

### Legendary & Semi-Legendary (400-500 AD)

**Vortigern** (c. 425–450 AD) A possibly legendary figure who invited the Saxons to Britain to help defend against Picts and Scots. This led to the eventual Anglo-Saxon settlement.

Seen as the last ruler of post-Roman Britain before the Anglo-Saxon period began.

**Hengist and Horsa** (c. 450–488 AD) Legendary brothers, leaders of the Jutes, and supposed founders of the Kingdom of Kent.

Hengist is often credited as the first King of Kent, while Horsa was killed in battle early on.

### The Heptarchy Period (c. 500–800 AD)

**Ælle of Sussex** (c. 477–514 AD) Considered the first Bretwalda (overlord) among Anglo-Saxon kings, Ælle was the king of Sussex and led conquests against the Britons.

His influence spread across southern England.

**Ceawlin of Wessex** (c. 560–592 AD) Another early Bretwalda, Ceawlin expanded the territory of Wessex and defeated several other kings, extending his influence over much of southern England.

**Æthelberht of Kent** (c. 589–616 AD) The first English king to convert to Christianity, influenced by his Frankish wife, Bertha.

Welcomed St. Augustine, who initiated the Christianization of Anglo-Saxon England.

**Raedwald of East Anglia** (c. 599–624 AD) Another powerful Bretwalda, Raedwald is believed to be the king buried in the famous Sutton Hoo ship burial.

He maintained a pagan-Christian duality in his court.

### The Heptarchy Period (c. 500–800 AD) (cont)

**Edwin of Northumbria** (c. 616–633 AD) A prominent Bretwalda who expanded Northumbrian power across much of England.

Converted to Christianity, which helped establish Northumbria as a center of religious and political power.

**Oswald of Northumbria** (c. 634–642 AD) Known for spreading Christianity in Northumbria and restoring the kingdom's fortunes after the death of Edwin.

Venerated as a saint after his death in battle.

**Penda of Mercia** (c. 626–655 AD) A powerful pagan king who dominated central England and resisted Christian influences.

Killed in the Battle of the Winwaed, after which Mercia gradually adopted Christianity.

**Offa of Mercia** (c. 757–796 AD) One of the most powerful kings of the Heptarchy, Offa is famous for building Offa's Dyke, a massive earthwork along the Welsh border.

He established Mercia as the dominant power in England during his reign.

### The Unification of England (800–927 AD)

**Egbert of Wessex** (802–839 AD) Often considered the first king to establish dominion over a unified England.

Defeated Mercia in 825 AD at the Battle of Ellandun, making Wessex the dominant power.

**Æthelwulf of Wessex** (839–858 AD) Son of Egbert, he continued to strengthen Wessex and defend against Viking incursions.

Father of several future kings, including Alfred the Great.



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### The Unification of England (800–927 AD) (cont)

**Æthelbald of Wessex** (858–860 AD) Eldest son of Æthelwulf, he ruled briefly and maintained the stability of Wessex.

**Æthelbert of Wessex** (860–865 AD) Younger brother of Æthelbald, Æthelbert ruled Wessex and Kent together, marking further consolidation of power.

**Æthelred I of Wessex** (865–871 AD) Another of Æthelwulf's sons, his reign was marked by significant Viking invasions.

Died fighting the Danes, leading to the accession of his younger brother, Alfred.

**Alfred the Great** (871–899 AD) One of the most famous early English kings, Alfred successfully defended his kingdom against Viking invasions and established a system of fortified towns (burhs).

Promoted education and legal reform, earning the epithet "the Great."

Seen as the founder of the English Navy and the first true King of the Anglo-Saxons.

**Edward the Elder** (899–924 AD) Son of Alfred the Great, he continued his father's work of unifying England and expanding Wessex's territory.

Recognized as king of a united England by 927 AD.

**Æthelstan** (924–939 AD) Often considered the first King of England, Æthelstan fully unified the various Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and defeated the last Viking and Welsh resistance.

His reign is marked by the Battle of Brunanburh (937 AD), a significant victory that cemented his rule over all of England.

### The Danish Influence (939–1042 AD)

**Edmund I** (939–946 AD) Known as "the Magnificent," he defended England from Norse incursions and consolidated the kingdom.

**Eadred** (946–955 AD) Continued his predecessors' efforts, finally defeating the Norse Kingdom of York and bringing it under English control.

**Eadwig** (955–959 AD) His reign was marred by internal conflict and disputes with the church, leading to his early death.

**Edgar the Peaceful** (959–975 AD) Known for a peaceful and prosperous reign, Edgar consolidated English power and was recognized by many kings of Britain.

Strengthened the monastic reform movement.

**Edward the Martyr** (975–978 AD) A short reign ended by his murder, likely due to internal court disputes. He was later venerated as a martyr and saint.

**Æthelred the Unready** (978–1013, 1014–1016 AD) Known for his poor handling of Viking invasions, leading to his nickname "the Unready" (from Old English "unræd," meaning "poorly advised").

Paid large sums in Danegeld to buy off Viking raiders, which weakened the kingdom.

**Sweyn Forkbeard** (1013–1014 AD) The first Danish king to rule England, he briefly took the throne after forcing Æthelred to flee.

His sudden death led to Æthelred's brief restoration.



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### The Danish Influence (939–1042 AD) (cont)

**Cnut the Great** (1016–1035 AD) Son of Sweyn Forkbeard, Cnut became king after defeating Edmund Ironside (Æthelred's son) and ruled over a North Sea Empire including Denmark, Norway, and England.

His reign was marked by stability and the integration of Anglo-Saxon and Danish customs.

**Harold Harefoot** (1035–1040 AD) Son of Cnut, he ruled England while his brother Harthacnut was in Denmark. His reign was short and contested.

**Harthacnut** (1040–1042 AD) The last Danish king of England, Harthacnut's reign was marked by heavy taxation and unpopularity.

His death led to the restoration of the Anglo-Saxon line.

### The Late Anglo-Saxon Period (1042–1066 AD)

**Edward the Confessor** (1042–1066 AD) Restored as king after Harthacnut's death, Edward was known for his piety and the construction of Westminster Abbey.

His reign saw increasing tensions over the succession, leading to the Norman Conquest.

**Harold II** (January–October 1066 AD) The last Anglo-Saxon king of England, Harold II, faced invasions from both the Norwegians and Normans.

Defeated the Norwegians at the Battle of Stamford Bridge, only to be defeated and killed by William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings in October 1066.



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