

Theme 3:

Norman England, 1066-88

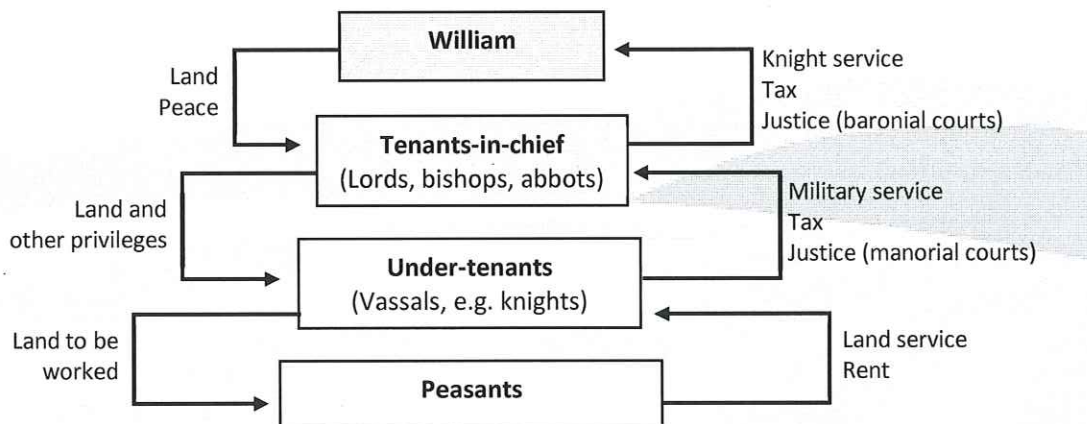


The Feudal System

The **feudal system** was the system of landholding, and the duties and obligations that came with it.

William gave land to his tenants-in-chief, but they had to provide him troops when needed. Land with this obligation was called a **fief** (or *feud*).

Some landholders also had to provide **knights**. **Knight service** was for 40 days, and was unpaid – the tenant-in-chief had to provide money, weapons and equipment for them. Essentially, this ensured that William had troops without having to pay for them himself.



The king was the most powerful person in the feudal hierarchy, followed by the tenants-in-chief. Vassals were not as powerful, and answered to the tenants-in-chief.

Tenants-in-chief

Tenants-in-chief held their fiefs direct from the king. They were important people like **barons**, and some were Church leaders (e.g. bishops). They had several important roles:

Military:

Expected to fight with the king and put down any local opposition.



Social:

- Provide knights for the king
- Organise the transfer of land-holding from Saxons to Normans
- Provide courts in each **barony** (area of land held by a baron)



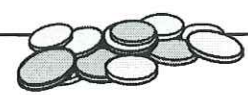
Political:

Gave advice to the king, and food and shelter when he travelled around the country.



Economy:

They gave the king a share of the revenue earned in their fief. They also kept a share themselves.



Knight service

There were probably around 6000 knights in Norman England. Their job was to guard their lord's property, help defeat any threats and provide up to 40 days' knight service when needed.

Knights were superior soldiers. They used **cavalry charges** and **couched lances** effectively against their enemies, and were often based in castles.

Knights replaced thegns as the under-tenants; the lords of the manor. They dealt with minor court cases in **manorial courts**.



Landholding

Under William, when a landholder died their heir did not automatically inherit the land. They had to prove their loyalty to William, and pay him to use the land. This payment was called a **relief**.

William could reward loyal followers with low reliefs, or threaten difficult landholders with high reliefs.

This was a new system, which even Normans hadn't had before. It was designed to **encourage loyalty to the king** and **reduce the power of potential challengers**.

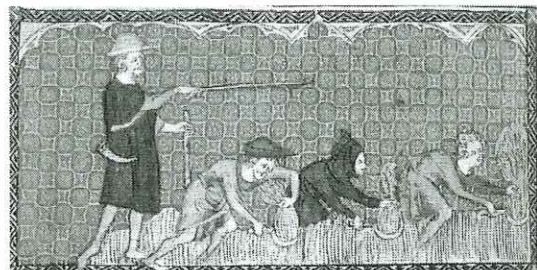
Homage

Landholders had to carry out a ceremony of **homage** to William. They promised on the Bible to remain loyal to him, saying "I become your man".

Tenants-in-chief would perform similar ceremonies with their under-tenants.

Labour service

Labour service was the work that peasants did in return for using the land. It involved farm work (e.g. ploughing the lord's fields) or providing produce.



