 September 1066. They raided the local areas and set about readying themselves for battle. Harold and his forces were back in London only by 12 October. Harold gathered what extra support he could and then proceeded towards Hastings.

When the two sides met at Senlac Hill on 14 October, Harold's troops were still exhausted. They were unmotivated and poorly paid. William's troops, however, were well prepared.

Some debate surrounds the size of the two armies. It is thought that each side had between 5,000 and 7,000 men, although both may have been bigger. William's troops were thought to have not only included Normans but also men from Brittany, Aquitaine and Maine, whom he had persuaded to support his invasion – in large part because he had received the Pope's blessing for his actions.

The forces steadied themselves for the confrontation. Harold's troops gathered at the top of the hill, forming a wall of shields. The Normans on foot fired arrows, while others on horseback charged up the hill. A rumour soon spread amongst the Normans that William had been killed, causing unrest and panic. William, however, is said to have removed his helmet and declared, 'Look at me! I'm alive and with the aid of God I shall gain the victory!' This rejuvenated his troops' spirits immediately.

It is also believed that the battle took a significant turn when the Normans pretended to run away. When they were chased, they turned and attacked – forcing Harold's army to lose the advantage of controlling the hill.

Harold's troops put up a brave fight against the Normans. The king, however, was killed in the battle, alongside his two brothers. Legend has it that he was wounded by an arrow in the eye and then was charged down. In total, around 10,000 men died in the battle.

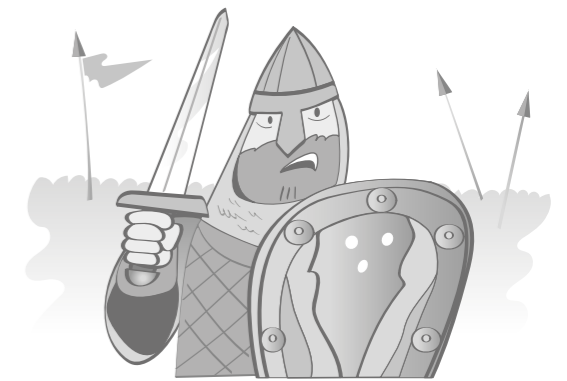
Our understanding of the fighting, now commonly known as the Battle of Hastings, is much clearer than other events of the time. The Bayeux Tapestry, made soon afterwards, depicts the story of events from 1064 to the end of the battle. The chronicles and memoirs of the well-connected William of Poitiers, a Norman soldier, also provide us with vital information. However, it is important to remember that all of these surviving records were created from a Norman viewpoint. As is often the case, history was written by the victors.

## The repercussions

Following the bloody battle, on Christmas Day 1066 William was crowned King of England at Westminster Abbey. The coronation marked the end of Anglo-Saxon rule and heralded a new period in British history. Gradually, the Norman influence transformed England and its language, law, customs and even architecture.

William had Harold buried next to the battlefield with a headstone reading 'Here lies Harold, King of the English', and built Battle Abbey on the site as an act of respectful penance. However, years later, Normans forgot William's humbleness. They destroyed the headstone and dug up Harold. His body now rests at Waltham Abbey, near London.

William is now often referred to as William the Conqueror – a just title.





**FILL IN THE GAP**



Read the sentences and choose the correct word or words to fill the gap.

On the morning of 14 October 1066, two armies prepared to fight for the \_\_\_\_\_ of England.

William's huge fleet of around \_\_\_\_\_ had landed at Pevensey Bay, in Sussex, on 29 September 1066.

The troops quickly \_\_\_\_\_ and took the Vikings by surprise.

The \_\_\_\_\_, made soon afterwards, depicts the story of events from 1064 to the end of the battle.

Harold's troops gathered at the top of the hill, forming a \_\_\_\_\_.

A rumour soon spread amongst the \_\_\_\_\_ that William had been killed, causing unrest and panic.

It is thought that each side had between 5,000 and 7,000 men, although both may have been \_\_\_\_\_.

