

Normandy

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*Normandy Tourist Board
Educational Resource Pack*

Part One

NORMANDY

Birthplace of William the Conqueror

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Birthplace of William the Conqueror

Have you heard of William I?

Well, you probably know him better as William the Conqueror, who won the Battle of Hastings in 1066 for the crown of England. Every English king and queen is thought to be descended from William as well as 25 percent of today's English population. So, what do we know about the man who transformed England, and is one of its most famous rulers, but wasn't even born here?

William the Viking

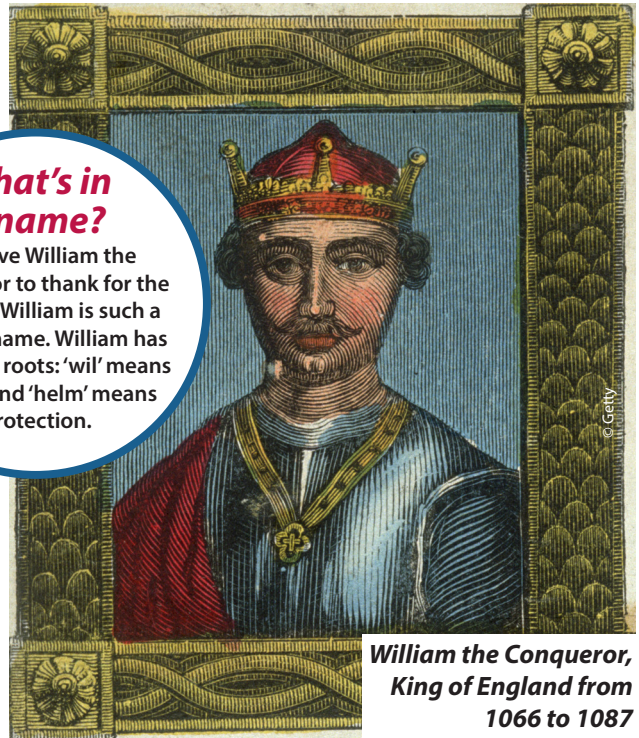
William was born in Normandy around 1027. In those days, it was a separate territory to the rest of France. In the ninth and tenth centuries, the Vikings **pillaged** and took control of this northern part of the country. They were led by William's great-great-grandfather, Rollo. The word Normandy comes from the Viking word, Norsemen (men from the North).

William the survivor

William was only eight years old when he was made Duke of Normandy following the death of his father, Robert the Magnificent. William's mother, Arlette, was the daughter of a **tanner**. His parents did not marry. Other lords did not approve of the fact that a young boy, born out of marriage, should be their ruler. In 1040, they tried to kill him but failed. Instead, William's guardian, Gilbert of Brionne was murdered during the attempt.

What's in a name?

We have William the Conqueror to thank for the fact that William is such a popular name. William has Germanic roots: 'wil' means desire, and 'helm' means protection.



**William the Conqueror,
King of England from
1066 to 1087**



A Norman battle sword

William the warlord

William was learning how to survive in such **turbulent** times. He created a highly trained, professional army. His cavalry soldiers on their fast horses, with their protective chain mail, and weapons such as lances, swords and maces, were unbeatable.

From 1047 onwards, William had to fight off **rebellions** inside Normandy and beyond. William showed no mercy. In 1051, the townspeople of Alençon mocked him for being **illegitimate** by hanging animal hides on the walls. For this display of disrespect, William had their hands and feet cut off.

King Henry I of France even tried to invade Normandy in 1054 and 1057 but William successfully defeated any opposition and kept Normandy unified.

By the time of the 1066 invasion of England, William was already famous as a skilful, military commander and ruler.



William the Conqueror

In 1066, Edward the Confessor died. The most powerful nobleman, Harold of Wessex, was crowned king of England.

But William saw Harold as a **usurper** and asserted his entitlement to be king.

William was Edward's cousin. He claimed that the childless Edward had promised him the throne when they met in 1051. William also maintained that Harold had sworn in 1064 to uphold his right to succeed to the English throne.

William took action.

He spent seven months building up his invasion force for England. There were 600 ships to carry around 7,000 men (including 2,000-3,000 cavalry) across the Channel.

