



Section 2: The 3 contenders for the throne in 1066

Name	Strengths of claim
<p>Harold Godwinson</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earl of Wessex, one of the most powerful men in England. • His sister was married to Edward. • He had support of the Witan. • English monks wrote 'on his deathbed that wise King promised the kingdom to Harold.'
<p>Harald Hardrada</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most feared warrior in Europe. Tough, ruthless and he enjoyed watching his enemies suffer. • A Viking called Canute had once been King of England 30 years earlier • Had support from Tostig, Harold's brother.
<p>William of Normandy</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was promised the throne in 1051. He had helped Edward become King of England by giving him some soldiers. • Duke of Normandy, the strongest part of France. • Harold had visited him in 1064 to tell him Edward's news and also promised to support his claim to the throne of England. • Edward had lived in Normandy and the two men were close. • Had been ruling his kingdom since the age of seven and was used to having to fight to keep his lands.

Section 3: Timeline of key events

5th January 1066	Edward the Confessor died. He died without an heir but it is claimed he made Harold Godwinson his successor on his deathbed.
6th January 1066	Harold Godwinson crowned King
8th September	8th September Harold sent his army home. Harold had expected to invade during the summer months when the weather was good. When the invasion didn't arrive. Harold's men went home to harvest the crops from the fields.
20th September 1066 Viking invade	Harald Hardrada and Tostig invaded, with more than 10,000 men in 200 longships. Anglo-Saxon Earls Edwin and Morcar were defeated at Battle of Fulford.
25th September 1066 Battle of Stamford Bridge	Harold Godwinson travelled north to fight Harald Hadrada. In four days he marched 180 miles to surprise Hardrada and Tostig, east of York. Godwinson defeated Hardrada but his army was tired and badly reduced in size.
28th September William lands	William arrived at Pevensey with 8000 men and horses in flat bottom boats. He even brought 'flat pack' castles to protect his men! He also had the Papal Banner from the Pope, making this a holy war.
6th October Harold arrives back in London	Harold raced his army down the old Roman road of Ermine Street, stopping on the way at his foundation of Waltham Abbey, to pray for victory. By 12th October, he was back in London and gathering what forces he could to face William. By the 14th, he was on the way to Hastings.
14 October 1066 Positioning for the Battle	Harold drew up his army on Senlac Ridge, a hill overlooking battlefield. He had 5,000 Saxon Housecarls, against a Norman force of infantry, archers and cavalry. Harold had no choice but to fight a defensive battle. He was forced to rely on the English shield-wall, behind which his men could stand and let the Normans attack. Normans began at the bottom of Senlac hill. This was a problem because they would get tired from charging uphill.

Allegiance	An oath of loyalty or agreement to be on someone's side in war
Bayeux Tapestry	Embroidered fabric made in 1077 showing the events of Battle of Hastings from Norman view
Cavalry	Soldiers on horseback
Coronation	Ceremony of crowning a monarch
Earl	Member of the nobility
Feigned retreat	Pretending to run away
Fyrd	Peasants who fought for Harold
Heir	Person who has legal right to receive title or property of another on their death
Housecarls	Professional, well trained soldiers
Infantry	Foot soldiers
Monarch	A king or queen.
Mercenary	A professional soldier who fights for money
Norman	A person from Normandy, an area of France.
Pope	Head of the Catholic Church
Papal banner	Formal support given by Pope to a king
Shield wall	Anglo-Saxon defence; soldiers interlink shields to create a wall
Sub-regulus	Deputy king
Successor	Person who will take over running the country
Thegn	Person who owned land but was not a noble
Viking	People from Denmark, Sweden or Norway. They often invaded other countries.
Witan	Group of leading earls and churchmen

Section 4: What happened at the battle?

Section 6: How did Harold die? Evaluating the evidence

9 am The First attack	Norman archers fired arrows but these went over heads of the Anglo-Saxons. Norman infantry attack but were blocked by Harold's shield wall. The battle raged for hours.
Rumours... William has been killed!?	Rumours spread that William had been killed. Normans began to worry and fearing William's death, began to run away. Anglo-Saxons, broke formation, left the shield wall and ran after the Normans. Suddenly, Norman knight tore off his helmet and cried "it is me, William" to prove he was not dead. Normans rallied around the Duke and using their cavalry, tore apart the Saxons.
Feigned retreat	When some Normans ran away from their line and the Anglo-Saxons ran after them, the Normans turned and slaughtered them. This was used as a tactic and drained the shield wall of Anglo-Saxon soldiers.
Midday	A break in the fighting allowed both sides to remove their dead and wounded. William used a new tactic. He moved archers so their arrows hit the Anglo-Saxons instead of going over their heads. This caught them out.
Cavalry charge	William ordered a cavalry charge. Harold's men stayed in formation but William used feigned retreat again. Heavy losses on both sides. William ordered knights to fight on foot, archers to fire arrows and infantry charged Harold's lines.
The King is dead	By 4pm Anglo-Saxon shield wall began to break and Normans began break through the wall. Remaining housecarls in a defensive position. According to legend, a stray arrow struck Harold Godwinson in the eye and the Saxon king fell down dead. The Saxon army was without a leader. The last Saxon Housecarls were killed protecting the body of the King.
Saxons defeated	The battle of Hastings ended in a Norman victory. As the Saxon lords had all been killed there were no Saxon leaders to fight after Hastings.
25th December 1066	William of Normandy, now William the Conqueror, was crowned king of England on Christmas day at Westminster Abbey, 1066.

Source 1: an image from The Bayeux Tapestry, produced on the orders of Bishop Odo, William's half brother in the 1070s



Harold fell, his brain pierced by an arrow. One of the soldiers with a sword gashed his thigh as he lay on the ground.

Section 3: Written by Guy of Amiens, a medieval writer from France in 1067

With the point of his lance the first knight pierced Harold's chest, drenching the ground with blood. With his sword the second knight cut off his head. The third disembowelled him with his javelin. The fourth hacked off his leg.

1. What does each source suggest about Harold's death?
2. Look at the NOP for each source. Does this affect any of the sources' reliability?
3. Based on the evidence of the 3 sources, explain who you think Harold died. Use the evidence from the source in your answer.

Section 5: Why did William win the battle?

