

Factual writing: The Battle of Hastings 1066

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Here are lots of facts about the Battle of Hastings. Use them to write your own factual account, written in paragraphs.

**Norman
cavalrymen
and archers**



**Norman soldiers
on horses
attacking the
English soldiers**



Who the battle was between:

- The battle took place on 14th October 1066
- Harold Godwinson had been made King of England after the death of King Edward the Confessor
- William the Duke of Normandy was fighting Harold for the throne
- William's brother, Bishop Odo, is known to have fought in the battle

The positions:

- the 14th October was reportedly a bright day
- King Harold's army was positioned at the top of Senlac Hill, William's at the bottom of the hill
- the front line of Harold's army formed a wall with their shields to protect them from attack
- William's army were split into three groups
- archers formed the front lines and behind them were the infantry (foot soldiers with spears)
- he held his cavalry (men on horses) in reserve

William of Normandy's battle plan:

- experts suggest that William was planning to start the battle with his archers shooting arrows at King Harold's army to weaken them
- he would then send in the infantry to create gaps in the English lines
- this would be followed by the cavalry who would break through King Harold's army and chase the soldiers

The death of King Harold:

- King Harold was killed late on in the battle
- it has been believed for about 900 years that he was killed when an arrow struck him in the eye
- this is what is shown in the Bayeux Tapestry
- experts suggest that this was made up some years after the battle
- he is more likely to have been hacked to death during the battle
- once King Harold had been killed there was no leader for the English army and many of them fled the battleground
- King Harold's army lost the Battle of Hastings and William, Duke of Normandy was the victor

Where the battle took place:

- the battle took place 7 miles north of Hastings
- the area (Senlac Hill) was covered with trees
- it was first described in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as the battle 'at the hoary apple tree'
- The Domesday Book of 1087 called it the 'Battle of Hastings'
- by about 1100 it was also called 'Senlac'

The battle:

- the Norman archers had to shoot up the hill towards King Harold's army
- this was not very successful as the arrows tended to bounce off the shields, or fly over their heads
- King Harold didn't have many archers in his army, so the Norman archers had few arrows to reuse once all theirs had gone
- the infantry who had spears were then sent to attack King Harold's army
- they received a bombardment from King Harold's army who were armed with spears, axes and stones
- William's infantry were not able to create any gaps in King Harold's army, who still kept up their wall of shields
- William sent in his cavalry next, but they too could not break through
- William's army began to retreat
- a rumour started going around that William of Normandy had been killed
- King Harold's army began to chase after William's army who were fleeing
- William then burst through his army on horseback to show his face to the English and shouted that he was still alive
- part of King Harold's army, who had run down the hill, were surrounded and hacked to death
- William then led his army in a final attack against King Harold's army
- the remains of King Harold's army gathered on a hillock, but were soon beaten