The **Battle of Hastings** took place on 14 October 1066. Harold's English army fought on foot, behind their Saxon shield wall. At first, William's archers could not penetrate the wall, so he used his cavalry to surround and fight the Saxons. He then regrouped all his troops and ordered his archers to shoot over the shield wall. Finally, William's troops were too strong for their English counterparts, who are said to have retreated after the death of their leader, Harold.

The story of the Battle of Hastings, and the events leading up to it, are recorded in the **Bayeux Tapestry**. It is believed this amazing 70m long, hand-woven embroidery was created by English needleworkers in Canterbury soon after the conquest on the command of Bishop Odo, William's half brother and one of the planners of the invasion.

Today, this famous, historical comic strip can be seen in the Bayeux Tapestry Museum, in the town of Bayeux in

Normandy. Almost one thousand years on, we can see a vivid illustration of the soldiers, their horses and the fighting all brought to life by colourful stitches created by people who lived in this period of history. As well as telling us the story of the Norman Conquest of England, the pictures give us all sorts of details about life in the 11th century, like the clothes they wore, how ships were built and even how they cooked.

This is a photograph of the Bayeux Tapestry. Can you see how the different stitching has been used to create the impression of the soldier's armour and the horse's coat and mane?



This is an artist's replica painting of the tapestry. Here, the Norman Army begins the assault at the Battle of Hastings.

The Bayeux Tapestry on display today in Normandy. Over the 70m, 626 people, 202 horses, 41 ships and 37 buildings can be seen.



William the Politician

On 25 December 1066, William of Normandy became William I, King of England. He made arrangements for the **governance** of England before returning to Normandy. Several unsuccessful rebellions against William followed, but by 1075 William's hold on England was strong. Whenever he was in England, his wife, Matilda, ruled Normandy.

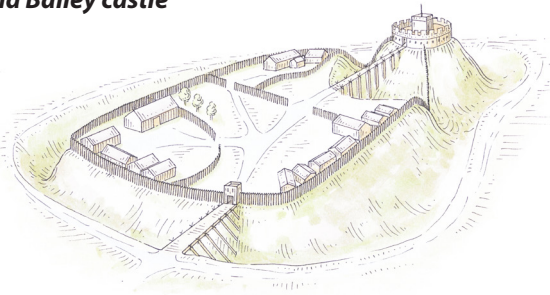
William was a political as well as military genius. He gained control over England with his **feudal system**. As King, William owned all the land and leased it to loyal subjects, called barons (lords of the manor), in return for rent and soldiers.

He also maximised taxes with the Domesday Book of 1086. This was a very detailed survey of all the landholders of England. William wanted to find out precisely who lived where, owned what and owed him taxes. He sent his sheriffs out to every corner of England and according to the 'Anglo-Saxon Chronicles' written by the monks at the time, he ordered that '*not one yard of land nor indeed one ox, nor one cow nor one pig*' was to be left out of the survey and not put down in the record. It is the earliest surviving public record in the UK. The pages of the Domesday book can be explored today on the UK National Archives website.



The wood and metalwork cover of the Domesday Book, the survey of land and wealth in England in 1086

Drawing showing Motte and Bailey castle



The Normans brought castles to Britain. They were built in strategic areas around the country to reinforce William's **authority**. Initially, castles were built with wooden towers on earth mottes (mounds) with a bailey (outermost defensive wall) surrounded by earth **ramparts**, but many were later rebuilt in stone. By the end of William's reign, there were over 500 castles throughout the kingdom.

One of the most famous still standing is the Tower of London. William originally had this built as a timber castle just after his coronation. In around 1070, he ordered it to be rebuilt in stone. It was built with creamy yellow limestone that was quarried from just outside Caen, in Normandy.

William maintained peace and order in England. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in 1087 declared, '*Amongst other things, the good security he made in this country is not to be forgotten.*'



Merci William!

After the Norman invasion, French was spoken in England's courts for centuries and completely transformed the English language. For example, soon after the conquest people started using the French word for animal's meat and the English word for the animal itself, as we continue to do today: beef = boeuf; pork = porc and veal = veau.

Many of the words we now use, such as those to do with administration (prison and castle), and government (chancellor, court and royal), come from the Normans too.



The Tower of London on the north bank of the River Thames

William's Normandy

There is still much of Medieval Normandy to see today.

The birthplace of William the Conqueror is the **Château de Falaise**. The castle was built by his father Robert, Duke of Normandy.

