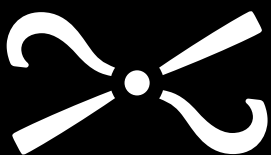


Viking Handling Box



National
Museum of
Scotland

Viking handling box

Teachers' notes

Welcome to the National Museum of Scotland.

Our Viking handling collection contains 33 replica objects based on archaeological evidence. All of the objects have links to Viking material on display in our *Early People* gallery.

The objects divide into four themes:

1. Daily life
2. Trade and travel
3. Clothing and jewellery
4. Warriors and warfare

A Vikings teachers' resource pack is also available on our website:

http://www.nms.ac.uk/learning/schools/gallery_packs_and_trails.aspx

Introduction

Between the 8th and 11th centuries, the Vikings emerged from their homelands in modern-day Scandinavia - Norway, Sweden and Denmark - as a force to be reckoned with. In their longships, they would set sail 'on a Viking' across the sea in search of land, slaves and riches. For around 300 years, they gained a reputation at home and abroad as great warriors and explorers, travelling as far north as Greenland, as far east as Bagdad (Iraq), as far south as Italy and as far west as Newfoundland (North America). Their influence can still be seen today in our customs, culture and language, for instance in the names we give days of the week, such as Thursday (after the Viking god - Thor's day).

The Vikings are often thought of as fearsome raiders, but archaeological evidence has revealed a much more detailed picture of their everyday lives as farmers, traders and craftspeople.

Viking handling box

Daily life

Drawer 1

In spite of their popular image as raiders and warriors, most people were farmers whose daily lives were spent growing crops, raising animals and making sure that their families and communities had enough food to eat, clothing to wear and houses to live in. Archaeological evidence from graves and settlements reveals much about these aspects of daily life, as well as the importance of leisure activities, such as playing board games.

Viking handling box



Key

It was very important to keep valuables under lock and key. Scandinavian laws punished thieves more severely if they broke into a locked area than if they stole goods that were not locked away. This is the same in Scottish law today.

Storehouses and barns needed strong locks, with large iron keys. Boxes and storage chests containing the household's treasures, on the other hand, were locked with padlocks and smaller keys. We do not know if homes were locked so carefully.

A key was considered a symbol of responsibility and dignity. This handmade iron key is a replica of one that would have been worn and used by a woman – a sign of her role in the household as keeper of the purse.

Touch



Feel how heavy this key weighs.

How is it different from the keys we use today (such as your house keys)?

How do you think this key worked to unlock a door or chest?

Did you know ?



In Viking society, women were often in charge of the household. They watched over supplies, especially the locked chest where the family valuables were kept.

Viking handling box



Comb

Evidence suggests that the Vikings liked to take care of their appearance. Combs, razors, tweezers and ear spoons (for removing ear wax!) are common finds in archaeological excavations of burial mounds.

This comb is a copy of one found in a man's grave. Most combs were made from deer antler. Craftspeople followed the natural shapes of the antler, to use as much of the raw material as possible. This comb is made with two side plates, which form the top of the comb, with a series of rectangular plates riveted in between. The fine teeth of the comb were cut out of the rectangular plates.

Combs were used to keep hair tidy and possibly to get rid of lice. They were often beautifully decorated, and may have also been used as hair ornaments.

The fact that combs have been found in so many graves suggests that they were considered to be very personal and important items of equipment for the afterlife.

In the *Early People* gallery, look out for:

- Comb teeth from Jarlshof, Shetland (Case E2, no.21)
- Comb from Westness, Orkney (Case Q8, no.8)
- Comb from Westness, Orkney (Case W7, no.6)
- Comb from high status woman's burial at Cnip on the Isle of Lewis (Case W14, no.23)

See



Examine the comb carefully to see how it has been made.

Viking handling box



Strike-a-light and flint

Fire was crucial, for heat, cooking and lighting. In the home, a fire was kept burning in the hearth all day. Very hot fires were used by metalworkers to melt down metal to make into tools, weapons and jewellery.

Strike-a-lights were used to make fire. They worked by striking a piece of flint against the metal to make a spark.

