

Saxon Crime and Punishment

Originally devised by Joanna Booth in Lancashire. This activity is designed to get pupils to appreciate (through moderate empathy) how a different kind of law operated in Saxon times. Nevertheless they may find similarities with modern laws where property may seem more important than treating others well. Hopefully it will improve discussion around why laws exist, and how they have developed. We also hope it encourages further study around the topic so that pupils might be able to improve the simulation by adding more details. We also need confirmation that our wergild prices are reasonable.

Pupils work in groups of three or four. They need to shuffle the crime, money, oath helper and Yes/No cards well and place them face down. You probably need to print off two sets of each. We've provided a board for the cards which you can use if you want to. Pupils each need a different coloured counter and take turns to travel down the decision tree moving their counter as they find out their fate. In addition to the factsheet to which they will need to refer you might consider having other source material to hand to encourage reading around the subject. They might want to try the simulation out more than once to explore the different possibilities and maybe come up with some improvements. We will have a Magna Carta activity ready soon, so it will be possible to make comparisons about whether legal systems were better or worse in Anglo Saxon or Norman England.

You will find it best to enlarge the Decision Tree to A3. You may need to print the cards in different colours to make them easier to keep in order. We always made this a pupil task!

Webaddress: <http://www.collaborativelearning.org/saxoncrimeandpunishment.pdf>
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COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROJECT

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We support a network of teaching professionals to develop and disseminate accessible talk-for-learning activities in all subject areas and for all ages.

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BRIEF SUMMARY OF BASIC PRINCIPLES BEHIND OUR TEACHING ACTIVITIES:

The project is a teacher network, and a non-profit making educational trust. Our main aim is to develop and disseminate classroom tested examples of effective group strategies that promote talk across all phases and subjects. We hope they will inspire you to develop and use similar strategies in other topics and curriculum areas. We want to encourage you to change them and adapt them to your classroom and students. We run teacher workshops, swapshops and conferences throughout the European Union. The project posts online many activities in all subject areas. An online newsletter is also updated regularly.

*These activities are influenced by current thinking about the role of language in learning. They are designed to help children learn through talk and active learning in small groups. They work best in non selective classes where children in need of language or learning support are integrated. They are well suited for the development of oracy. They provide teachers opportunities for assessment of talk.

*They support differentiation by placing a high value on what children can offer to each other on a particular topic, and also give children the chance to respect each other's views and formulate shared opinions which they can disseminate to peers. By helping them to take ideas and abstract concepts, discuss, paraphrase and move them about physically, they help to develop thinking skills.

*They give children the opportunity to participate in their own words and language in their own time without pressure. Many activities can be tried out in pupils' first languages and afterwards in English. A growing number of activities are available in more than one language, not translated, but mixed, so that you may need more than one language to complete the activity.

*They encourage study skills in context, and should therefore be used with a range of appropriate information books which are preferably within reach in the classroom.

*They are generally adaptable over a wide age range because children can bring their own knowledge to an activity and refer to books at an appropriate level. The activities work like catalysts.

*All project activities were planned and developed by teachers working together, and the main reason they are disseminated is to encourage teachers to work more effectively with each other inside and outside the classroom. They have made it possible for mainstream and language and learning support teachers to share an equal role in curriculum delivery. They should be adapted to local conditions. In order to help us keep pace with curriculum changes, please send any new or revised activities back to the project, so that we can add them to our lists of materials.

Saxon Crime and Punishment - Factsheet

There were different punishments for different crimes.

A thief might have his hands or feet cut off.

People who hurt or killed others had to pay a fine called 'Wergild'. This means man price. Important nobles (thanes) were worth more than farmers (churls). People often lost bits of their bodies in fights with swords and every bit had a price.

Crime	Wergild
killing a thane	1200 shillings
killing a churl	200 shillings
cutting off a nose	60 shillings
cutting off an ear	30 shillings
cutting off a big toe	20 shillings
cutting off a little toe	9 shillings
killing a slave	2 shillings to the owner



a saxon shilling

If you didn't have enough money to pay the wergild, then you became a slave.

