

## HA Resource Hub Submission Form

**Resource Title:** JORVIK - Learning about Vikings through Archaeology

**Age Range:** KS2

**Author name and email contact: \*NB This form will be published along with your resource, so please choose an email address that you do not mind making public, or leave blank if you would rather not be contacted about your resource.**

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**Resource Details: (e.g. how many documents does it consist of? In which order?)**

1. The Coppergate Dig
2. A Reconstruction of Viking York
3. Artefacts from Viking York
4. Viking Artwork

This set of worksheets can be used a) as a stand-alone exercise for learners beginning to look at the Viking period; b) in conjunction with resources available via the JORVIK Viking Centre website, or c) to provide additional contextual information in support of a visit to JORVIK. They can also be used independently of each other.

For more information, see

<https://www.jorvikvikingcentre.co.uk/discover-from-home/>

**Necessary prior learning to complete this:**

None needed. This is an enquiry-based case study of York in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, so could either be used as an introduction to the Viking period (i.e. how do we find out about the Vikings? What sorts of evidence can we use?), or to encourage learners to think about life and culture in northern England in the period *after* the conquest and settlement of a large part of the country by Vikings and their descendants. To support discussion of the points raised in these worksheets, please refer to <https://www.jorvikvikingcentre.co.uk/about/jorvik-story/coppergate-dig/> for worksheet 1 and <https://www.jorvikvikingcentre.co.uk/about/jorvik-artefact-gallery/> for worksheet 3.

**What does it lead to next?**

The worksheets are intended to stimulate discussion, and to provide some fun 'taster' activities based on the history of the Vikings in York.

As they present two of the principal sources of evidence for life in the Viking age (archaeology / art historical evidence), however, the worksheets can supply material for beginning an enquiry into the Viking period, or supplement enquiries based on historical documents, literary sources, place-name evidence etc.

### **Explanation: How should this resource be used?**

The worksheets are best used in sequence, and can be used to supply the material for e.g. an hour-long session on the Vikings in England (four separate, shorter sessions would work just as well). In their arrangement they mimic the sequential presentation of the Coppergate Dig, the reconstruction of Viking-age York and the associated artefacts and replicas encountered during a visit to the JORVIK Viking Centre in York. The majority of the exercises in the worksheets are discussion-based, although you may wish to print them for some of the gap-filling, spotting and artwork exercises.

You do not require any specialist knowledge in order to guide a learner through these worksheets. They have been conceived to stimulate discussion and speculation. The following pointers, however, may help you in your discussions.

### Worksheets 1 & 2

The depth of the archaeological deposits in York is due to the fact that York has been a densely occupied city for nearly two thousand years. Its inhabitants have always produced a great deal of rubbish. It is this rubbish, along with building debris, which has built up over the centuries to create multiple layers. In the Viking layers at Coppergate the archaeologists found a range of well-preserved artefacts, including items in wood, leather and wool, all of which normally rot to dust very quickly when buried; they also found that insect and plant remains had been preserved in the soil, allowing them to build up a very detailed picture of what the environment was like in York 1000 years ago. The contents of the rubbish pits provided evidence for food waste (animal bones and oyster shells), giving insights into the diet of the people of York.

The buildings of the city were mostly made of wood, in common with buildings elsewhere in the Viking world. The Vikings were expert woodworkers, so would have used the same tools and materials they knew from boat building. Some stone buildings of the Roman period still stood, however, including the walls of the fortress. Some of the city churches seem to have been built in stone around this time too. Fire was a common hazard: metalworking and glassworking involved the use of furnaces, and heat in homes was provided by an open hearth or sometimes a brazier, so there was always a danger of fire spreading. Evidence for the kinds of work that went on in and around the buildings comes from the waste products found in their associated rubbish pits. The evidence suggests that York was a thriving centre for many trades, including making items in metal, bone, antler and wood, as well as for every stage of textile production. It also imported materials from far-off places, including amber from the Baltic.

### Worksheet 3

The playing piece is made of walrus ivory (from the animal's tusks).

The second item is a woollen sock.

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**Worksheet 1: The Coppergate Dig**

Between 1976 and 1981 there was an archaeological excavation right in the middle of York, next to the street called Coppergate. There had been a big sweet factory on the site, but this was pulled down to make way for shops.

The archaeologists were looking for evidence of how people in York lived hundreds and even thousands of years ago.

They dug to a depth of 9 metres and found all sorts of interesting things left behind by the people of the past. They had been preserved because of the soil conditions in York, where the ground is damp and densely compacted.

Have a look at this picture of the Coppergate Dig and think about the following questions:

1. Why is the evidence of the past buried so deeply here?
2. What sorts of things might the archaeologists have found?
3. What would you find if you dug down into your garden or schoolyard?