Forfeiture

Forfeiture was the punishment for breaking the agreement between landholder and tenant. If the land-user didn't provide the service required of them, they would **forfeit their land** or **pay a fine**.



Match each speech bubble with the correct person in the feudal system.

I hold my land directly from the king. In return I must pay taxes and provide him with knights when needed.

I'm at the bottom of the feudal hierarchy. I farm the lord's land. The person in charge of me is an under-tenant.

I'm a soldier, and I answer to my tenant-in-chief. I give 40 days' military service to the king when required.

I'm the most powerful person in society. Nobody gets land without paying and showing their loyalty to me.

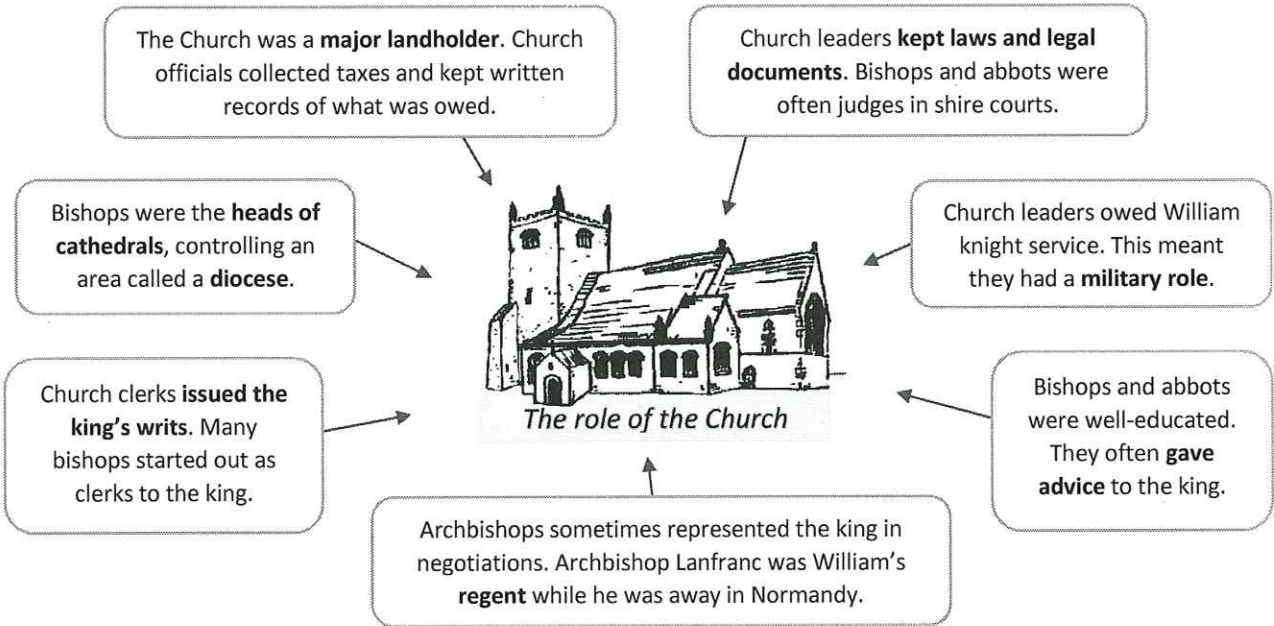
Knight

Peasant

King

Tenant-in-chief

The Church



The last Anglo-Saxon Archbishop of Canterbury was **Stigand**. He was replaced in **1070** by **Lanfranc**. There were some key differences between them:



Stigand had been appointed because he was a close ally of Earl Godwin.

Stigand didn't have control over the Church outside his area.

Stigand was a **pluralist**: he was bishop of 2 areas (Canterbury and Winchester) so he had more land and money. He was also accused of giving top jobs in return for money (**simony**).

Lanfranc thought that appointment should be from God.

Lanfranc was made the head of the Church in England.

Lanfranc was against this: he thought the Church should stand above corruption and money.



Lanfranc's Reforms

Lanfranc was an Italian monk who had run St. Stephen's monastery in Normandy. He was heavily involved in changes to the Church.

He wanted priests to live **spiritual lives**. He banned marriage and made celibacy (no sex) compulsory for priests.

From 1076, priests were tried in special **Church-only bishops' courts**.

There were **more monasteries** – places dedicated to a spiritual life.

Lanfranc introduced Norman **guidelines for following and creating new laws**.

