Mantle of the Expert Planning Template

Stage 1
Foundations
↓

Theme	**Anglo-Saxons**

Curriculum focus	Inquiry questions
History • **Knowledge:** ○ Who the Anglo-Saxons were and why they migrated to Britain. ○ Key events, settlements, and kingdoms. ○ Daily life, culture, law, and governance. ○ The impact of Christianity and the role of monasteries. • **Skills:** ○ Analysing primary sources (e.g., artefacts, burial sites). **Geography** • **Knowledge:** ○ The migration routes of the Anglo-Saxons. ○ Settlement locations and reasons (e.g., rivers, farmland, trade). ○ How geography influenced Anglo-Saxon economy and warfare. • **Skills:** ○ Using maps to trace migration and settlement patterns. ○ Analysing how geographical features shaped daily life. ○ Identifying place names with Anglo-Saxon origins. **English** • **Knowledge:** ○ Developing narrative structures, characterisation, and dialogue ○ Anglo-Saxon myths, legends, and epic poetry (e.g., *Beowulf*). ○ Riddles and storytelling traditions. • **Skills:** ○ Writing in different genres (reports, scripts, persuasive texts), active listening, and verbal communication. **Art** • **Knowledge:** ○ Styles and symbolism in Anglo-Saxon art. ○ Design of brooches, shields, and jewellery. • **Skills:** ○ Creating Anglo-Saxon-inspired artwork (runes, patterns, illuminated letters). ○ Designing and crafting models of artefacts.	**Key Question:** How did the invasion and settlement of the Anglo-Saxon affect the culture and history of England? **Historical** • Why did the Anglo-Saxons come to Britain? • What is left for historians to study? • What effects did the Anglo-Saxons have on English history? • What effects did the Viking invasions have on life in Anglo-Saxon England? • How did monarchy and kingship change during Anglo-Saxon times? • What roles did women play in Anglo-Saxon society and its history? **Political** • Why did the rules of succession become so important during Anglo-Saxon history? • How did Anglo-Saxon kings (and warlords) establish their authority? **Religious** • What pagan gods did the Anglo-Saxons worship? • How did Christianity become the Anglo-Saxon religion? **Social** • What was an Anglo-Saxon settlement like? • How was life in an Anglo-Saxon settlement? • How did the Anglo-Saxons protect themselves? **Cultural** • What was Anglo-Saxon literature, art and design like? • How did the conversion affect Anglo-Saxon culture? • How did the monasteries and the work of its monks affect Anglo-Saxon culture during the 'golden age' and its restoration after the Viking invasions. • How did the kings of Wessex (beginning with Alfred) help develop Anglo-Saxon culture and the creation of the 'English'?

Stage 2
Context
↓

Narrative (characters, location, events, time, tension)	Expert Team (powers, responsibilities, values)	Client and Commission
A construction team working on a new housing estate on the edge of town has uncovered evidence of an **Anglo-Saxon settlement**, including the remains of a **long hall**. As experts in archaeology, history, and heritage conservation, a history team is tasked with investigating the site, interpreting the findings, and making recommendations for preservation, public engagement, and future development.	**History Team** **Aims:** to **investigate, document, and preserve** the Anglo-Saxon settlement while balancing historical conservation with modern development. **Powers**: Authority over excavation methods, site management, and preservation decisions. **Responsibilities**: **Excavate & Document** – Carefully uncover and record all findings using proper archaeological methods. **Analyse & Interpret** – Study artefacts, structures, and remains to understand the settlement's purpose and history.	**The Town Council & Heritage Preservation Trust** The **local town council**, in collaboration with a **heritage preservation trust**, has commissioned a team of experts to assess the significance of an **Anglo-Saxon settlement** uncovered on a new housing development site. Their priorities are to balance **historical preservation with urban expansion**, ensuring that the site's heritage is documented and, if possible, integrated into the local community.

