

The Battle of Largs

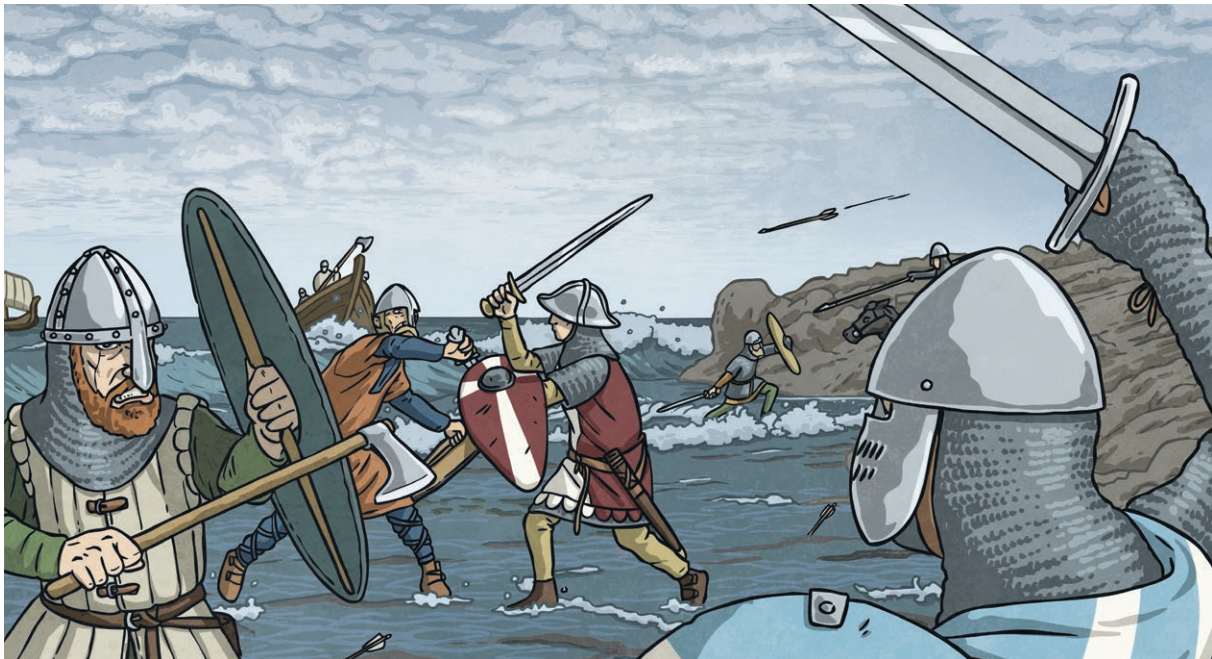
The Battle of Largs is a significant part of Scottish history because it was the last Viking raid on Scotland's mainland. The battle was ferociously fought between Norwegian Vikings (Norsemen) and the Scots on the 2nd October 1263.

The battle took place in Largs, Ayrshire. Largs is a small town on the west coast of Scotland.



History of the Battle

In September 1263, King Haakon ordered his army of Vikings to invade Scotland to stop King Alexander III gaining control of the Western Isles. However, when the Norsemen were travelling to Scotland, their longships were caught in a terrible storm and they were forced to go ashore on Largs. King Haakon sent additional men to recover the lost ships but they were met by the Scots, who were primed for battle.



It is unclear who won the battle because men on both sides were killed or wounded. However, the Vikings retrieved their longships and fled back to Norway and the Scots regained their land.

Scottish Legend

According to Scottish legend, on the night of the attack, a barefoot Norseman stepped on a thistle and cried out in pain. This alerted the Scots and helped them win the battle.

Largs Viking Festival

Largs' Viking heritage is celebrated every year at the Largs Viking Festival. At the festival, visitors can go back in time and experience life in a Viking village. They can also watch a re-enactment of the Battle of Largs and the burning of a Viking longship.



Life in a Viking village



Burning of a Viking longship



Battle of Largs re-enactment

To mark the end of the festival, there is a fireworks display at the Pencil Monument. The monument was built in 1912 to commemorate the battle.

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Questions

1. Why was the Battle of Largs significant in Scottish history?

2. Which phrase in the text tells you that the battle was violent?

3. Who ordered the Vikings to invade Scotland and why?

4. Use three adjectives to describe what you think a Norseman would be like.

5. Do you think King Alexander III is a significant individual in Scotland?

Explain your answer.

6. Why do you think it is unclear who won the battle?

7. Using the text and any other information you know about the Battle of Largs, which side do you think won? Explain your answer.

8. Name three attractions that visitors can see at the Largs Viking Festival.

9. Write three facts you have learnt about the Battle of Largs.

Challenge:

Design a leaflet to advertise the Largs Viking Festival. Things to include:

- the date, time and place;
- the different attractions visitors can see;
- why the Battle of Largs is important.

Remember to make your poster bright, colourful and include headings.

Answers

1. Why was the Battle of Largs significant in Scottish history?

The Battle of Largs was significant in Scottish history because it was the last Viking raid on Scottish mainland.

2. Which phrase in the text tells you that the battle was violent?

The phrase in the text is ferociously fought.

3. Who ordered the Vikings to invade Scotland and why?

King Haakon ordered his army of Vikings to invade Scotland to stop King Alexander III gaining control of the Western Isles.

4. Use three adjectives to describe what you think a Norseman would be like.

Answers may vary

5. Do you think King Alexander III is a significant individual in Scotland?

Explain your answer.

Answers may vary.

6. Why do you think it is unclear who won the battle?

It is unclear who won the battle because men on both sides were killed or wounded. Answers may vary.

7. Using the text and any other information you know about the Battle of Largs, which side do you think won? Explain your answer.

Answer may vary.

8. Name three attractions that visitors can see at the Largs Viking Festival.

Three attractions visitors can see at the Largs Viking Festival are: burning of a Viking longship; battle re-enactments; the Pencil monument; life in a Viking village; fireworks display.

9. Write three facts you have learnt about the Battle of Largs.

Answers may vary.

Challenge:
Various answers.