Did you know?

William died in 1087, following an injury in battle, when his horse reared up and ruptured William's intestines. Legend has it that as priests tried to put William into his stone coffin, his abdomen burst. The stench was so bad that mourners had to flee the church. After his death in 1087, his eldest son Robert became Duke of Normandy. His son, William Rufus, became King William II of England.



Falaise, Caen, and Bayeux in Normandy

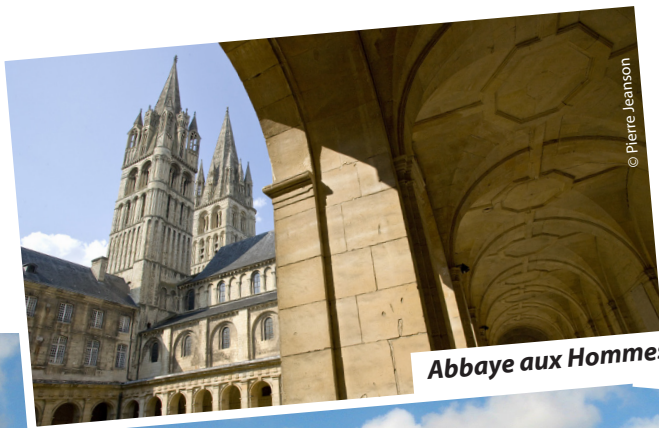


Château de Falaise, the birthplace of William the Conqueror

William chose the city of Caen as his **administrative** base. This was where he sorted out all the business of ruling the **duchy** of Normandy. There, you can also visit the **Abbaye aux Hommes** and **Abbaye aux Dames**. They were built by William and his wife-to-be, Matilda, to gain permission from the Pope for their marriage in 1050. William's tomb is at the **Église St-Étienne**, while Matilda is buried at the Église de la Trinité.



Statue of William the Conqueror at Château de Falaise



Abbaye aux Hommes



Abbaye aux Dames



Château de Caen, built by William in 1060. This was his administrative centre when he was Duke of Normandy

950th Anniversary of the Battle of Hastings

2016 marks the 950th anniversary of the Norman invasion of England and William the Conqueror's crowning at Westminster. To celebrate this occasion, from April to December, medieval themed festivals will take place throughout the region of Normandy. Medieval street markets, music, dance, theatre, workshops, sound and light shows and special exhibitions will be held in many towns and villages associated with William the Conqueror and his momentous expedition.

17 Feb - 26 October, Ladies and Knights, Ducal Palace, Fécamp.

Various shows, dance, juggling and cooking. www.fecamp-tourisme.com/home

25 - 26 June, Les Médiévales de Touques, Touques.

The streets of this typical Norman town will come alive with medieval performances, plus market and medieval tavern. www.mairiedetouques.fr

26 June - 3 July, Medieval Festival, Bayeux.

A medieval market, concerts, parades, exhibitions, workshops and performers will fill the streets for the 30th anniversary of this festival.

www.bayeux-bessin-tourisme.com/en/event/bayeux-medieval-festival

9 - 10 July, Les Médiévales de Château-Ganne, La Pommeraye.

This archaeological site is open to the public for this festival with re-enactments and medieval market. www.ot-suisse-normande.com/en

31 July - 7 August, Les Médiévales de Crèvecœur, Crèvecœur-en-Auge.

The grounds and castle are transported back to the Middle Ages.

www.chateau-de-crevecoeur.com/en/

5 - 6 August, Les Médiévales, Creully.

Sound and light show plus a medieval banquet and tavern.

www.creully.fr/frag/zoomHistoire.php?rub=22UK

6 - 7 August, Les Médiévales de Domfront, on the castle grounds.

Re-enactments and night shows. www.ot-domfront.com/manifestation/agenda

7 - 9 August, Dives-sur-Mer, Cabourg and Houlgate.

William the Conqueror's Festival with re-enactments, craft and medieval market.

www.guillaume2016.fr/english-version

13 - 14 August, Fête des Jeux, Falaise.

Family entertainment at the Château Guillaume le Conquérant with jesters, jugglers, knights etc.

www.chateau-guillaume-leconquerant.fr/web/animations_uk.php

13 - 15 August, Les Grandes Fêtes Médiévales, Abbaye de Mortemer, Lisors.