Have a look at this picture: it shows a wall found by the archaeologists at Coppergate. It once formed part of a house or workshop that stood here during the Viking Age, over one thousand years ago. Now think about the following questions:

1. What was this building made of, and what sorts of tools might have been used to construct it?
2. How might archaeologists work out what the building was used for?
3. Some of the buildings found at Coppergate showed signs of having been damaged by fire. What might have happened to cause this?



As well as finding the remains of buildings, screens, pathways and other structures made of wood, the archaeologists found Viking-age rubbish pits. These had been used as toilets, as well as for throwing things away. The rubbish included 5 tonnes of animal bones and around 750,000 oyster shells. Discuss the following:

1. Why do you think there were so many animal bones and oyster shells amongst the rubbish?
2. What might the archaeologists learn by looking at the contents of the Vikings' rubbish pits and toilets?
3. What might the archaeologists of the future learn about you by looking at your rubbish?



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**Worksheet 2: A Reconstruction of Viking York**

By looking at all of the evidence found during the Coppergate Dig, York Archaeological Trust was able to produce a detailed picture of what life there must have been like during the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Working with designers and artists, the archaeologists created the JORVIK Viking Centre, an attraction which includes a reconstruction of the Viking-age landscape for visitors to travel around.



Have a look at this artist's impression of the city of York in the year 975, then discuss the following:

1. What are most of the buildings made of? Are there any exceptions?
2. What sorts of people, animals and birds can you see?
3. Can you see any evidence for a) methods of travel and transportation; b) how people might have cooked their food and heated their homes; c) the layout of the houses, workshops and backyards; d) any activities occurring within the city?
4. Do you think that York in 975 would have been a pleasant place to live?

Try to spot and draw a circle around the following:

- a) A red kite (bird of prey); b) a tower on the walls of the old Roman fortress; c) shoppers at the market on Coppergate; d) All Saints church

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**Worksheet 3: Artefacts from Viking York**

The archaeologists found around 20,000 individually interesting objects during their excavation at Coppergate. This worksheet is going to examine just two of them.

1. The object below is thought to have been a playing piece for a board game, and is just over 2cm in diameter. It is made of a material that comes from a marine animal found in the far north. Can you work out the animal, and which part of the animal it comes from?

Clue: W - - - - - i - - - - - (from the animal's t - - - - -).

What might the presence of this object in York tell us about a) Viking trade, and b) Viking pastimes?



No-one knows which game this piece was made for, but we have evidence for Nine Men's Morris boards from Viking York, and a game called *Hnefatafl* was popular in the Viking world. Use the space below to write the names of some traditional board games that you know.

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2. This object is also made from an animal product, but the Vikings of York would not have had to go quite so far to find it. It is an item of clothing, a very rare find in archaeological digs. Can you tell what it is?

Clue: it is a s - - - made of w - - - .



It was made using a Scandinavian knitting technique known as nålebinding, which uses a single needle. It can be used to make mittens, hats and bags. The sock from Coppergate is the only example of historical nålebinding known in England, so may have arrived on the foot of a Viking settler or trader. There is a narrow red band around the ankle which may have marked the beginning of the leg of a longer stocking. This replica (below) shows how it may have looked when first knitted. Use the box next to it to draw some mittens, hats and bags, and colour them in red: the Vikings used a dye made from a plant called madder to make this colour.



Make a list of any woollen clothes that you own in the space below:

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**Worksheet 4: Viking Artwork**

On display at the JORVIK Viking Centre is a replica of one of several Viking-age stone crosses found at St Andrew's Church, Middleton in Ryedale, Yorkshire. Our replica shows how it might have looked when it was newly carved. The original was damaged when it was reused as building material at the church. The cross probably dates back to the 10<sup>th</sup> century, when it would have stood next to the grave of an important person. It was probably brightly painted. Have a go at colouring this drawing of the cross to see how its appearance changes with the addition of colour.



The image on this side of the cross depicts a seated, armed figure. Can you identify the weapons and pieces of kit that he has with him?

1. A --
2. S p ---
3. S w ---
4. S h ----
5. S h --- S ----
6. H -----

The image on the opposite side of the cross is a fearsome-looking serpent. Use the space below to draw your own serpent or snake monster.





The Vikings and others in Britain and Ireland during the 10<sup>th</sup> century were fond of creating patterns that nowadays are called 'interlace'. They are made up of complex knots and plaits, which sometimes form the bodies of dragons, serpents, or other fantastical creatures. Interlace designs appear on the Middleton Cross.

Look at the interlace pattern below, which is similar to patterns used on the Middleton Cross, then use the space below to have a go at creating your own interlace design. It isn't as easy as you might think!

