**Charlemagne Worksheet**

**Introduction**

Emperor Charles the Great (742–814), more commonly referred to as Charlemagne, is a figure of monumental importance in the history of Western Europe. His military conquests created a European-wide empire with long-lasting impact, and many modern nation states have a place for Charlemagne in their creation myth. In academia, his life often acts as the starting point for university modules that introduce students to the medieval period, and his name also resonates in the public psyche. In very recent years, he has featured prominently in genealogical TV programmes as the ancestor of notable figures, such as Richard Branson, his name appears frequently in computer games with a medieval theme (*Total War*, to offer one example of several), and a fictionalised Charlemagne is frequently on the pages of popular novels.

Considering the KS2 curriculum’s focus British history, Charles the Great may seem like an unusual figure on which to base a learning package. Indeed, the EU’s prestigious Charlemagne Prize is awarded annually to individuals who have made significant contributions to the unification of Europe, and Charlemagne is sometimes referred to as the ‘father of Europe’. However, his legacy has exerted considerable impact on the culture and history of the British Isles, especially in the wake of the Norman Conquest, after which a Francophone aristocracy ruled for centuries.

It is the aim of these teaching materials to offer those working with KS2 students a ready-made package that will enable them to introduce the topics of Charlemagne, his legend and the connections between the English and French languages. It focusses on the development of the Charlemagne legend in medieval England in the century following the Norman Conquest of 1066. Included in the package is a PowerPoint presentation that elaborates on the brief introduction offered in the worksheet.

**Materials Included**

Within this package, you will find:

* **A 2-page worksheet**. On page one, students are provided with a very brief introduction to the historical Charlemagne and the development of his legend in the British Isles. The second page includes exercises that will enable students to develop their language skills.
* **A PowerPoint presentation** that can be downloaded for teachers and students to use in class or in their own time. This file offers an account of Charlemagne’s life and legend in greater depth than the worksheet. It is set out in distinct sections:
  + **Context** – The development of Europe and the Byzantine Empire after the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the fifth century.
  + **Historical Emperor** – The life of Charlemagne.
  + **Charlemagne’s Impact** – The development of Europe after Charlemagne’s death until 1066.
  + **Charlemagne across the Channel** – The impact of the Norman Conquest on the British Isles
  + **Legend** – The development of Charlemagne’s legend in popular culture to the present

**Meeting the KS2 Criteria**

**History**

Within the curriculum framework, this package is most appropriate for:

* A study of an aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils’ chronological knowledge beyond 1066

This study will:

* Provide students with an opportunity to examine the cultural impact of Charlemagne and his legend within the British Isles after the conquest of England by a Francophone aristocracy – the Normans. Having likely examined the Anglo-Saxon era, the Vikings, and the Romans during earlier studies, students will develop a greater understanding of the various migrations and conquests that exerted considerable impact on British society and culture into the twelfth century and beyond.
* Introduce students to the historical Charlemagne, who in the year 800 was the first ruler crowned as Roman Emperor after the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the fifth century (n.b. the Eastern Roman Empire, often called Byzantium) continued to exist in various forms until the conquest of Constantinople (modern day Istanbul) by the forces of Mehmed II in 1453. By studying Charlemagne, students will considerably extend their chronological knowledge of the Roman Empire.

**Languages**

The aspects of the languages framework most appropriate to this exercise are (**in bold when only aspects are relevant**):

* Read carefully and show understanding of words, phrases and simple writing
* Appreciate stories, songs, poems and rhymes in the language
* Broaden their vocabulary and **develop their ability to understand new words that are introduced into familiar written material**, including through using a dictionary
* Understand basic grammar appropriate to the language being studied, including (where relevant): feminine, masculine and neuter forms and the conjugation of high-frequency verbs; key features and patterns of the language; how to apply these, for instance, to build sentences; and **how these differ from or are similar to English**.

This study will:

* Develop students’ understanding of the influence of other languages on English – in this case, Old French – through use of an exercise based on cognates (similar words in different languages)
* Enable students to develop an ability to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words through a process of deduction – an essential skill in language acquisition.