Medieval market, jousting, dance shows.

www.abbaye-de-mortemer.fr/en/agenda-nouveautes-de-la-saison-mortemer.html

18 August, Saint-Lô National Stud.

Horse and fencing show. www.calameo.com/read/004661504786c216de459

16 - 18 September, Festival Cidre et Dragon, Merville-Franceville.

Medieval and fantasy festival together with a medieval market. www.cidreetdragon.eu

8 October, Argences.

Church service followed by a medieval banquet. www.ot-valedunes.net/en/events

October to December

Bayeux will put on a magical light show to highlight its magnificent cathedral and its heritage.

www.bayeux-bessin-tourisme.com/en

Many more events on www.medieval-normandy.co.uk



GLOSSARY

ABBAYE AUX HOMMES - the French for men's abbey, monastery for monks

ABBAYE AUX DAMES - the French for ladies' abbey for nuns

ADMINISTRATIVE SEAT - where William carried out all the business of ruling Normandy

AUTHORITY - power

CHÂTEAU - the French word for castle

CONSECRATED - made holy

DUCHY - the territory of a duke or duchess

ÉGLISE - church

GOVERNANCE - control

ILLEGITIMATE - a child born to parents who are not married to each other

PILLAGE - steal, raid and plunder

RAMPARTS - fortifications

REBELLIONS - uprising, revolt

TANNER - a person who turns the skins and hides of animals into leather

TURBULENT - violent, unstable

USURPER - a person who takes the throne (or land) without the right to do so.

Find out more - Click the links below to discover more about William the Conqueror and the Normans.

NORMANDY TOURISM

■ www.medieval-normandy.co.uk

Travelling to Normandy:

■ Brittany ferries - www.brittanyferries.co.uk

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR

William the Conqueror's blog

■ www.william-the-conqueror.co.uk/william-the-conquerors-blog/

The Fabulous Epic

■ www.lafabuleuseepopee.com/en/index

CASTLES

Caen Castle

■ www.normandie-tourisme.fr/pcu/musee-de-normandie/caen/fiche-PCUNOR014FS000C9-2.html

Falaise Castle

■ www.chateau-guillaume-leconquerant.fr/index_uk.php

Hastings Castle

■ <http://www.visit1066country.com/things-to-do/attractions/hastings-castle-and-1066-story-p44433>

Tower of London

■ www.hrp.org.uk/TowerOfLondon

ABBEYS AND CATHEDRALS

Abbaye-aux-Hommes (Men's Abbey)

■ www.caen-tourisme.fr/en/discover-caen/william-the-conqueror/abbaye-aux-hommes

Abbaye-aux-Dames (Women's Abbey)

■ www.caen-tourisme.fr/en/discover-caen/william-the-conqueror/abbaye-aux-dames

Battle Abbey, UK

■ www.english-heritage.org.uk/daysout/properties/1066-battle-of-hastings-abbey-and-battlefield



School children visit the Bayeux Tapestry in Normandy

The field at Hastings where the battle took place in 1066. Battle Abbey was built on the ridge where King Harold was killed.



BAYEUX TAPESTRY

■ http://www.bayeuxmuseum.com/en/la-tapisserie_de_bayeux_en.html

The Animated Bayeux Tapestry

■ www.youtube.com/watch?v=LtGoBZ4D4_E

Created as an art project by students at Goldsmith College.

DOMESDAY BOOK

■ www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/domesday

Explore the Domesday Book online at the National Archives.

William the Conqueror - Timeline of Key Events

ACTIVITY A: UNDERSTANDING CHRONOLOGY

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR'S TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

Can you work out the order these key events in William's life took place in?

i) Using your detective skills, can you work out the order in which these key events took place?

ii) Add them to the timeline to find out what year the event took place. You could cut and stick them, or write them on to the timeline.

iii) Can you calculate how old William was when each event happened?



King William dies in Rouen in Normandy. He is buried in the Men's Abbey in Caen. His son, William, becomes the second Norman King of England.

The French King gives a region of the north west of his kingdom to the Vikings that have settled there. It becomes known as the land of the Norsemen or Normans - Normandy is born.

William is crowned King of England at Westminster Abbey in London.

King William orders a survey of England to record every settlement and their resources (people, buildings, livestock, woodland, lakes etc) in his new nation. Published the next year, it becomes known as the Domesday Book by locals.