This replica strike-a-light is based on archaeological evidence from the Viking period. It has been handmade from iron.

In the *Early People* gallery, look out for:

- Strike-a-light found in a grave from Westness, Orkney (Case W7, no.4)

See



Look at the design of this strike-a-light.

Why do you think the metal is curled like a scroll at the ends?

Viking handling box



Barley, spelt wheat and oats

Most people were farmers, although in Scandinavia, the land was often very poor. Bad soils and harsh weather conditions encouraged many farmers to set sail across the sea in search of new lands, such as Iceland and Britain, where they hoped to find fertile land and more space for their animals and crops.

A range of different grain crops were grown, which were ground to make flour using quern stones. Farmers also grew vegetables such as onions, beans and cabbages. They used manure from the animals they kept (such as goats, cattle and chickens) to keep the soil fertile.

Barley was malted with hops to make beer. It was also used to make bread, often mixed with oats or spelt wheat. Spelt wheat is an early form of the wheat we use to make flour for our bread today. People in the Viking Age also used oats to make porridge, just as we do today.

Think



How might the Vikings have farmed their land without the modern inventions farmers use today?

Viking handling box

Hnefatafl game

Archaeological evidence from graves and settlements shows that the Vikings liked to play table games. Written sources (such as the Orkneyinga Saga) describe how being good at table games impressed other people. Some games were scratched onto wood or stone, with broken pieces of pottery or bone used for counters.

This is a replica of a Viking game called Hnefatafl, which means 'king's table'. The originals were found in the grave of a boy discovered at Balnakeil, in the far north of Scotland. The board is made of oak with inlays of cow bone fastened to the wood with metal rivets. The playing pieces are made from antler. They have bone pegs to fit into the board.

We think that Hnefatafl is older than chess! Different versions of the game have been found across the Viking world, from Ireland to the Ukraine.

How to play Hnefatafl

Hnefatafl is a game of attack and defence, for two people.

The king piece and defenders occupy the centre of the board and a larger force of attackers is placed around the edges.

The attacker wins the game if they can capture the opponent's king piece. The defender wins if their king piece can escape to one of the corners of the board.

Board and pieces

This set uses a 9 x 9 squared board. The centre square is the royal castle and the four corner squares are castles to which the king must escape.

16 attackers (red)

8 defenders (black) + king (which has a copper cap)

Play



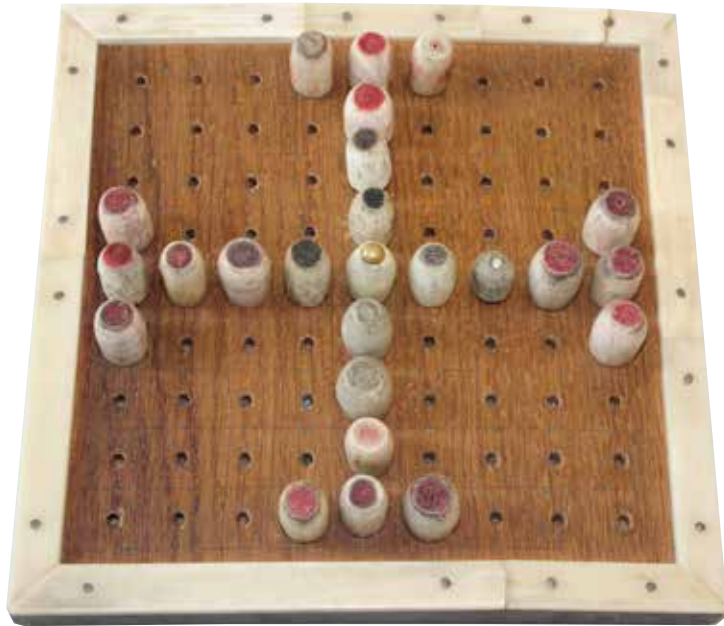
See if you can work out how to play a game of Hnefatafl!

Look at the board and the pieces – do they remind you of any games we play today?

Viking handling box

Playing the game

The game begins with the pieces arranged like this



All the pieces can be moved any number of squares at once in a straight line. You cannot move the pieces diagonally.

The king's side has the first move, and then the players take turns.