		Preserve & Conserve – Ensure that fragile materials and historical sites are protected for future study and display. **Report & Publish** – Share findings through detailed reports, academic articles, and public materials. **Educate & Engage** – Communicate discoveries to the public through museums, schools, media, and exhibitions. **Balance Development & Heritage** – Work with planners and local authorities to ensure responsible site management.	
Stage 3 Activities & Curriculum Links ↓	Activities Curriculum Links		Literacy links
	Mathematics 1. **Grid Mapping** – Using coordinates to map an excavation site. 2. **Anglo-Saxon Number System** – Learning and using their numerical symbols. 3. **Measuring Artefacts** – Calculating the size of tools and jewellery. 4. **Timeline Maths** – Working out how long ago the settlement existed. 5. **Money & Trade** – Comparing coin values and bartering systems. **Science** 1. **Soil Testing** – Examining different soil types and their impact on farming. 2. **Decay & Preservation** – Testing how materials like wood and metal break down. 3. **Food & Nutrition** – Investigating the Anglo-Saxon diet through plant and animal remains. 4. **Bones & Skeletons** – Learning how archaeologists study human remains. 5. **Metalwork Science** – Exploring how iron and gold were used in Saxon tools and jewellery. **History** 1. **What Was Life Like?** – Researching Saxon homes, clothing, and daily routines. 2. **Famous Saxons** – Learning about King Alfred, Aethelflaed, and Bede. 3. **Battle Reenactment** – shield wall formation. 4. **Create a Timeline** – Placing key events in order from the Anglo-Saxon period. **Geography** 1. **Why Here?** – Discussing why settlements were built in certain places. 2. **Map the Settlement** – Drawing a plan of where buildings and farms were located. 3. **Travel & Trade** – Tracing Anglo-Saxon trade routes on a map. 4. **Weather & Farming** – Looking at how climate affected crops and food supply. 5. **Rivers & Roads** – Finding out why transport routes were important to Saxons. **Art** 1. **Illuminated Lettering** – Designing their name in an Anglo-Saxon style. 2. **Make a Brooch** – Creating a paper or clay version of a Saxon brooch. 3. **Storytelling with Pictures** – Drawing scenes from *Beowulf* or daily life. 4. **Shield Design** – Decorating a cardboard shield with Saxon patterns. 5. **Weaving & Textiles** – Making simple woven patterns with wool or string. **Design & Technology** 1. **Build a Mini Long Hall** – Using sticks, clay, or LEGO to create a Saxon house. 2. **Cooking Like a Saxon** – Making a simple Saxon-style meal (e.g. oatcakes). 3. **Tool Making** – Designing tools based on Saxon farming or crafting. 4. **Clothing & Accessories** – Designing an outfit based on historical sources. **Religious Education** 1. **Gods & Goddesses** – Learning about Woden, Thunor, and the shift to Christianity. 2. **Saxon Burials** – Comparing pagan and Christian burial customs. 3. **Monk's Life** – Writing like a scribe and learning about monasteries. 4. **Sacred Symbols** – Drawing Christian and pagan symbols found in Saxon England. 5. **Places of Worship** – Learning about early churches and temples.		**Reading & Comprehension** 1. **Extracts from *Beowulf*** 2. **Anglo-Saxon Chronicle Study** 3. **Historical Letters** 4. **Poetry Exploration** kennings and riddles from Anglo-Saxon literature. **Creative Writing** 6. **Life of an Anglo-Saxon Settler** 7. **Anglo-Saxon Myth Creation** 8. **First-Person Narrative** witnessing a Viking raid. 9. **A Day in the Life Story** **Historical & Informational Writing** 11. **Archaeological Report** 12. **Newspaper Article** 13. **Persuasive Letter** – Argue for or against preserving the site instead of building houses. 14. **Anglo-Saxon Lawmaking** – Write a set of laws for the settlement and explain their importance. **Speaking & Performance** 16. **Oral Storytelling** 17. **Debate: Settlement vs. Development** – 18. **A Witan (Council Meeting)** – Decide how to defend the settlement from invaders. 19. **A Battle Speech** – Write and perform a leader's speech before battle.

FIRST STEPS INTO THE CONTEXT

Note: These plans are a guide only. Change and adapt them to meet the age and the needs of your class.

Session 1 – The Construction Site

Resources:

- Masking tape.
- A5 paper.

1. Mark out an area in the classroom with masking tape, approximately 2 metres x 3 metres.
2. Ask the students to sit around the tape.
3. Narrate: *"On the edge of town is a patch of land. Not a beautiful place, it had been a number of things in recent years – a car park, a dumping ground for old furniture, a half-finished building project abandoned when the funds ran out. There is high fence and a locked gate with a sign."*
4. Pick up a piece of A5 paper and write:

CONSTRUCTION IN PROGRESS

Future Site of Affordable Homes

This land is being developed to provide new housing for the community.