Anglo-Saxon **cathedrals in rural locations were knocked down and rebuilt** in market towns (e.g. Thetford to Norwich)

There were **more archdeacons** (below bishops, but above priests). They looked after Church courts.



Lanfranc's reforms

Within about 50 years, every English church and cathedral had been **rebuilt in Norman style**.

Although most priests were still Anglo-Saxons, after 1070 there was only one Anglo-Saxon bishop left (Wulfstan of Worcester).

Normanisation

The Church was "Normanised":

- Norman bishops and archdeacons influenced the messages people heard about the king and God.
- A quarter of all land was held by the Church. Putting Normans as bishops and archdeacons reduced the risk of Anglo-Saxon rebellions.
- Parish priests came under stricter control. They had to follow Norman procedures.

Normanisation of the Church strengthened William's power in 3 ways:

New bishops did **homage** to the king. Church leaders could forfeit their lands if they failed their duties.

When a bishop died, William chose his successor. He also received the revenue from that land until the replacement bishop arrived.

William controlled communication between the Church leaders and the pope. This stopped people obeying the pope over him.





The most important people in the Church were _____, who often held large areas of land. These areas were known as a _____.

The last Anglo-Saxon Archbishop of Canterbury was _____, who was replaced by _____ in 1070. Lanfranc made a number of changes to the Church to make it a more spiritual organisation, dedicated to serving God. For example, priests had to remain _____; more monasteries were set up; and more _____ were appointed.

To increase their control, the Normans replaced Anglo-Saxons bishops with Normans, made bishops perform _____ to the king, and controlled communication with the pope. This process is known as _____.

- Stigand
- homage
- archbishops
- celibate
- Normanisation
- Diocese
- Lanfranc
- archdeacons

Changes to Society

CHANGES

CONTINUITY (STAYED THE SAME)

King

William built castles and cathedrals as a symbol of his power. He introduced the feudal system so that he had ultimate control over society.

The roles in the royal household (the king's servants, troops, advisers) didn't change; William just replaced Anglo-Saxons with Normans doing the same job.



Nobles

Earls became tenants-in-chief. The earldoms were made smaller to reduce their power. The nobles were no longer in a position to challenge the king's power.

Just like Anglo-Saxon earls had sworn loyalty to Edward, tenants-in-chief had to pay homage to William.

Warriors

Thegns were destroyed as a class and replaced by knights. Knights had less power than thegns had had.



Similar to how thegns owed Edward military service, Norman knights owed the king knight service.

Peasants and slaves

The number of free peasants (ceorls) went down. Peasants came under more pressure because William wanted more revenue from the land. Normans thought slavery was wrong, and freed some slaves.

Day to day village life for most peasants was much the same as before – they still farmed for their lord.



Economy

William stopped trade with Scandinavian countries (this especially impacted the Danelaw areas). Trade with Normandy increased. Large cities grew rapidly.

Towns kept the trading rights given to them by Anglo-Saxon kings.

Norman Government

Changes to Government

The existing Anglo-Saxon government was more advanced than government in Normandy, so William kept and improved what worked.

- William **centralised power** so that he had total control. He owned all the land and no one was powerful enough to challenge him.

Ways in which power was centralised:

- The **power of the earls was reduced**, and some earldoms were phased out completely.
- William used **regents** (e.g. Lanfranc) to run either England or Normandy while he was away. He usually returned whenever there were signs of trouble.

Knight service: troops loyal to the king

William earned money through **reliefs** and the **geld tax**

The Church was Normanised under Lanfranc



The Domesday Book recorded how much areas were worth, and how much they should pay

All land was owned by William

Demesne: Land kept by William for himself

The feudal system: all land users depended on the king

Sheriffs

The role of the sheriff (aka shire reeve) stayed mostly the same as in Anglo-Saxon times; William just replaced the Anglo-Saxons with Normans.

The key differences of Norman sheriffs were:

POWER

Norman sheriffs were more powerful than Anglo-Saxon sheriffs. They answered only to the king.

LAW

Some of the sheriffs' legal responsibilities were taken over by baronial, manorial and Church courts.

DEFENCE

The sheriff's military role now ran alongside knight service. Sheriffs looked after castles in their shire.

Sheriffs were often unpopular with local people:

- They were **entitled to a share of the revenues** they collected from their shire. This meant they could make themselves very rich.
- A lot of **land-grabbing** was done by sheriffs. Because of their power, people had nobody to complain to.