To capture a piece, you need to 'sandwich' it with a counter on each side in either a vertical or horizontal straight line.



You can capture the king in different ways:

- By surrounding the king on all four sides.
- By driving the king to the edge of the board and surrounding it by three attacking counters.
- By trapping the king against the squares of one of the attacker's four 'bases' (located in the middle of each side of the board), to which nobody is allowed to return or to pass through.

In the *Early People* gallery, look out for:

- An unfinished gaming board, probably for Hnefatafl, from the Brough of Birsay, Orkney (Case E6, no.13)
- Boards and gaming pieces from Westness, Orkney (Case W7, no.3) and the Brough of Birsay, Orkney (Case E1, no.24)

Viking handling box

Trade and travel

Drawer 2

Going on a Viking required a team of expert sailors. Skilled craftsmen built wooden longships (sometimes called 'Sea Horses', 'Wave Horses' or 'Sail Horses' in Norse literature) which were considered the greatest sea-faring vessels of the period. These ships were big enough to transport animals and goods, so they were ideal for trade. The Vikings also used them to carry their belongings and livestock when they set sail to settle new lands.

Viking handling box



Cowrie shells

Cowrie shells come from sea snails that live in warm sea waters in many parts of the world. In the past, these shells have been used as money in places such as China, Africa and the Middle East.

During the Viking Age in Northern Europe, cowrie shells from the Indian Ocean were a very valuable commodity (something which can be traded). This was because they were exotic, almost indestructible and very hard to fake. They were also used in jewellery. Rich women often wore them in pendants.

Thousands of cowrie shells have been excavated by archaeologists at the port of Birka in Sweden. They are an important clue as to the great distances covered by Viking trade networks.

See



Look closely at the shape of the shells. See how shiny they are and feel their smoothness.

The Vikings had different ways of trading using precious objects from across the world. Compare the cowrie shells with the amber and the coins – how are they similar? How are they different?

Think



Why do you think many ancient people used cowrie shells as 'money'?

Viking handling box



Amber

Amber, a fossilized tree resin, was highly valued in Viking times - just as it is today. Collected from beaches in southern Scandinavia and along the Baltic coast, this precious material has been used for centuries to make jewellery.

Amber has to be polished to bring out its shine and beautiful yellow-orange colour. The raw amber chips and the polished amber bead show what amber looks like before and after polishing.

Amber could also be used like money, and traded in exchange for other valuable goods.

See



Look at the amber bead and the raw amber chips.

How are they different?
Can you tell that they are made from the same material?

Did you know ?

Amber from the Baltic coast in Northern Europe is from fossilized tree resin that is 44 million years old!

Viking handling box



Beads

Archaeological evidence from graves shows that people in the Viking Age liked to wear jewellery made from brightly-coloured beads. In Scandinavia, archaeologists have found the remains of several Viking Age workshops that manufactured beads. Beads could be made of rock crystal, semi-precious stones and amber.

Beads were also traded for in other lands to sell back home in Scandinavia. Ibn Fadlan, an Arabic writer who met Viking traders in Russia in the 10th century, wrote that they would pay 'as much as one dirhem' (an Arabic silver coin) for a single bead.

These replica beads are made of glass and pewter (a mixture of silver, tin and other metals). Glass often made the brightest, most colourful beads. Craftpeople melted down specially imported or broken drinking glasses, fusing them together to make beads like these ones, which have swirling patterns and mixtures of colours.

In the *Early People* gallery, look out for:

- A necklace from Westness, Orkney made from glass, stone, shell, bone and amber beads (Case Q8, no.13)
- A necklace from Ballinaby, Islay (Case W14, no.12)
- Glass beads found in a high status woman's burial at Ballinaby, Islay (Case W14, no.24)

See



Look at the patterns in the beads.

How are the glass beads different from the ones made out of pewter?

Which one do you like best?

Did you know



Beads were commonly buried in children's graves.

Whilst the beads were often parts of a necklace they may also have been worn as amulets or 'lucky charms'.