WARNING: BUILDING SITE – KEEP OUT

- No unauthorised access
- Heavy machinery in operation
- Deep excavations – Danger of injury

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Building for a better future

5. Ask, “What do you make of this?”
6. Discuss

7. Ask, “Imagine if you were people who lived close to this building site. What questions might you have?”
8. Task: Talk to the person next to you and come up with a couple of questions you would like to ask the building company working on this project.
9. Teacher-in-role as representative of the builders: “Let’s imagine I’m someone who is working on this project and we’ve organised a community meeting where you can ask questions. Who would like to begin?”
10. Answer questions as the building company. These are your motivations:
    - **Providing Affordable Housing** – The company is committed to creating much-needed homes for local families.
    - **Economic Growth & Jobs** – The project will create jobs for builders, suppliers, and local businesses.
    - **Community Benefit** – The new housing will improve the area, bringing better infrastructure and services.
    - **Environmental Responsibility** – The company is using sustainable materials and minimising disruption to nature.
    - **Meeting Housing Demand** – There is a housing shortage, and this project helps meet government targets.
    - **Safety & Regulation Compliance** – All work is carried out following strict safety and legal guidelines.
    - **Minimising Disruption** – The company is working hard to reduce noise, dust, and road closures for residents.
    - **Future-Proofing the Area** – The development will include green spaces, cycle paths, and modern infrastructure.
    - **Listening to the Community** – The company values local concerns and is open to feedback and discussion.

11. Reflection: Come out of role as the building company representative and ask, “What did you make of that? Do you think he/she was someone you can trust? Do you think they were being entirely honest? What other reasons might they have for building the houses?
12. Discussion.

Session 2 – A Grisly Discovery

Resources:
- Images of construction machinery and materials printed and cut out.
- Cut-out photocopy of skull (see resources at the end of this unit).

11. Return to the marked-out area.
12. Narrate: *“Work on the building site continued uninterrupted for several days. The rubbish was cleared away, and the old rubble and leftover materials from previous projects were removed. The ground was levelled, preparing it for construction. With this stage completed, heavy machinery and building materials were brought in.”*
13. Task: Hand out the images of construction machinery and materials. Ask students to place them inside the marked-out area, representing where these things might be used on the building site.

14. Narrate: *"Early one morning, at the start of the second week, a group of construction workers was digging a trench in preparation for the foundations of a house when one of them noticed something unusual in the hole—something that shouldn't be there. He called out for the digger driver to stop and jumped into the trench. This is what they found…"*

15. Place the cut-out photocopy of the skull inside the marked-out area.

16. Ask, "If you were the construction workers and you found something like this while digging, what would you do?"

17. Discussion.

18. Listen to the students' ideas, then introduce the following: "I know legally if something like this happens then the construction company are obliged to stop all work and contact the police. After all, it might be a crime scene."

19. Narrate: *"The police arrive within the hour and set up a perimeter, halting all work on the site. A forensic team arrives later, photographs the skull, and takes it away for analysis. The results of their tests are available the next day."*

20. Say, "If you had the chance to talk to the police after the tests, what questions would like to ask them? Talk to the person next to you."

21. Say, "Let's imagine I'm the police officer returning to give you test results on the skull."

22. Teacher-in-role: *"After conducting our tests, we have determined that the skull is over 1300 years old. This means it is not related to any recent crime, but rather a historical find. Because of this we have contacted the museum, and they will be sending a team of archaeologists to investigate further. I'm happy to answer any of your questions, but I'm not an expert on history."*

23. Answer questions. This is what the police officer knows:

    - Forensic testing suggests the skull is at least **1,300 years old**.
    - Initial observations suggest it belonged to a young female.
    - There were **no obvious signs of trauma or violence**, but further analysis is required.
    - The discovery site might have been a **settlement or burial ground**, but the archaeologists will determine more.
    - Any historical artefacts found nearby will have to be **carefully excavated and studied**.
    - The construction work will remain paused until the museum's team completes their investigation.

Session 3 – The Archaeologists' Report

Resources:

- Writing books or paper for notetaking
- Images from webpage - https://www.thehistoryblog.com/archives/65854 (see Resources folder)
- PowerPoint 'Anglo-Saxon burial site' in Resources folder

24. Narrate: "Some time later, a team of archaeologists visited the building site and conducted a comprehensive investigation of the area. What they discovered was of great interest."
25. Ask the students to return to their desks and open their writing books (or use a piece of paper) for notetaking.
26. Show the first slide from the **'Archaeologists' PowerPoint**.
27. Say: *"The following PowerPoint presents the report made by the team of archaeologists after investigating the site. It would be a good idea to take notes, as there is quite a lot of information. You will have an opportunity to ask questions after the presentation."*
28. Go through the slides, giving the students the time to make notes.

