

Viking Sword



Blades

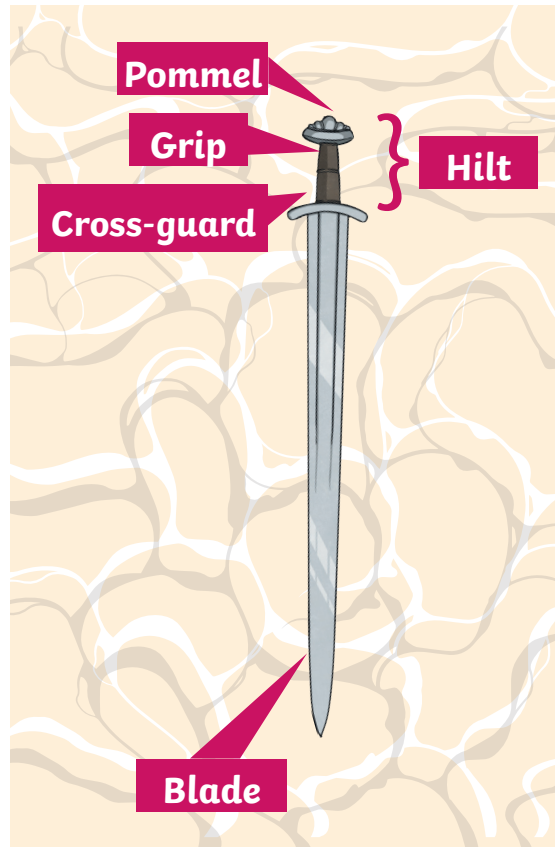
The blade of a Viking sword was double-edged, which means it was sharp on both sides.

Ulfberth

The finest Viking swords came from central Europe and were made from high-quality steel. One of these was the Ulfberth, a sword of status and prestige.

Viking Law

Viking law stated that all free men should own weapons. Decent weapons weren't used just for battles; they showed a person's status and wealth as well – none more so than a Viking sword!



Quick Sword Facts

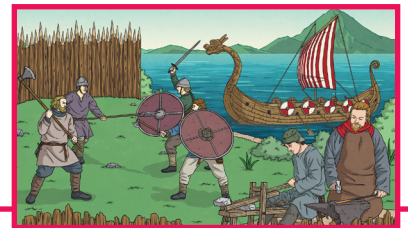
Width: 4–6 cm

Weight: 1–2 kg

Length: 60–90 cm

Leg-Biter!

A sword might be the most expensive item that a Viking owned. They were often given names, such as 'Leg-biter' and 'Gold-hilt', and passed down through the generations from father to son.



Did You Know....?

Because they cost so much to make, not every Viking owned a sword. Spears were the most common weapon for warriors but they were also quite fond of battle-axes!



1. Viking swords weren't just used in battle. What other use did they have?



2. Vikings sometimes gave names to their swords. Find one from the text and explain why that might be a good name for a Viking sword.



3. Imagine you were given a Viking sword and you had to give it a Viking name. What would you call it? Give a reason for your answer.



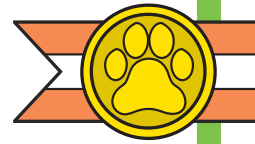
4. Name the **three** parts of a Viking sword that make up the hilt.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____





The Ulfberth

Gudmund stared at his sword. It glinted in the early dawn light and a shiver ran down his spine. Soon, it would be time. He looked down at the others. The warriors looked peaceful as they lay around the camp, the sun's rays slicing their sleeping bodies between long, tree-lined shadows.

"Not long now," a voice rumbled from behind Gudmund's shoulder.

Gudmund gripped his sword and spun round. A huge warrior stood over him. He had deep, shadowed eyes, a matted beard, and wild, yellow hair. Gudmund loosened his grip. It was Bjalki, his friend and comrade. The huge man tore at a piece of meat with his teeth and sat down beside Gudmund. "Today, you will have peace, my old friend," he growled, chewing at some gristle. "As Odin is my witness."

Gudmund tried to smile. "Do you know how long it has been, Bjalki?" he asked, staring at the strange markings that ran along the sword's blade. "I was just seven seasons old." A light breeze eased through Gudmund's hair and the sky darkened. "I remember Valgard attacking the village. I remember him fighting my father..."

His eyes misted over and he ran his fingers over the handle of his sword. "And I remember the ship burial when my father was laid to rest."

Bjalki reached over and slapped Gudmund's shoulder with a giant hand. "Then, today you will have your revenge," he smiled; his eyes wide and wild. "And if not, then you shall meet your father again in Valhalla!" The sun crept out from behind the clouds and the blade glistened once again. "That is an Ulfberth sword," Bjalki exclaimed, the sun reflecting into his eyes.

