Who were the Vikings?

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The Vikings were Scandinavian seafarers (1) known for their raids (2) and exploration, which left a lasting impact on language (3) and systems of governance worldwide. Despite popular stereotypes, their history is complex and nuanced.

Originally, the term "Viking" referred to the activity of exploring, piracy (4), or raiding rather than a specific group of people. However, it later became associated with Scandinavian seafarers who ventured beyond their borders (5) between 790 and 1100 A.D.

Their raids were extensive and often violent (6), targeting regions such as England, Scotland, Ireland, and even as far as North Africa and Canada. They also settled (7) in various areas, influencing (8) language and culture wherever they went.

During the "Great Heathen Army" invasion of England in 865, the Vikings took control of several Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Despite their reputation as raiders, Vikings also engaged in trade (9) and cultural exchange.

By the 11th century, Viking dominance began to wane due to political changes and the adoption (10) of Christianity. While popular culture often portrays Vikings as horned-helmeted warriors, their impact on language, trade, and governance was significant and enduring.

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