

Learning Sustainability from the Vikings SIMULATION OF CHANGE IN NORSE GREENLAND

Part 1

Simulation of change in Norse Greenland

EXERCISE

D

Subject History
Level easy
Duration 75 minutes

Learning Opportunity

Competences	Detailed description
Social and civic competences	The pupils are aware of the range of influences on the development of Norse Greenland society, and the difficulties of developing appropriate strategies to enable the society to survive and flourish.
Learning to learn competences	The pupils have to develop strategies based on a range of possible scenarios.

Overview

Min.	Topic	Tasks for the pupils	Tasks for the teacher	Material
5	Introducing the Norse Greenland settlement.		Tell the story of Erik the Red and allocate the farms	Presentation D 1
60	The simulation	Consider the appropriate strategies for each time period and complete their journal at the end of each time period.	Manage the pace of the journey through Norse Greenland history from 1010-1460.	Presentation D 2 Strategy Cards (Material D 3) Norse Greenland settlement journal (Worksheet D 4)
10	Debrief and plenary			

Detailed Description

STEP 1

If not already done in exercise C, tell the story of Eric the Red's landing using Erik the Red.ppt

Allocate three types of farm – high/medium/low status. These categories have been simplified but reflect the reality of farms in Norse Greenland. They can also be referred to as magnates (high status), free-holders (medium status) and cottagers (low status). This activity can be used in conjunction with exercise C, enabling students to choose their own farms based on the historical evidence, or pairs of pupils can simply be allocated to low/medium or high status farms. In case the farms are allocated, the table below shows proportions dependent on class size.

- 30 pupils = 15 farms = 3 high /5 medium /7 low
- 28 pupils = 14 farms = 3 high /4 medium /6 low
- 26 pupils = 13 farms = 2 high /4 medium /7 low
- 24 pupils = 12 farms = 2 high /4 medium /6 low

Each group should be given a Norse Greenland settlement journal (Worksheet D4), along with the three strategy cards of Material D3 (Mainly farming / Mainly hunting / Balanced approach).

STEP 2

Use Presentation D2.

Brief students as to what is required for the year 1010 in terms of choosing their strategy before they see the actual events on the powerpoint slide. Once they have chosen their strategy, display the slide for the year following which they should complete their journal entry.

Repeat this pattern for each of the years in the sequence as follows:

1. **Run through the years: 1010 – 1135** (slides 8-25)
2. **Critical reflection relating to the preceding period.** Give the pupils the open task to describe the experiences they made. They should explain possible interpretations and reactions.
3. **Run the year 1160** (slides 26-29)
4. **Spannered event 1.** A new bishop of Greenland arrives (1153) bringing a range of luxury products which benefit the wealthier farmers. But insists that all groups pay their tithes.
5. **Run the years 1185 – 1285** (slides 30-43)
6. **Critical reflection relating to the preceding century.**
Note: By 1260, a medium status farm has roughly the same resources that a low status farm had in 985.
7. **Run the year 1310** (slides 44-46)

8. Spannered event 2

The price of walrus ivory has collapsed (traders no longer want to buy it) – people in Europe are buying elephant ivory instead. How does this affect the settlement?

9. Run the years 1335-1360 (slides 47-52)

When the simulation runs, once a family unit reaches a single person, they must make a decision. They have two options. :

- a) remain in Greenland and move to a higher status farm (low – medium) / (medium / high)
- b) try and emigrate to Iceland or Norway. The poor weather in 1360 will prevent people from emigrating, but the option is still available for them in 1385 should they decide to emigrate as soon as practicable. But keep in mind, emigration is only possible, if boats from Europe arrive.

This will occur in 1360 for low status farms and 1385 or 1410 for medium status farms.

10. Run the year 1385 (slides 53-55)

11. Spannered event 3

Major storms in the North Atlantic prevent boats from reaching Greenland – no trade possible. Hunting seals also becomes more risky.

12. Run the years 1410-1460 (slides 56-64)

13. Critical reflection relating to the preceding period.

Note: By 1410, a high status farm has roughly the same resources that a low status farm had in 985.

STEP 3

Discuss the whole experience with the class. What kinds of adjustments did the students have to make and what sorts of problems did they face? To what extent were factors within their control, or beyond their control? A more detailed reflection may be realised in combination with exercise E.