Following the bloody battle, on Christmas Day 1066 William was crowned King of England at \_\_\_\_\_.

William is now often referred to as William the \_\_\_\_\_ – a just title.

When \_\_\_\_\_ was named king, he expected some opposition.

When the two sides met at Senlac Hill on \_\_\_\_\_, Harold's troops were still exhausted.

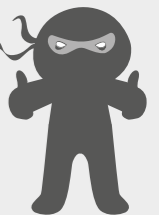
They were unmotivated and \_\_\_\_\_. William's troops, however, were well prepared.

Harold's quick response meant that the Vikings were defeated at the \_\_\_\_\_, near York, where Harald Hardrada was killed.

The \_\_\_\_\_ and memoirs of the well-connected William of Poitiers, a Norman soldier, also provide us with vital information.

The Normans on foot \_\_\_\_\_, while others on horseback charged up the hill.

**MATCHING**



Draw a line with a ruler to match the information.

- the battle began
- Harold's troops
- the king was killed
- the Normans on foot

- predicted an invasion from France
- legend says Harold died by
- William was crowned King of England
- Harold's troops were

- William's huge fleet
- supported invasion of England
- Vikings were defeated
- 14 October 1066

- depicts the Battle of Hastings
- the two sides met at
- Edward the Confessor
- the Battle of Hastings

- Harald Hardrada
- Duke of Normandy
- killed at the Battle of Stamford Bridge
- William's fleet

- fired arrows
- alongside his two brothers
- in the morning
- put up a brave fight

- at Westminster Abbey
- unmotivated and poorly paid
- an arrow lodged in his eye
- Harold Godwinson

- Battle of Stamford Bridge
- Battle of Hastings began
- 700 ships
- men from Brittany, Aquitaine and Maine

- left no heir to his throne
- famous and bloody battle
- the Bayeux Tapestry
- Senlac Hill

- landed in Pevensey Bay, Sussex
- had a Viking army
- William
- Harald Hardrada

# MULTIPLE CHOICE



Circle the correct answer for each of the following questions.

When did William's fleet land in Pevensey Bay, Sussex?

29 September	19 September	14 October	12 October
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When did the Battle of Hastings begin?

10 October	29 September	14 October	12 October
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Which King of England died in 1066?

Duke of Normandy	Harald Hardrada	Edward the Confessor	William of Poitiers
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When did the Battle of Hastings begin?

afternoon	evening	morning	night
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Who was killed by an arrow to the eye?

Duke of Normandy	Harold Godwinson	Edward the Confessor	William of Poitiers
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Which people supported Harald Hardrada?

Normans	Anglo-Saxons	Vikings	French
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How many ships were in William's fleet?

400	around 500	600	around 700
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How many men died at the Battle of Hastings?

9,000	around 10,000	11,000	around 12,000
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Whose chronicles tell us about the Battle of Hastings?

Duke of Normandy	Harald Hardrada	Edward the Confessor	William of Poitiers
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Where did the two sides in the Battle of Hastings first meet?

Senlac Hill	Stamford Bridge	York	Kent
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# TRUE OR FALSE



Read the sentences. Put a tick in the correct box to show which sentences are *true* and which are *false*.

Edward the Confessor was King of France. True  False

William's huge fleet of ships landed at Stamford Bridge. True  False

The Battle of Hastings began on 14 October 1066. True  False

The Normans raided local areas near Pevensey. True  False

Legend has it that Harold was wounded by an arrow in the knee. True  False

The Normans charged on horseback. True  False

Harald Hardrada was defeated by Harold Godwinson. True  False

Edward the Confessor left the throne to his son. True  False

The Bayeux Tapestry tells the story of the Battle of Hastings. True  False

Harold's body can be found at Westminster Abbey. True  False

The Duke of Normandy was William the Conqueror. True  False

William was crowned king on Christmas Day. True  False

William of Poitiers' memoirs tell the story of the Battle of Hastings. True  False

2,000 men died in the Battle of Hastings. True  False

William's army included men from Maine and Brittany. True  False