At the Battle of Hastings, the invading Normans defeat King Harold and his army. The Normans begin to take charge of England.

In England, King Edward promises Harold Godwinson the throne of England on his deathbed. He is crowned King Harold.

William's father dies, and William becomes the 7th Duke of Normandy at the age of 8.

The Bayeux Tapestry, a 70m embroidery that tells the story of the Battle of Hastings in stitched pictures, is completed and goes on display in Bayeux Cathedral in Normandy.

King Edward the Confessor promises William, Duke of Normandy, the throne of England when he dies.

William is born in Falaise Castle

William the Conqueror - Timeline of Key Events

Date	Event	William of Normandy's age when this event took place
911		
1027		0 years old
1035		8 years old
1051		
Jan 1066		
Oct 1066		
Dec 1066		
1077		
1085		
1087		

William the Conqueror - Map of Key Events

ACTIVITY B: LOCATING SITES OF KEY HISTORICAL EVENTS

Can you locate the sites of important historical events in the Norman Conquest of England?

- i) Use an atlas to find the names of the towns and cities marked on the map of England and Normandy. Write them in the map's key.
- ii) Find out key events that happened at these places during the life of William the Conqueror. Add these to your key to make an informative historical map.
- iii) Can you locate the sites of other important events during William's life and add these to your map and key?

NEED SOME HELP?

The following place name and event clues will help you to create your map showing the sites of important historical events in the Norman Conquest of England.

PLACES

London

Falaise

Canterbury

Bayeux

Hastings

Caen

EVENTS

William was born in the castle here in 1027. His father was Richard Duke of Normandy.

The battle between William, and his invading army, and King Harold, and his troops, took place in a field outside this town. The Normans built an abbey on the site of the battlefield and a castle in the town.

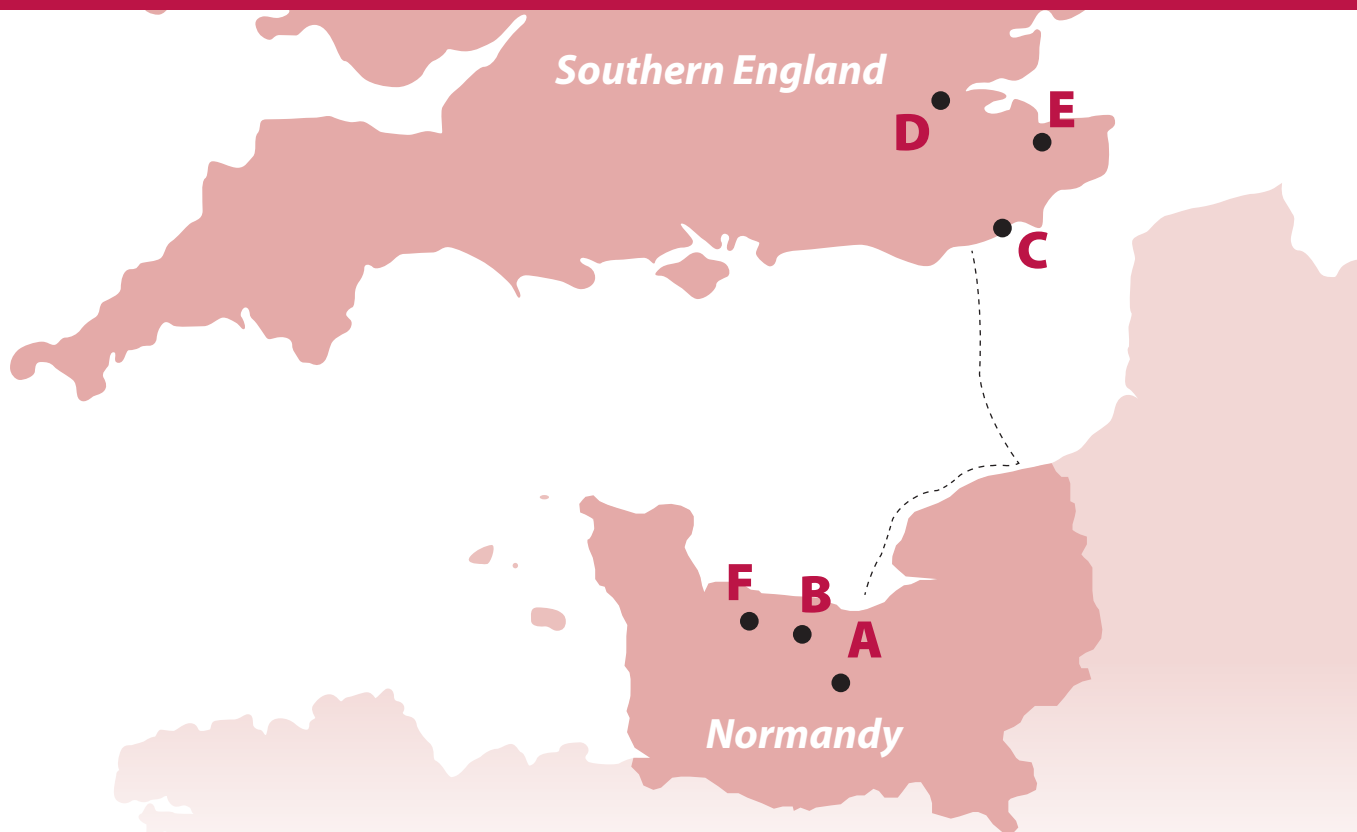
It is believed that artists and needleworkers from this city created the Bayeux Tapestry in the years following the conquest. It is thought that William's half brother, Bishop Odo ordered it to be made and he lived in this city after the invasion.