The Forest

William liked hunting and kept much more land as **royal demesne** than Edward had. Demesne was the land that the king kept for his own use.

He made new areas into **forest** – this was not necessarily covered in trees; it meant that it was protected land reserved for hunting.

Many landholders lost land to forest. Entire areas were turned into forest, such as the New Forest in southern England.

Reasons why the 'forest' was significant:

- It showed that the **power of the king** was above everything else.
- Extending the forest **increased the amount of land William controlled directly**.
- Taking areas for forest was basically land-grabbing – William doing this **made land-grabbing by sheriffs and barons look more acceptable**.
- There were **harsh punishments** for breaking forest laws, which showed how brutal Norman rule could be.
- William earned more **money** from the forests – from fines and the sale of hunting rights.

Animals were protected; especially William's favourites, deer and boar



Hunting weapons were not allowed into the forest



Restrictions on cutting wood, buildings and clearing land in the forest



Hunting dogs were not allowed into the forest



Damage to the vegetation (needed by the animals) was forbidden



Write a definition for each of these:

Centralised power

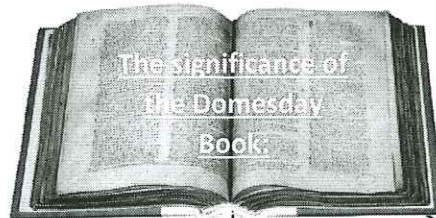
Demesne

Forest

The Domesday Book

At Christmas 1085, William ordered a survey of England. He wanted to find out who held what land, what taxes they owed and whether they could pay more.

The results of the survey were written up in the **Domesday Book** in **1086**.



Financial

William wanted to find ways to get more money out of his tenants. There were heavy geld taxes in 1084 and 1086.

Legal

The survey helped to solve land disputes (many Anglo-Saxons claimed land had been taken from them). This boosted the image of William as a fair king.

Military

There was an invasion threat from Denmark in 1085, though it never happened. The Domesday survey may have been linked to seeing how many soldiers each tenant could provide.

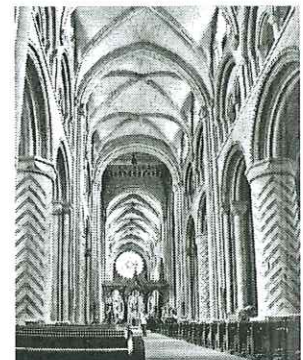
The council that met to discuss the Domesday survey was called mainly to discuss a possible new Viking attack in 1085. The invasion never happened, but William took it seriously – he brought thousands of soldiers over from Normandy.

Norman Aristocracy

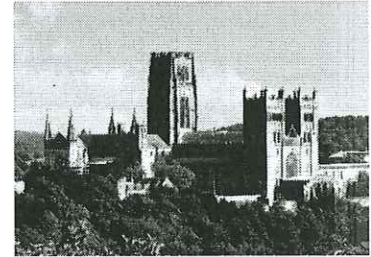
Culture

The Norman **aristocrats** (nobles/important people) liked to show off their power, wealth and superiority over the English.

- **They built huge, more experimental cathedrals, churches and castles.** Winchester Cathedral was the longest in Europe; Westminster had Europe's biggest hall; the Tower of London was the largest stone keep in Europe.
- **Male aristocrats shaved the backs of their heads.** Spending time on your appearance showed you were rich because it was a luxury few could afford.
- **They introduced a complicated ceremonial method of butchering animals they hunted.** Hunting was their favourite leisure activity.

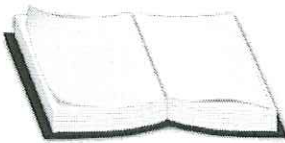


- **They brought the culture of chivalry.** This was a kind of moral code about looking up to knights, and treating your enemies in a certain way – William was merciful to enemies, putting them in prison rather than killing them.
- **They were very religious.** They believed in penance – everyone who fought against the English at Hastings had to atone for their sins by praying or giving money to the Church. Each man they wounded was 40 days' penance.
- **The Normans threw out many Anglo-Saxon saints' relics and destroyed tombs.** They thought they were superior to the Englishmen they had conquered.
- **They introduced family names based on where they lived.** They liked to pass estates onto a single heir, rather than giving pieces to different family members.



Language

William tried to learn English, but gave up because he didn't have the time. Lanfranc also couldn't speak English when he was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 1070.



All legal and Church documents were written in **Latin**. The Norman aristocracy spoke **French** though their children would probably speak both French and English.

