Viking Longship
Written by Mick Manning and Brita Granstrom

Just Imagine Book Guide

Just Imagine...
About the Authors

Mick Manning and Brita Granstrom

Mick Manning and Brita Granstrom have won numerous awards for their wonderful picture information books, which include the English Association Award and Smarties Silver Award. Their most recent books include: The Beatles, Roman Fort, What Mr Darwin Saw and Secrets of Stonehenge. They have four sons and live in the North of England and Sweden.

About the Book

The authors introduce us to a range of characters, including a warrior, pirate and priest, who sail in a beautiful longship called The Sea Dragon to Lindisfarne. From here, we are transported back to the 9th century and the land of the Vikings. After a devastating storm, Viking Longship continues the story of Grimm, a young warrior, who buys and fixes the broken ship and sets sail in search of adventure, battles and treasure. The story follows Grimm’s progress as he invades England with his band of grizzly warriors and then creates a farm settlement where his family can live peacefully.

The style of this book is informative, yet entertaining and quirky. Informal sketches, scribbly handwriting, burnt pages, axe marks and splatters of blood lend an authentic touch to the story. There’s even a recipe for Viking bread! Each section has a clear title, a short synopsis and more detailed notes and information at the bottom of each page. The colourful illustrations are energetic, fresh and humorous and work beautifully alongside an engaging narrative and lively characters. Children will enjoy learning about skilful ship builders, battles, gods and everyday life in Jorvik. The ending of the story is particularly touching and will ensure young readers will want to continue their research into this exciting period in history.
Before Reading

Cover the title of the book. Ask the children what they think the title might be and why. Reveal the title.

This book is part of a series called *Fly on the Wall*.

- Have you heard that expression before?
- What do you think it means?

Follow-up prompts might include:

- What kind of book do you think this is and why?
- Does this book look different to other non-fiction books you’ve read?
- How is it different? How is it similar?
- What do you already know about the Vikings?

First encounters

Circle Map (David Hyerle, 2008): Before reading *Viking Longship*, write down everything you think you know about the Vikings in a circle. Write where you learned this information in the rectangle. Share your ideas with your partner and add any new ideas to your diagram.

Think about where you learned this information, from books, television programmes, films, games, visiting places of interest? Write any sources of information that you can recall in the rectangle (frame of reference).

Allow some time for the children to explore the book. If it is possible for the children to have their own copy, they can read at their own pace and write down their responses.

- Is there anything that puzzles them about the book?
- Do they have any questions?
- Is there an image they like or dislike?

Use the children's questions to initiate a discussion – they will be more engaged if it is something they are genuinely interested in. Some questions might be answered easily, whilst others may need to be explored at a later date or after further exploration of the book.

You may wish to discuss the context of this book further with your children by looking at:

- Where the Vikings came from
- When they lived
- Homes, clothing, food, roles in society, art, culture
- Language, Old Norse, runes

Contents

Scan the contents page in pairs.

- Ask the children to share ideas about what they think will be covered in each section.
Read aloud
Read the introductory section aloud to the class.

Vocabulary
Clarify the meaning of the following words:

- colonised
- traded
- raided
- settlement
- migrated

Add them to a working display of subject content vocabulary.

Ask the children to create new sentences containing these words.

During Reading

Dragging a dragon
Pages 8 – 9 Read the page aloud.

- What is happening on this spread?
- What have you learnt about how the Vikings moved their ships across land?
- Why do you think Ragnar needs his boat to go to church?
- Why is the title of this section ‘Dragging a Dragon’?

Smash and Grab

- What did the Viking raiders do with the silver that they plundered?
- What would happen to the monks?
- How many years ago did the Vikings raid Lindisfarne?

Storm at sea

- Look at the pictures of the longship on pp 8 – 13. How do you think the boats were powered? (oars and sail)
- Can you imagine what it would be like to cross an open sea in one of these longships, especially in bad weather conditions?
- What do we learn about how the Vikings prepared for their voyages and raids from this spread?
- How were the Viking beliefs different to the Lindisfarne monks?

Shipyard

- Vocabulary: look at the pictures. Can you work out what a ‘rivet’ is? Check the definition in a dictionary.
- What are the different skills needed to build a Viking long ship?
- What sort of materials were used to build the ships?
Warrior training
- What would a well-equipped Viking warrior need?
- What sorts of thoughts and emotions do you think the new recruits might have had about their forthcoming expedition?
- Why do you think the Vikings had colourful shields in battle?

Sacrifice
- What were Frey, Freya, Frigg, Odin and Thor?
- How does the place that the Vikings worship differ to the place where the Lindisfarne monks worship?
- What is a sacrifice? Have you heard the word used in a different context? Look it up in more than one dictionary. Is there more than one meaning? Which meaning is used in this section?