The 70m long tapestry ordered by Bishop Odo to tell the story of the Battle of Hastings, and the events leading up to it, went on display in the cathedral in this city in 1077. Almost a thousand years later it can still be viewed in this city.

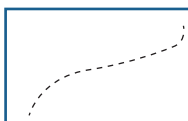
William is crowned King of England at Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day 1066. When he arrived here, he had a castle built on the northbank of the River Thames called 'The Tower'.

William ruled Normandy from this city. He built the castle, Abbaye aux Dames and Abbaye aux Hommes that are found here.

William the Conqueror - Map of Key Events



KEY



William's invading fleet leave the harbour at Dives-sur-Mer. They travel close to the Normandy coastline. Once the winds are favourable, they cross the Channel and land on the south coast of England on Pevensey Beach.

A**B****C****D****E****F**

William the Conqueror - Sources of Historical Evidence

PART ONE: HISTORICAL DETECTIVES

Can you find out historical information from primary sources of evidence?

Study the section of the Bayeux Tapestry on the next page.

This is a primary source of historical information that tells us about events that happened a very long time ago but it was made by people who were around when the events took place.



i) Can you work out exactly what is being illustrated in this part of the tapestry?

ii) Make notes or annotations on the page around the picture of the tapestry to describe what you see happening.

Do the above task before you read on.

What did you notice and work out?

- Who were the passengers in the boats?
- What different items were the soldiers on horseback carrying?
- Where did the soldiers get their food from?
- How did the locals try to defend themselves?
- Did you work out where this action took place?

From the Latin commentary sewn along the top strip of the Bayeux Tapestry, and from the chronicles and poems written at the time, we have quite a clear picture of what is being depicted in this section:

On 29th September 1066, the Norman boats reached the south coast of England at Pevensey. They unloaded the boats, bringing their horses, weapons and other cargo onto shore, and then pulled the boats up the beach beyond the reach of the tide.

They met no resistance from the locals at this point, and King Harold and his army were four days march away in the North of England fighting off an invading Viking tribe.

The Normans made camp. They took provisions from the locals and prepared their first meal to get their strength back after the rough sea crossing ready for the battle ahead. They begin to prepare their weapons, and in the next scene Duke William orders a wooden castle on a mound to be built in Hastings.



PART TWO: ANALYSING HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

i) From studying this section of the tapestry, what do we learn about the following areas of life in the 11th Century?

- BOATS AND TRANSPORT
- WEAPONS
- FOOD
- CLOTHING

ii) Can you think of different reasons why the information illustrated in the Bayeux tapestry may not necessarily be totally accurate?

William the Conqueror - Sources of Historical Evidence

Can you find out historical information about life long ago from primary sources of evidence?

- Can you work out exactly what is being illustrated in this part of the tapestry?
- Make notes or annotations on the page around the picture of the tapestry to describe what you see happening.



NB: These are artists' paintings of the Bayeux Tapestry. They are an exact replica of the tapestry.