Many Normans did not learn to read. Youngsters were often whipped when witnessing land grants to make sure they remembered the details.

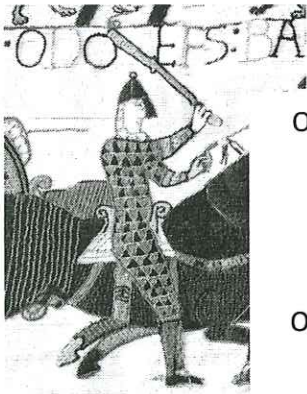
English became a **vernacular language** – spoken only by the common people.

True or False?



The Norman aristocrats generally thought they were better than the English.	T	F
Norman aristocrats shaved their whole heads to symbolise their luxurious lifestyle.	T	F
The Normans were not very religious.	T	F
Normans gave family names, named after the area they lived in.	T	F
Important documents were written in French.	T	F
Most Normans – including William – did not speak English.	T	F

Bishop Odo of Bayeux



Odo was William's half-brother. William had made him Bishop of Bayeux in 1049, and Odo helped William in his invasion of England.

He was rewarded with the earldom of Kent (forfeited from Leofwine Godwinson). He became the second largest landholder after the king.

Odo was **co-regent** of England (along with William FitzObern) while William was away in 1067.

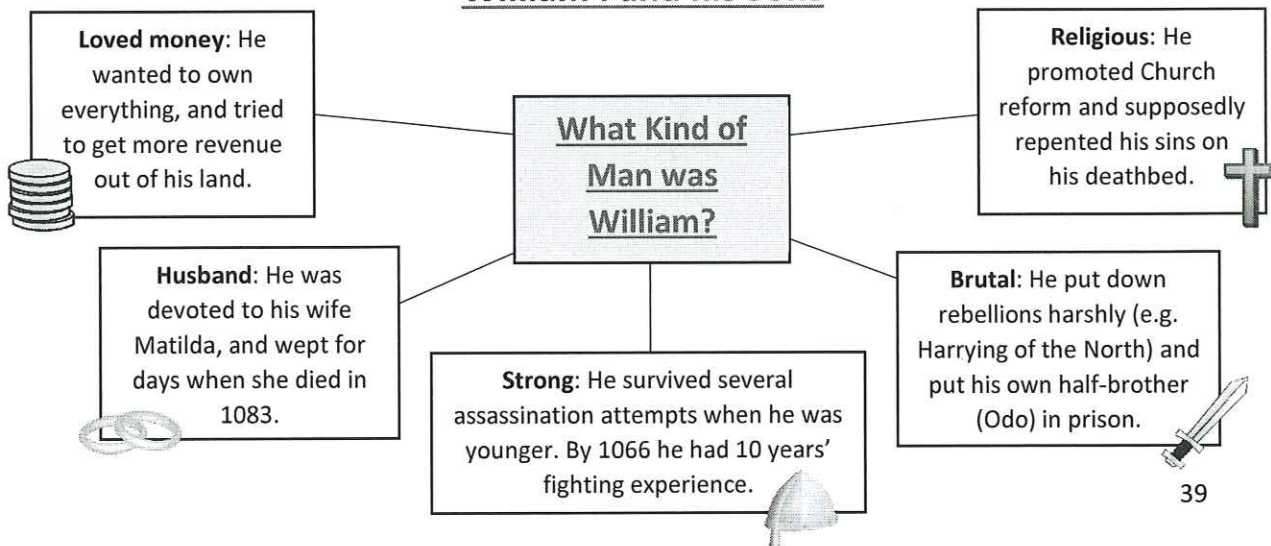
Odo in trouble:

Odo got into trouble with William due to his corrupt behaviour. He seems to have had ambitions for power.

- The Domesday Book records many complaints against Odo for **illegally taking land**, including from the Church. Lanfranc complained to William and Odo was made to give land back in 1076.
- William sent Odo to deal with trouble in Northumberland in 1079. While he was there, Odo **damaged the region, robbed people and took cathedral treasures**.
- **Odo tried to take some of William's knights with him on a trip to Rome**. This went against William's power because knights were loyal to the king, not the personal troops of their tenant-in-chief.

In 1082, William had Odo put in prison. William was only persuaded to release him on his deathbed in 1087; he had freed other prisoners (e.g. Morcar) with much less persuasion.