Viking handling box



Coins

Coins only became commonly used as money towards the end of the Viking Age. The Vikings usually traded for objects with pieces of silver, jewellery or, in Britain and Ireland - silver bracelets known as 'ring money'. They also traded by swapping items of a similar value (such as amber or cowrie shells) for the objects they wanted.

These coins are replicas of Viking Age silver coins found across Europe. The collection includes English, Arabic and Scandinavian coins.

In the *Early People* gallery, look out for a coin made in Bagdad and Viking hoards of silver containing coins and ring money:

- Coins minted in England (York, London, Bath and Winchester), found across Scotland, e.g. in Skye, Iona and Tiree (Case Q10, no.2)
- Arabic coins minted in Tashkent and Samarkand, found at Stevenson Sands and Storr Rock in Skye (Case Q10, no.7)
- A hoard of silver bracelets ('ring money'), coins, a neck ring, hacked up jewellery and ingots, found in Burray, Orkney (Case Q13, no.1)
- A hoard of silver coins, hacked up jewellery and ingots found at Storr Rock in Skye (Case Q13, no.2)
- Ring money bracelets (Case U1, no.4)
- Coins from England and the Arab world, found at Skail, Orkney (Case U1, no.5)

See



Look at the symbols on these coins. They are not all from the same place - some are Scandinavian, some are English and others are Arabic.

The Vikings valued the different coins according to their weight in silver.

Think



Compare these coins with the silver ring money in the *Early People* gallery. What makes ring money a useful trading currency? Why might coins be easier to trade with?

Which would you prefer to use – coins or ring money?

Viking handling box



Ice skate

Scandinavia is very mountainous with long sea-lochs (called fjords), large forests and marshland. This made travelling overland difficult for the Vikings, especially when weather conditions were bad. Whenever they could, they chose to make journeys in boats or ships. Travelling on land was often easier in winter, because it grew so cold that the land was covered in snow and many rivers and lakes froze over. People could then travel on sledges, skis and ice skates.

Ice skates were an everyday means of travel in winter and the Norse word for them is 'ice legs'. They were made from the leg bones of horses and cattle, which were carved and then tied to the skater's shoes with leather thongs. The skater would push themselves along using a pointed stick (a bit like a ski pole) made of iron or wood. Ice skates have been found in Sweden which date back as far as the 9th century AD (1200 years ago).

This replica ice skate is based on archaeological finds from northern Europe. It has been made from the metatarsal (lower leg) bone of a cow. The holes are for the leather thongs. It has been polished on one side to enable smooth skating across the ice.

See



Look for the small holes in the side of the skate at the front and the back. What might these have been used for?

Touch



Feel how smooth the surface of the skate is on one side. Why do you think ice skates needed to be made like this?

Viking handling box

Clothing and jewellery

Drawer 3

People took special care of their appearance, particularly if they were rich and powerful. Archaeological evidence shows that their clothes were made from materials such as animal skins, woven wool and linen. Both men and women wore jewellery and brooches, often made from precious metals and decorated with complex designs. Pins and brooches were not just a fashion accessory, but essential for holding clothes in place.

Viking handling box



Red & Roe deer hide and leather shoe

Animal hides were an essential raw material for making many items of clothing such as leather belts and shoes. This replica shoe is an example of the kind of footwear worn by people in the Viking Age.

People also used leather to make purses, bags and scabbards to hold their knives and other weapons.

Red and Roe deer would have been a good source of food and clothing with the hides being used to make warm, furry winter cloaks. Red and Roe deer are native to Britain and are also found across a large part of Europe.

In the *Early People* gallery, look out for:

- The 'Using Skins' display case for some great examples of clothing, shoes and other items made of animal fur and leather (Case G1)

Touch



Compare the colour and thickness of the two different deer hides.

Why would deer hide have been a good material to make clothes from?

Viking handling box



Bone needle

Archaeological evidence from graves suggests that dressing up was very important in the Viking Age – both men and women liked to look their best. Although clothes rarely survive, written evidence tells us that clothing was made from woollen cloth or linen. Men usually wore trousers under a long shirt and a cloak. Women wore a long garment of linen covered by a full-length woollen tunic that was fastened by brooches at the shoulders.

Needles were often made from bone and thread would have been made from wool, animal sinew, or plants, such as rushes and nettles.

