

A4 Open Educational Resource: DK Findout Pages on Viking Explorers

For this assignment, I picked the DK Findout pages about the Vikings and the Viking Explorers. (This is near the beginning of my explorer unit, after Zheng He and Marco Polo and before Henry the Navigator.) I'll probably concentrate on the pages about Viking longships, Leif Erikson, Erik the Red, and the longships. Here is the link to this open educational resource:

<https://www.dkfindout.com/us/history/vikings/>

I chose this resource because of the high-quality images available. I also know that the information from DK is accurate and well-researched. I was amazed to find out that DK has an online version (of the famous DK Eyewitness books) with interactives, online quizzes, and many things to click around and find. Another reason I chose this resource is because it is kid-friendly. To be honest, some of the information about the Vikings is rather unsavory, with lots of murder and pillaging. (Seriously, Erik, his father, and his son were all banished from their homes for the same crime—manslaughter.) In class, I will go into some of that, but before they get lost in the violent parts of Viking history, I want them to have solid background information. Parents wouldn't complain about this website, and the kids will still find it fascinating.

Why is it appropriate for your students?

The reading level of these pages is within range for my 5th grade ELL students, and they can use Google Read and Write if they are newcomers or have lower reading levels. Unlike some of the other webpages on the Vikings, this one is written at a good level for intermediate students without being simplistic or boring. The graphics are excellent and help the kids visualize the history.

How does it align with your outcomes?

One of my outcomes is for students to be able to write about and orally explain why and how explorers traveled to other places. This site provides some of the answers, though students will have to read carefully and explore the pictures and their captions to get the most out of this site. Some but not all of the other explorers we're studying are on this site, but I thought the information on the Vikings was particularly good.

With what other resources do you see it being paired with? Why?

My students will pair this resource with our Discovery Education videos (my school has a subscription and the students can get to the videos independently) and various NEWSela stories that are on topic and leveled precisely to the reading levels of my 5th graders. I chose these two resources because they are extremely high-quality, accurate, and age-appropriate. Instead of *me* teaching them about the explorers, and more specifically the Vikings, I want them to be able to discover and discuss. It's only then that a true understanding of history comes about. The videos on Discovery Education are high quality and will spark their interest, and then they

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can use NEWSela and DK Findout to learn more and report back on the new things they've learned.

Will it be used as an opener? Tutorial? Motivational piece? Refresher? Other?

Initially, I'll use a short video on the Vikings from the Discovery Education website to spark their interest (as an opener). They *always* want to know more, so letting them explore the DK Findout pages on the Viking Explorers will suck them in and get them reading and thinking about these explorers and their motivations. The page on the longship in particular is detailed enough that the students will get a better idea of the challenges of traveling long distance in these ships. When paired with sentence frames, word banks, and peer support, my students will be able to meet the goal of orally explaining why and how these explorers traveled.