William I and his Sons



Relationship with his Son, Robert

William's eldest child was **Robert**. He was given the mocking nickname Robert Curthose ('short stockings'/'dumpy legs'), probably by William.

They had a difficult relationship.

Robert's revolt shows a common problem – princes who wanted power before their fathers were ready to let go of it

In **1077**, Robert started a fight with two of his younger brothers after they played a prank on him. He felt that William didn't punish them enough, and tried to take control of his castle.

William wanted Robert and his supporters arrested. Robert fled and was taken in by King Philip of France. He began to launch raids from a castle in Normandy.

Unknown to William, Matilda was sending money to Robert. She explained to William that she was just looking after her son.

In **1079**, Robert knocked William off his horse during battle. Robert gave his defenceless father his own horse and ordered him to retreat - William was humiliated.

William and Robert made up at Easter **1080**, a reunion organised by Matilda. Robert was once again the chosen heir for Normandy.



William's Death

William was injured in July 1087 when he was thrown from his horse during a raid in France. He suffered in pain for weeks before he died on the 9th of September.

People thought his death was full of bad omens:

- When he died, his panicked servants stole everything they could, leaving his stripped corpse on the floor.
- At his funeral, his fat corpse burst when it was being squeezed into the tomb. It caused a horrible smell which drove everyone out of the cathedral.

William had said that Robert should inherit Normandy, while William Rufus (his favourite son) should inherit England.

However, he was filled with guilt for his sins on his deathbed, and said he would let God choose the next king of England.

▪ Odo was William's...

brother

half-brother

son

▪ William's eldest son was...

William Rufus

Odo

Robert

▪ Matilda was William's...

daughter

sister

wife

▪ Robert was heir to...

Normandy

France

England

▪ William's favourite son was...

Robert

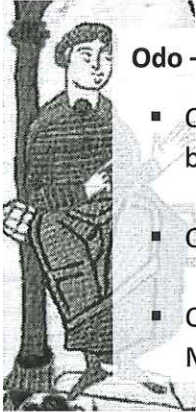
William Rufus

Henry



William Rufus v. Robert and Odo

Lanfranc crowned William Rufus king William II in September 1087. But -



Odo – recently released from prison – started a rebellion against William II in 1088.

- Odo and many barons thought it made sense for the same person (Robert Curthose) to be in charge of both England and Normandy.
- Odo was joined by his brother Robert of Mortain (*another Robert*).
- Other smaller rebellions also broke out in places such as Norwich, Leicester and the Marcher earldoms.

However, most of the Norman aristocrats and English population were **against** the revolt. William Rufus caught both Odo and Robert of Mortain at Pevensey Castle, using local fyrd troops. Odo escaped to Rochester Castle, but eventually surrendered after Robert Curthose didn't come to support him.

William was popular after Odo's defeat, and made promises to overturn many of the hated parts of Norman rule (e.g. high taxes, the forest). However, he went back on all of them!

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- The Anglo-Saxon social system was replaced by William's feudal system.
- The Church was reformed and "Normanised" under Archbishop Lanfranc.
- William kept many Anglo-Saxon elements, but centralised power so that he was the most powerful.
- The authority of the sheriff/shire reeve was strengthened.
- The Domesday Book recorded details of all tenants and landholders. This helped William to maintain his control of the country.
- Anglo-Saxon aristocratic culture was replaced by Norman aristocratic culture. Aristocrats now spoke French, while English became a vernacular (local/common) language.
- Odo, William's half-brother, was untouchable until he began to challenge William's power.
- William's strong personality influenced the success of the Norman Conquest, but caused tensions with his sons, one of whom (Robert) rebelled against him.
- After William died in 1087, there was a dispute over who should succeed him. His son William Rufus successfully defeated a rebellion by Odo, and was supported by most of the population.

Topic Test 2: William in Power: Securing the Kingdom

1. What word describes land held in return for a service to someone higher up?

2. What was a relief?

3. What was knight service? How long was it for?

4. Who was the last Anglo-Saxon Archbishop of Canterbury?

5. Name two changes that Lanfranc made to the Church.

6. Name one way in which William centralised power.

7. Name one feature of the role of a Norman sheriff.

8. What was the demesne?

9. When was the Domesday Book produced?

10. What language replaced English for written documents?

11. Name 3 characteristics of William's personality that helped the success of the Norman Conquest.

12. Which of William's sons rebelled against him in 1077?

13. Which son succeeded William as king?

14. Who unsuccessfully rebelled against the new king in 1088?
