Name: _____ Date: _____

The Domesday Book: Counting All of England

Circle group

In 1086, King William of England wanted to know what was in his kingdom. He had been king for twenty years. He wanted to know who owned the land. He also wanted to know how much tax people could pay. So he sent officials all over the country to ask questions.

The officials went from county to county. In each place, they met with local people. They asked how much land each person had. They asked how many farm workers and plows there were. They asked about mills, ponds, and woods. They even counted some animals. The answers were written in Latin. Latin was used for important records then.

The records were put into two big books. Together they are called the Domesday Book. One old story about the name is that nobody could argue with the answers. What was written in the book was the last word on who owned what.

Today, historians love the book. It shows what village life in England was like almost a thousand years ago. It is kept safe in a national archive.

Questions

1. Why did King William want a survey?

_____

_____

2. Who collected the information?

_____

_____

3. What did the officials ask about?

_____

_____

4. What language were the answers written in?

_____

_____

5. Why do historians value the book?

_____

_____

6. Why might some people have worried when the officials came?

_____

_____

Words to know

officials: people who do important jobs for a government
tax: money that people must pay to their government
county: a region of a country with its own local government
historians: people who study the past

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Domesday Book: Counting All of England

Triangle group

In the year 1086, King William of England decided he wanted to know exactly what his kingdom held. He had become king twenty years earlier, and he needed to learn who owned the land and how much tax people could pay. So he sent officials all over the country to ask questions.

The officials traveled from county to county. In each place, they gathered local people and asked how much land each person held, how many farm workers and plows there were, and how many mills, ponds, and woods lay nearby. They even counted some of the animals. The answers were written down in Latin, the language used for important records at the time.

The final record was gathered into two large books, which together are known as the Domesday Book. One old explanation for the name is that people felt its answers could not be argued with. Once something was written in the book, it was treated as the last word on who owned what.

Today the Domesday Book is a treasure for historians. It paints a detailed picture of village life in England nearly a thousand years ago, from the size of the farms to the number of mills on a stream. The book is still kept safely in a national archive.

Questions

1. Why did King William want a survey of his kingdom?

_____

_____

2. Who gathered the information?

_____

_____

3. What kinds of things did the officials ask about?

_____

_____

4. In what language were the answers written?

_____

_____

5. Why is the Domesday Book valuable to historians?

_____

_____

6. Why might some people have felt worried when the officials arrived?

_____

_____

Words to know

officials: people who do important jobs for a government
tax: money that people must pay to their government
county: a region of a country with its own local government
historians: people who study the past

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Domesday Book: Counting All of England

Square group

In the year 1086, King William of England resolved to learn precisely what his kingdom contained. He had held the crown for twenty years, and he needed to discover who owned the land and how much tax his people were capable of paying. For this purpose, he dispatched officials throughout the country to ask a long series of questions.

The officials traveled from county to county. In each location, they assembled the local people and inquired how much land each person held, how many farm laborers and plows there were, and how many mills, ponds, and woods lay in the neighborhood. They even counted some of the livestock. The answers were recorded in Latin, which was the language reserved for important documents at the time.

The finished record was compiled into two large volumes, which together are known as the Domesday Book. One old explanation for the name is that people believed its answers could not be disputed. Once a fact had been written in the book, it was regarded as the final word on who owned what.

Today the Domesday Book is a treasure for historians. It presents a richly detailed portrait of village life in England nearly a thousand years ago, from the size of the farms to the number of mills along a stream. The book is still carefully preserved in a national archive.

Questions

1. Why did King William want a survey of his whole kingdom?

_____

_____

2. Who gathered the information for the king?

_____

_____

3. What kinds of things did the officials inquire about?

_____

_____

4. In which language were the answers recorded?

_____

_____

5. Why is the Domesday Book a treasure for historians?

_____

_____

6. Why might some people have felt uneasy when the officials arrived?

_____

_____

Words to know

officials: people who do important jobs for a government
tax: money that people must pay to their government
county: a region of a country with its own local government
historians: people who study the past

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: The Domesday Book: Counting All of England

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: The Domesday Book: Counting All of England

Easier · 178 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.9

1. He wanted to know who owned the land and how much tax people could pay.
2. Officials he sent from county to county.
3. Land, farm workers, plows, mills, ponds, and woods.
4. Latin.
5. It shows what village life in England was like long ago.
6. The survey could decide how much tax they owed.

Triangle: The Domesday Book: Counting All of England

This passage · 213 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.4

1. He wanted to know who owned the land and how much tax people could pay.
2. Officials he sent from county to county.
3. Land, farm workers, plows, mills, ponds, and woods.
4. Latin.
5. It gives a detailed picture of village life in England long ago.
6. The survey could be used to decide how much tax they owed.

Square: The Domesday Book: Counting All of England

Harder · 226 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 8.6

1. He needed to learn who owned the land and how much tax his people could pay.
2. Officials he sent throughout the country, from county to county.
3. Land, farm laborers, plows, mills, ponds, and woods.
4. Latin.
5. It presents a detailed portrait of village life in England long ago.
6. The survey could be used to decide how much tax they would owe.