29. Teacher-in-role: "Let's imagine I'm one of the team of archaeologists. What questions would you like to ask?"

30. Answer questions. This is what the archaeologist might surmise:

1. Identity and Status of the Woman

- She was likely a **high-status individual**, possibly **nobility** or **a religious leader** (such as an **abbess**), given the richness of the burial.
- The **gold necklace and silver cross** suggest she had **both wealth and religious importance**.
- Since **bed burials were reserved for elite women**, she was almost certainly **a powerful or influential figure in her community**.
- Her **young age at death** (early twenties) suggests she may have died from **illness, childbirth complications, or other natural causes**, as there is no evidence of violent trauma.

2. Religious and Cultural Significance

- The **large silver cross** and **Christian symbols** indicate she was buried **during the transition from pagan to Christian burial customs**.
- The presence of **grave goods**, despite Christian beliefs discouraging them, suggests she lived in **a period where old and new traditions overlapped**.
- She may have played a role in **spreading Christianity** within her community.

3. Trade and Foreign Connections

- The **Frankish-style pots** suggest trade or cultural exchange with what is now **France or Belgium**.
- The **gold, garnets, and semi-precious stones** could indicate access to **trade networks** that brought luxury materials from **Europe and beyond**.
- The **Roman coins repurposed as pendants** could mean her family **valued Roman heritage** or that older coins were still being used decoratively.

4. Burial Practices and Lifestyle

- The presence of **fabric, feathers, and leather** hints that the burial **may have included a canopy or richly decorated bed**.
- The **organic residue in the pots** might reveal clues about burial customs—were they offerings of **food, perfume, or medicine**?
- If the pots contained **medicinal herbs**, it might suggest she had **an important healing or religious role**.
- The **lack of a coffin** but the presence of a bed suggests this burial followed a **specific, rare tradition**.

5. Why This Burial Was in This Location

- The site **was not previously known as a burial ground**, so why was she buried here?
- It could have been a **private family burial plot**.
- If further excavations reveal other burials nearby, it might have been part of a **small, forgotten settlement or religious community**.
- Alternatively, she might have been **buried alone in a special location**, perhaps because of her **religious status or leadership role**.

6. The Mystery of Her Death

- There are **no obvious signs of violence** from the burial evidence.
- If scientific tests identify **certain plant remains or chemicals** in the pots, it could give clues about her final days (e.g., medicine used for illness).

7. What This Means for History

- This burial **adds to our understanding of early Christian England** and the **role of powerful women** in society.
- The discovery of **unique artifacts**, such as the silver faces with blue glass eyes, **suggests artistic or cultural influences not previously recorded**.
- It raises **new questions about burial traditions, wealth, and trade** during the Anglo-Saxon period.

Session 4 – The Anglo-Saxon Settlement

Resources:

- A length of rope or string for the boundary
- A pictures or pictures of an Anglo-Saxon settlement
- Pieces of A5 paper
- A length of blue ribbon

31. Bring the students together in a circle.
32. Ask them to help make a shape using a piece of rope (or string) to mark out the boundary of the settlement: “I have some rope here I thought we could use to mark out the boundary of the settlement – a kind of tall wooden fence. As I pass it round, can you lay it on the floor.

33. Hand out two pieces of A5 paper to mark entrances on the boundary: “There are two ways into this community, one in the north, the other in the south. Can you lay these pieces of paper on the boundary where you think the gates should be?”
34. Show the students an image of a settlement from the same period of history: “Before we go any further, I’d like to show you a drawing of an Anglo-Saxon settlement, like the one we’re going to create here.”
35. Say, “I’ll give you a little bit of time to study the picture and see what you notice.”
36. Discuss their observations, gently asking for more information without turning it into an interrogation.
37. Hold up the blue ribbon and explain that it’s going to represent a nearby water-source, something essential for a successful settlement in the past.
38. Share the list of locations in and around the settlement. (See resources list below)
39. Ask the students to each take a piece of the A5 paper and draw one of the buildings or other structures on the list. Tell them to take another piece of A5 if they want to draw more than one.
40. Once the drawings are done, gather everyone back around the circle, bringing their drawings with them.
41. Discuss where the different buildings and other structures should be placed. Give the student who drew the picture the final say on where it should go.

RESOURCES

Session 1

CONSTRUCTION IN PROGRESS

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Session 3

Archaeological Report: Discovery of an Anglo-Saxon Burial

Location: Building site on the edge of town

Introduction

Our team was commissioned to carry out an archaeological investigation after construction workers discovered a **skull** on the site of a housing development.