In the *Early People* gallery, look out for objects that tell us about Viking Age clothing including:

- A pair of oval brooches, one of which has traces of cloth preserved by corrosion of the metal pin (Case F1, no.4)
- Bone needle from Freswick, Caithness (Case F3, no.10)
- Needle cases from Brough of Birsay, Orkney and Càrn a' Bharraich, Oronsay (Case G3, no.11)
- Needle fragments and case found in Cnip, Isle of Lewis (Case W14, no.24)

See



Look at the needle. How is it different to the needles we use today?

Did you know ?

Clothes weren't just dull colours like brown and grey – men's tunics and women's dresses were sometimes woven with brightly coloured geometric patterns. People who were very wealthy had their clothes sewn with gold and silver threads.

Viking handling box



Shears

Iron shears were used to shear sheep, to cut cloth and even to trim beards. Shears are often found in women's graves dating to the Viking period. Along with other items such as weaving tablets, loom weights and spindle whorls, they indicate that women had an important role in making cloth and clothing. These are a copy of shears found in a grave that were probably used for cutting threads.

In the *Early People* gallery, look out for:

- Shears from Westness, Orkney (Case F2 no.3, Case Q8 no.16 & Case Case W7 no.5)

See



How are these shears different from the scissors we use today?

Do you think they would have been easy to use?
What do you think they might have used them for?

Viking handling box



Oval brooches


Women dressed in layered garments, with a long under-dress and a short over-dress, like a pinafore. This was held in place at both shoulders by pairs of brooches. Women of high status wore oval brooches, which were beautifully decorated and joined by rows of beads. This style was fashionable throughout the Viking world. Men usually wore a single brooch that held their cloaks at the shoulder.

Oval (or 'tortoise') brooches were made from precious metals such as copper, brass, silver and gold. These pewter brooches are copies of Viking finds from Lisbjerg in Denmark and have been made using traditional methods. If you look very carefully, you might be able to make out a 'gripping beast' design – an animal that writhes and wriggles, turning this way and that, gripping its own legs and throat. This design was very popular in Viking art.

Archaeologists have often discovered oval brooches like these ones in graves. They are an important clue that the dead person was female and this form of dress, which comes from Scandinavia, tells us they were buried in the Viking Age. Although the clothing material has normally rotted away, the position of the brooches on the shoulders shows how they were worn.

In the *Early People* gallery, look out for other oval brooches found amongst the grave goods of Viking women's burials:

- Brooch set from Libberswick, Shetland (Case Q8, no.14)
- Brooch sets from high status women's burials at Cnip on the Isle of Lewis and Ballinaby on Islay (Case W14, no.20 & no.11)

See 
The pattern on the back of the brooches is from a cloth lining in the moulds that were used to shape the brooches.



Viking handling box



Bronze pin

Archaeological evidence from Viking Age graves suggests that both men and women wore brooches and pins made of bone and various precious metals. The richest jewellery was often decorated with beautiful and complicated designs. Pins would also have been functional – essential for fastening clothing together.

Many different types of pins have been found. This is a copy of a bronze pin found by archaeologists in a boy's grave in the north of Scotland. Bronze was a valuable and precious metal in the Viking Age. Some pins have fragments of textiles attached to them. This evidence has helped archaeologists to work out what they were used for.

In the *Early People* gallery, look out for these cloak pins:

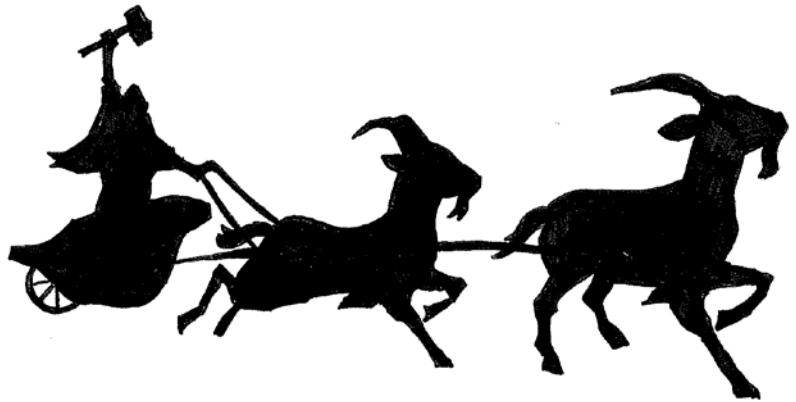
- Brooch pin found in a Viking grave in Westness, Orkney (Case W7, no.10)
- A dress pin from Ballinaby, Islay (Case Q8, no 6).
- Dress pins from the Brough of Birsay, Heisher and Scotland (Case Q9, no.10)
- Cloak pin from a high status woman's grave at Cnip on the Isle of Lewis (Case W14, no.21)