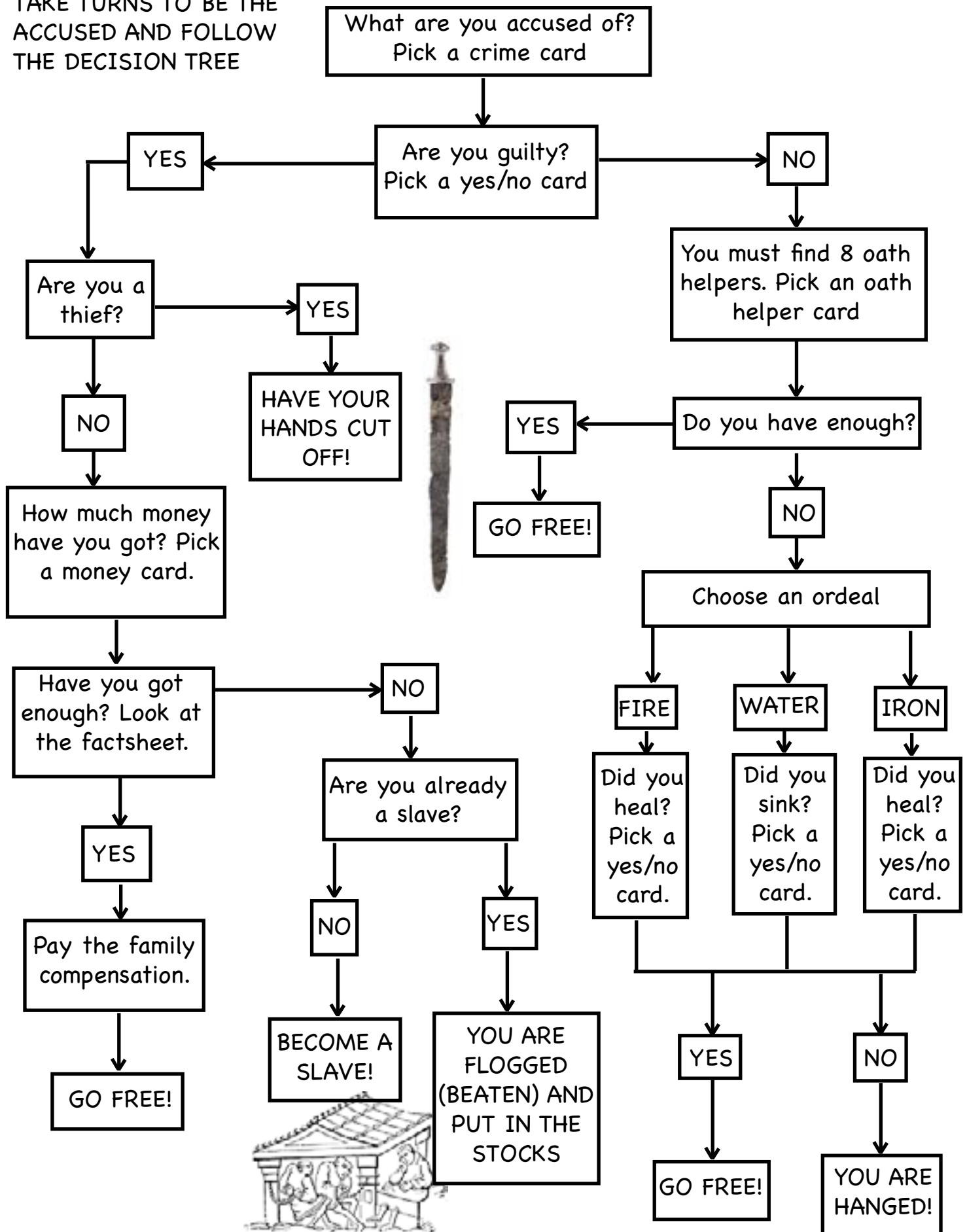
Slaves did not pay wergild because they did not have money. Slaves who committed crimes were whipped, hanged or put in the stocks.

If you said that you were not guilty then you had to find men who would swear that you were innocent. These were called oath helpers. If you could not find enough oath helpers, then you had to go through an ordeal.

ORDEAL BY FIRE	You put your hand in boiling water. If it started to heal after three days, you were not guilty.
ORDEAL BY IRON	You held a piece of hot iron and walked nine paces. If your hand started to heal after three days you were not guilty.
ORDEAL BY WATER	You had your hands and feet tied up and were thrown into a lake or river. If you sank, you were not guilty.

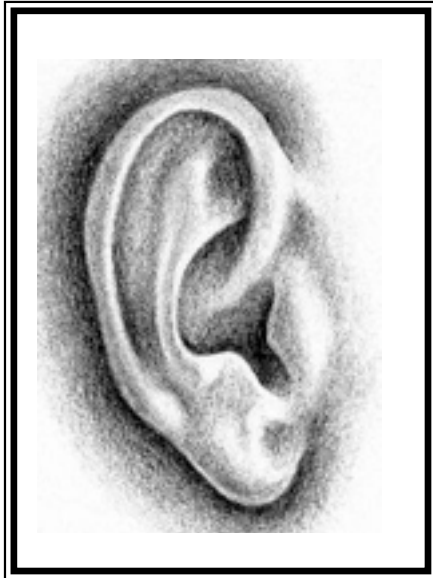
Saxon Crime and Punishment Simulation

TAKE TURNS TO BE THE ACCUSED AND FOLLOW THE DECISION TREE



Saxon Crime and Punishment Chance Cards

Shuffle Cards well at the beginning and place face down on this board. Pick a card from the top and replace it at the bottom of the pile.



Crime Cards



Money Cards



Oath Helper
Cards



Yes/No Cards



Crime Card

You have
killed a
thane
(nobleman)



Crime Card

You have
killed a
farmer.



Crime Card

You have
killed a
slave.



Crime Card

You have
cut off
someone's
ear.



Crime Card

You have
cut off
someone's
nose.



Crime Card

You have
cut off
someone's
big toe.



Crime Card

You have
cut off
someone's
nose.



Crime Card

You have
stolen a
purse full
of gold
coins.



Crime Card

You have
killed a
thane
(nobleman)



Crime Card

You have
killed a
churl.



Crime Card

You have
cut off a
little toe.



Crime Card

You have
killed a
slave.



Crime Card

You have
cut off a
right arm.



Crime Card

You have
cut off a
left arm.



Crime Card

You have
cut off a
leg.



Crime Card

You have
stolen a
sheep.



10
oath
helpers



16
oath
helpers



7
oath
helpers



9
oath
helpers



1
oath
helper



12
oath
helpers



10
oath
helpers



2
oath
helpers



4
oath
helpers



2
oath
helpers



6
oath
helpers



8
oath
helpers



10
oath
helpers



12
oath
helpers



No
oath
helpers



5
oath
helpers



60
shillings



1200
shillings



20
shillings



200
shillings



60
shillings



1200
shillings



20
shillings



200
shillings



9
shillings



5
shillings



30
shillings



No money.
You are a
slave.



9
shillings



5
shillings



30
shillings



No money.
You are a
slave.

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

No

No

No

No

No

No

No

No