The Discovery

After conducting tests, we concluded that the skull belonged to **a young woman in her early twenties**. The cause of death remains unknown.
While examining the area around the skull, we discovered **a gold and garnet-inlaid pendant**, along with an **ornate gold necklace featuring 30 pendants and beads** made from **gold, garnets, coloured glass, and semi-precious stones**.
Further excavation revealed that this necklace was part of a **bed burial**, a rare type of high-status burial used for elite individuals in early medieval England. The burial has been dated to between **630 and 670 AD**, placing it within the **Anglo-Saxon period**.

Significance of the Burial

The **grave goods** suggest that the individual buried here was a **woman of high status**, possibly a religious leader such as an **abbess**. Unlike traditional burials, where jewellery was worn, this necklace was **placed beside the body on the burial bed**, a detail observed in similar high-status graves.

Grave Goods

Several other significant items were recovered from the burial site:

- **Two ceramic pots**, placed beside the lower legs, containing an **organic residue**. This is a rare find, as similar pots are usually empty. Further scientific testing will determine the nature of the contents.
- **A large silver cross**, placed face-down, carefully removed in a **soil block** for laboratory excavation. **X-ray analysis** revealed **intricate decorations, including silver human faces with blue glass eyes**—an artistic style not previously seen in similar burials.
- **Traces of organic material**, including **fragments of fabric, feathers, and leather**, which may provide evidence of the **burial structure**, such as a **canopy or covering for the bed**.

Historical Context

This burial represents a **transitional period in early Christian England**, when **burial customs were changing**. High-status individuals were previously buried with many valuable items, but as Christianity spread, **grave goods became less common**. This burial suggests that the deceased was an **important figure in early Christian society**, bridging the gap between **pagan and Christian burial traditions**.

Report Compiled by:

The Archaeology Team

Session 4 – list

1. The Great Hall (Mead Hall)

- The **largest** and most important building in the settlement.
- Used as the **chief's or king's hall**, a **meeting place**, and a **feasting hall**.
- Central to **community gatherings, storytelling, and celebrations**.

2. Homes (Huts or Longhouses)

- Simple **wooden houses with thatched roofs**.
- Usually **one-room dwellings**, sometimes with a **hearth (fireplace) in the center**.
- Built using **wattle and daub** (woven sticks covered with mud or clay).
- Wealthier individuals might have had **larger houses with wooden floors**.

3. Workshops

- Spaces where craftsmen such as **blacksmiths, potters, weavers, and carpenters** worked.
- Tools, weapons, jewellery, and household items were made here.
- Some settlements had **dedicated metalworking areas** with forges and anvils.

4. The Church or Monastery (in Christian Settlements)

- After the spread of Christianity, many Anglo-Saxon settlements had a **wooden or stone church**.
- **Monasteries** were centers of learning, where **monks and nuns copied manuscripts and educated people**.
- Often surrounded by fields for **growing food** and keeping animals.

5. The Market Area (for Trade and Craftsmanship)

- In larger settlements, there would be an area for **trading goods like food, pottery, textiles, and metalwork**.
- **Coins** were sometimes used, but many Anglo-Saxons still relied on **bartering**.

6. Storehouses (Barns and Granaries)

- Used for storing **grain, food supplies, and tools**.
- Often built on **raised platforms** to keep food dry and safe from animals.

7. Mills

- **Water mills** were sometimes built near rivers to grind grain into flour.
- **Hand mills (querns)** were also used in individual homes.

8. Animal Enclosures and Fields

- Anglo-Saxons kept **cattle, sheep, pigs, and chickens** for food and materials.
- Fields were used to grow **wheat, barley, oats, and vegetables**.
- Surrounding land might include **meadows, orchards, and hunting grounds**.

9. Defensive Structures (in Larger Settlements)

- Some settlements had **wooden palisades (fences) or ditches** for protection.
- Important towns (burhs) were **fortified with earthworks and walls**.
- **Watchtowers** might have been used in more strategic locations.

10. Wells and Water Sources

- Fresh water was essential, so settlements were built near **rivers, streams, or wells**.
- Wells were often dug **by hand and lined with wood or stone**.

11. Cemeteries or Burial Grounds

- People were buried in **graveyards near churches** or in separate **burial mounds**.
- **Pagan burials** often included **grave goods**, while later Christian burials were simpler.
- **High-status individuals** were sometimes buried in **ship burials or bed burials**.

12. Roads and Pathways

- Early settlements had **dirt tracks** for walking and riding.
- Important villages or towns were often linked by **Roman roads**, still in use at the time.