Think

This type of pin would have been worn by men, pinning their cloaks together at their right shoulder.

Why do you think it was important for men to have their right arms free?

Viking handling box



Thor's hammer amulet

People from Scandinavia believed in many different gods and goddesses. They wore small amulets, made of iron or precious metals such as gold and silver, to help them to communicate with these gods. Written evidence tells us that amulets were sometimes also carried in leather pouches so as to be easy to hand. Often, a single amulet would be worn as a pendant.

Many of the amulets discovered by archaeologists are miniature versions of everyday objects such as axes, sickles or fire strikers.

Amulets represented specific gods - this amulet is in the shape of Thor's hammer. Thor rode through the sky in a chariot pulled by goats, making thunder and lightning with his mighty hammer. He was very popular with peasants and farmers and featured in Viking stories (called 'sagas') where he battled against evil giants and monsters.

Amulets like this one might have been associated with the special powers of the god they represented.

This amulet is based on archaeological finds from Scandinavia. It is made of pewter, a mixture of silver and other metals, and would have been worn as a pendant.

Did you know ?

In one Norse myth, Thor's hammer was stolen by the giant Thrym, who said he would only give it back if he could marry the goddess Freyja. So Thor decided to trick the giant by dressing up as Freyja and going along to the ceremony. When the time came for Thrym to bring out the hammer to bless the bride, Thor grabbed it and used it to kill the giant and all his giant guests!

Viking handling box

Warriors and warfare

Drawer 4

Although most people who lived in the Viking Age were farmers, they deeply valued acts of daring and courage. They believed that honour and glory in battle were the only things that lasted forever and a valiant death on the battlefield was the only way for them to pass into Valhalla – a place of eternal feasting with the gods.

Viking handling box



Drinking horn

Feasting and drinking ale together were important parts of social life. Such occasions helped to strengthen the bonds of kinship (family) and community. The hangovers would have been terrible, given the impurities contained in their drink!

This is a replica drinking horn made from the horn of a cow. Cattle horns are hollow, which make them ideal to use as drinking vessels. As you can see, however, they were difficult to put down without spilling their contents everywhere, and so they were either rested in holders designed especially for this purpose, or passed around so that others could share the drink.

Drinking horns were often decorated with metal mounts, around the rim (like this one) and at the base.

Other Viking drinking vessels came in various shapes and sizes, ranging from wooden cups to silver bowls.

In the *Early People* gallery, look out for:

- Drinking horn terminals found in Pierowall, Orkney (Case B7, no.5)
- Mount from a drinking horn found in a grave in Westness, Orkney (Case W7, no.2)
- Mounts from a drinking horn found in Ballinaby, Islay (Case W14, no.10)