Invasion
- What does the verb ‘spilling’ imply in the sentence: “The Sea Dragon is one of many longships dragged up on the sandy shore, spilling out men, supplies, weapons and horses.”
- What are ‘wind-blown sand dunes’?
- What do you think a ‘knarr’ is? Look it up and add it to your subject content word display.
- What do you think a Viking warrior’s battle cry might have been? Practise your battle cries to fill your enemies with dread.

Battlefield
- What is a shieldwall?
- Why were the Vikings so brave and feared in battle?
- Who were the Vikings fighting?
- What types of weapon did the Vikings use in battle?
- What do you learn about Viking beliefs about healing and medicine on this page? Explain them to a partner.

Viking farm
- What Viking place names were used to show where they made their homes?
- Do you have any places close to where you live that include these words? (Most likely if you live in the north or the east where the Vikings settled).
- Is there anything that you think you would have liked about being a Viking in the 800s? Is there anything that you would have disliked?

Viking women
- Why was the hole in the roof called a vindeye? Which word do we use today?
- Do you think the women worked harder in Viking times or today? What makes you think that?
- The text says ‘Vikings consider the men and women equal’. From what you have read so far, do you agree?

Jorvik
- Where is Jorvik? Find out if anyone in the class has visited.
- What sorts of activity took place at Jorvik?
- How easy do you think it would be to write Viking runes? Why do you think all the lines are straight?
- Is there any evidence on this page to suggest that the Vikings didn’t spend all their time fighting or working?
- What does ‘minted’ mean? Have you heard the word minted applied to a person? Look it up in more than one dictionary and see if you can find more than one meaning. What does it mean in the context of this section?
Yule feast
• Have you heard the word yule before? Do you know what a yule log is? What might it have been in Viking times?
• Do you learn anything new about the Viking gods on this spread?
• Do you think winter would have been a miserable time for the Vikings?

Raiders
• What is a raider?
• What does the adjective ‘rusty’ suggest in the sentence: “Grim and his followers grab rusty weapons.”
• The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle reads ‘West Saxons went forth on enemy’s tracks, hewing them from behind with blades new harpenend.’ Discuss with a partner what you think this means.
• What does ‘while arrows rain down’ mean?

Viking funeral
• How would you describe a Viking funeral to someone who knew nothing about Vikings?
• What would a Viking warrior buried with?
• How do you think the Vikings might be feeling about Ugglā’s death? Find evidence in the text to support your ideas.
• What do you think Grim is feeling as he burns his ship?

After Reading
Now that you have read the book, what interested you most about Viking life?

For and against
The Vikings were nothing more than savage and brutal barbarians. Do you agree?
Find evidence in the book for and against this argument

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence for the argument</th>
<th>Evidence against the argument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Purpose and audience
• What age is this book aimed at? Why do you think that?
• Do you think the authors use layout and design successfully to engage their audience? Give reasons for your answer.

History detectives
We are told this book was researched on location in Jorvik, Dublin, Northumberland and Scandinavia.

• What does ‘researched on location’ mean?
• Find these places on the map on p6
• See if you can find out about the Vikings in these areas using the internet and other resources.
What sources of evidence have told us how Vikings lived? Find examples on these pages: p9, p11, p25, p29, p33.

Display a range of artefacts including jewellery, swords, helmets.

- The following website link has a good collection of pictures of artefacts: [https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/mar/03/viking-world-british-museum-neil-macgregor-exhibition](https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/mar/03/viking-world-british-museum-neil-macgregor-exhibition)
- Ask the children to discuss what they think the objects were, who wore or used them, how they were made, what they are made of and what they tell us about life in Viking times.

Odin's ravens are referred to several times. Find out what a raven looks like and why they were important to Viking warriors.

**Freeze frame and drama**

Look again at the section 'Storm at Sea'. This informative story provides an excellent basis for dramatic improvisation and theatre. Can they create a piece to perform to an audience? They could include:

- mime and movement
- freeze frames
- music and sound effects
- words and phrases taken from the story

**Ancient runes**

Challenge the children to write a secret message in Ancient Runes!

**Gods**

Give the children a range of resources so they can research some of the Viking gods mentioned in the story, including Frey, Odin and Thor. Can they create their own Viking Gods Top Trumps game, using and applying the information they have retrieved?

**Viking longboats**

Allow the children time to look at images of Viking longboats and discuss their shape, design and purpose. Encourage the children to design and make their own Viking longboat using card, drinking straws, felt for the sails and coloured pens or paint. They may wish to make helmets and shields too! Can the children find out about other modes of transport and travel throughout history?

**If you liked this book, you might enjoy…**

Goscinny *Asterix and the Vikings*

Lari Don *The Dragon's Hoard: stories from the Viking Sagas*

Andrew Langley *You Wouldn't Want to be a Viking Explorer*