"Indeed it is," Gudmund smiled knowingly, rising to his feet. "It was my father's and his father's before him."

"Then, Odin really is with you!" Bjalki laughed. He jumped up and began kicking at the sleeping men's feet. "Wake up!" he roared. "We are Vikings! Today, we battle! Today, we taste victory!"

"For Odin!" the men cheered.

"For our king!" Bjalki bellowed, raising Gudmund's arm into the air.

'For my father', Gudmund thought as the Ulfberth glinted in the early dawn light.



1. Why do you think the writer used the verb **rumbled** to describe the way Bjalki speaks?



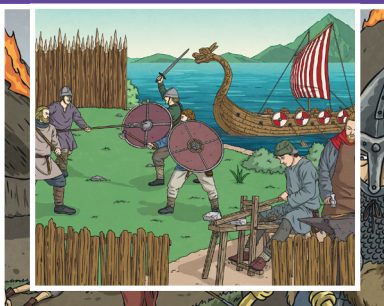
2. What is an Ulfberth?



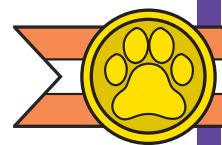
3. Look at the first paragraph. Find and copy the word that means the same as 'small flashes of bright light'.



4. Summarise this story in 25 words or fewer.



The Godless



I pray they did not see me,
through the flames and the smoke.
I pray, Lord, for forgiveness
for the Godless, Norsemen folk.

For they worship Thor and Odin
and they fight with hearts so cold;
they do not show compassion
and ignore the love You hold.

I pray You will forgive me,
as I run into this church.
Away from those who need me,
in the hope they'll stop their search.

Their swords and spears were flying;
red rain had filled the air,
they burnt down all the houses,
and all the people there.

Hush! I hear them coming!
Their laughter scares me more.
As I kneel down praying to you, Lord,
they're smashing down the door.

I smell their ale and sweat, Lord,
as I crouch and and lie so still,
their footsteps are edging near, Lord,
but I do not fear Your will.

They've got me, Lord, it's over,
they've hurt me - Lord, I'm broke!
Forgive them, Lord, I beg you:



1. Who does the author say the invaders worship?



2. **Hush! I hear them coming!**

What feeling is the author trying to portray with his line?



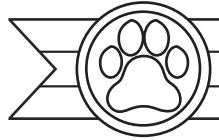
3. Look at the verse beginning **Hush! I hear them coming!...**

Read the lines carefully and try to visualise what is happening. Now, write a few sentences below summarising what you think is happening in this verse.



4. Read the third verse and think about the person narrating the poem. Why do you think he asks for forgiveness?

Answers



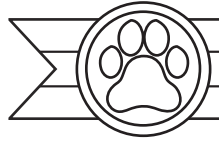
Non-Fiction Reading Mat - Viking Sword

1. Viking swords weren't just used in battle. What other use did they have?
Viking swords were used to show a person's status and wealth.
2. Vikings sometimes gave names to their swords. Find one from the text and explain why that might be a good name for a Viking sword.
Accept either of the following: Leg-biter or Gold-hilt with a reasonable explanation as to why, such as: I think 'Gold-hilt' is a good name for a viking sword because it could have a beautifully embellished hilt.
3. Look at the first paragraph. Find and copy the word that means the same as 'small flashes of bright light'.
glinted
4. Name the **three** parts of a Viking sword that make up the hilt.
 1. **Pommel**
 2. **Grip**
 3. **Cross-guard**

Fiction Reading Mat - The Ulfberth

1. Why do you think the writer used the verb **rumbled** to describe the way Bjalki speaks?
Children to refer to how the author wants to portray Bjalki as strong, huge or powerful.
2. What is an Ulfberth?
An Ulfberth is a type of sword.
3. Look at the first paragraph. Find and copy the word that means the same as 'small flashes of bright light'.
glinted
4. Summarise this text in 25 words or fewer.
Pupils' own responses, such as: This story is about Vikings preparing to go into battle. Gudmund's village had previously lost a battle and they are seeking revenge.

Answers



Poetry Reading Mat - The Godless

1. Who does the author say the invaders worship?
The author says the invaders worship Thor and Odin.
2. **Hush! I hear them coming!**
What feeling is the author trying to portray with his line?
Pupils' own responses, such as: The author is trying to portray a feeling of being scared and panicked with this line.
3. Look at the verse beginning **Hush! I hear them coming!...**
Read the lines carefully and try to visualise what is happening. Now, write a few sentences below summarising what you think is happening in this verse.
Pupils' own responses, such as: I think the author of the poem is hiding and hoping they won't be found.
4. Read the third verse and think about the person narrating the poem. Why do you think he asks for forgiveness?
Pupils' own responses, such as: He asks for forgiveness because he has run away and left his friends and family alone as the Vikings search the village.