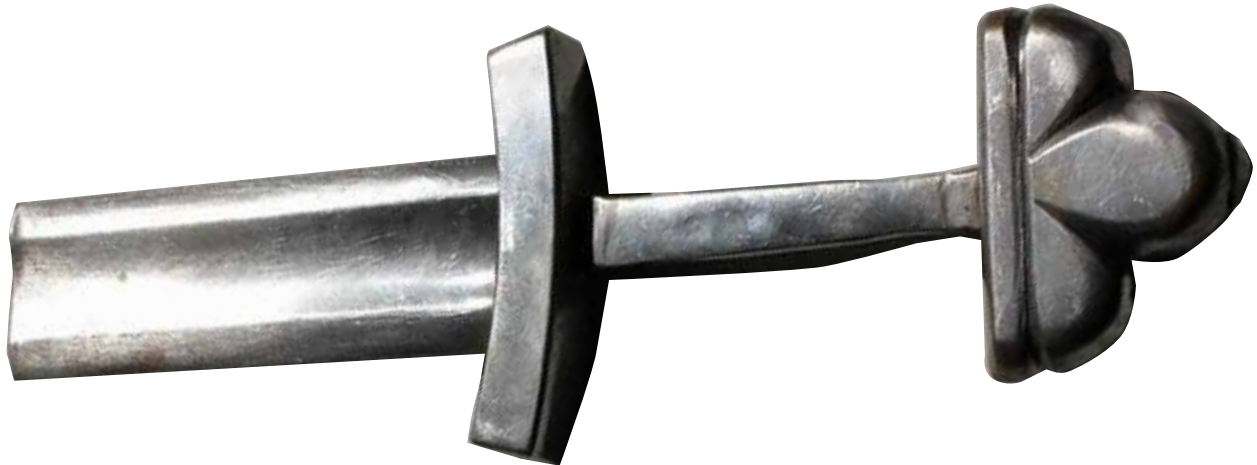
Think



How different is this drinking horn to the cups and glasses we use today?

Do you think it would have been easy to use?

Viking handling box



Sword hilt with blade section

A warrior's typical weapons consisted of a sword, an axe and a spear. The sword was his most prized possession. Viking swords were made of iron and usually double-edged. Craftspeople used special techniques to make the blades extra strong. Sword hilts were often decorated with precious metals such as silver, copper or brass. The more beautifully ornamented the sword, the more rich and powerful its owner.

This replica sword hilt (handle) is made of steel. The sword's pommel is the decorated bit at the very top and its guard is the section of metal that separates the hilt from the blade. The thin narrow handle would have been wrapped with leather or another material to give a good grip and to protect the hand. The sword would have been kept in a scabbard made of wood and leather.

Warriors often gave their swords names such as 'killer' or 'leg-biter'. The names often referred to the particular feats achieved by the sword itself. Warriors would be buried with their weapons so that they could use them in the afterlife.

In the *Early People* gallery, look out for:

- Highly decorated sword hilt found on the Isle of Eigg (Case R10, no.1)
- Sword, axe head, spearhead and shield boss from a warrior's grave at Westness, Orkney (Case R10, no.2)
- A sword found at Gorton, Scotland (Case R10, no.3)
- Sword from a man's grave at Ballinaby, Islay (Case W14, no.1)
- Sword from a boat burial at Kiloran Bay, Colonsay (Case W15, no.7)

See



How decorated is this sword hilt?

Can you work out what the Vikings might have used to make its narrow handle more comfortable to hold?

Touch



What does the sword hilt feel like in your hand?

How would the hilt have protected your hand during battle?

Viking handling box



Axe head

Axes were vital to daily life in the Viking Age. Metalworkers made sharp axes for cutting wood for building houses and longships. Farmers used these axes to chop down trees and clear land so that they could grow more crops.

An axe was also an important weapon. Axes with long wooden handles were the most common weapon, because most Viking men would own one for their everyday chores.

This axe head is a replica of a Viking battle axe.

In the *Early People* gallery, look out for:

- Sword, axe head, spearhead and shield boss from a warrior's grave at Westness, Orkney (Case R10, no.2)
- Axe heads found at Dunrobin and Westness, Orkney (Case R10, no.4)
- Axe heads from a high status man's grave at Ballinaby, Islay (Case W14, no.7)
- Axe head found at a boat burial in Kiloran Bay on Colonsay (Case W15, no.9)

Think



Why do you think archaeologists sometimes only find axe heads without their handles?

Touch



How heavy does the axe head feel in your hand?

Can you work out how it would have connected to its wooden shaft (handle)?

Viking handling box



Spearhead

Together with the sword and the axe, the spear was an important part of a warrior's 'tool kit'. In fact, the spear was often the weapon of choice.

Spears were used as both pikes and throwing weapons. Pike spears had large, broad blades for stabbing and slicing at enemies. Throwing spears had much lighter, narrower blades which could be guided accurately towards their target.

This is a copy of a spearhead designed for throwing. It has been made of steel. In other examples found by archaeologists, the spears' sockets (where the spearhead fitted onto the wooden spear shaft) are elaborately decorated.

In the *Early People* gallery, look out for:

- Sword, axe head, spearhead and shield boss from a warrior's grave at Westness, Orkney (Case R10, no.2)
- Spearhead found in Vallay on North Uist (Case R10, no.5)

Touch



Feel the smooth edges of the spearhead. Why do you think it was made like this?

Can you work out how it fitted onto the wooden spear shaft (handle)?

Think



Why do you think archaeologists sometimes only find the metal parts of spears like this and not their wooden shafts?

Viking handling box



Whetstone

Whetstones were used in Viking times to sharpen iron tools, such as knives, axes, arrows, needles, scissors and any other instrument with a cutting edge or point. They were an essential and everyday part of a person's tool kit. Evidence from graves suggests that both men and women used whetstones. They were often hung from the waist, or worn around the neck, as a decorative pendant.

Types of stone which were particularly suitable for whetting were greatly valued and transported over long distances.

This example is a copy of a Viking Age whetstone and is made from coloured banded slate.

In the *Early People* gallery, look out for:

- Whetstones found in North Uist, Links of Skail and Brough of Birsay in Orkney (Case Q8, no.15)
- Whetstone pendant found in a high status woman's grave at Cnip on the Isle of Lewis (Case W14, no.26)

Touch



Feel the smooth edges of the whetstone.

Does the slate feel warm or cold to the touch?

What do you think it would look like after it had been used to sharpen lots of metal blades?

Viking handling box

Using the Viking objects with your class

1. Working in groups

There are 33 objects in the Viking box. To make sure that your pupils to see all of the objects, you can divide the class into four groups.

You can either:

- give each group one drawer of objects to look at and discuss
- give each group one object to look at and discuss in detail

Allow each group 5-10 minutes to talk about and/or draw the objects, then rotate the objects around each group.

You can follow this up with a group discussion session where children can share their ideas, discoveries and thoughts about the objects.

2. Asking questions

Asking questions can help focus children's attention on the objects, especially questions that can be answered by looking at the objects (rather than requiring prior knowledge). Useful starter questions include:

- What is it?
- What materials is it made of?
- Is it broken? Is there anything missing?
- What might this object have been used for?
- Do we have anything like this today?

3. Drawing and writing

You can encourage pupils to make a record of one of the objects by making a sketch or creating their own museum label, or writing a short descriptive piece.

Eg:

My favourite object was the...

I liked it because...

I thought it was interesting because...

Viking handling box

checklist

Please help us by

- 1 making sure that all items are returned to the box and signing this form
- 2 telling us how you think we could improve our handling collections

Thank you!

Object Returned (please tick)

Drawer 1: Daily life (9 objects)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Key | <input type="checkbox"/> Strike-a-light |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flint | <input type="checkbox"/> Comb |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barley | <input type="checkbox"/> Wheat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oats | <input type="checkbox"/> Hnefatafl game
(25 pieces in total, a board and a leather bag) |

Drawer 2: Trade and travel (8 objects)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amber | <input type="checkbox"/> Amber bead |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Glass bead | <input type="checkbox"/> Pewter bead |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cowrie shells in leather purse (12 shells in total) | <input type="checkbox"/> Silver coins (5 in total) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bone ice skate | |

Drawer 3: Clothing and jewellery (11 objects)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 samples of deer hide (1 Red and 1 Roe) | <input type="checkbox"/> Shoe |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bone needle | <input type="checkbox"/> Shears |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A pair of pewter tortoise brooches | <input type="checkbox"/> Beads (1 pewter, 1 glass) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thor's hammer pendant | <input type="checkbox"/> Bronze pin |

Drawer 4: Warriors and Warfare (5 objects)

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drinking horn | <input type="checkbox"/> Sword |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Axe head | <input type="checkbox"/> Spearhead |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Banded slate whetstone | |

Name of School: _____ Visit Date: _____

Teacher Signed: _____

Comments: _____