The Battle of Hastings Mapping Exercise

*TASK*

*Read all the information provided before drawing up your map.*

*You MUST include the following:*

* *Labels*
* *Arrows*
* *A numbered key*

## The Normans Arrive

8.30am William’s army arrives and finds Harold and his army already in place on Senlac Ridge. Harold and his standard are just behind the English shieldwall.

William divides his army into three sections: the Bretons under Alan of Brittany next to some marshy ground; the French and Flemish under Roger of Montgomery; the Normans, whom he commands himself, in the centre.

Each section of William’s army has three parts: the archers at the front; the infantry (footsoldiers) in the middle; the cavalry at the back.

## The Battle begins

9.30am The archers in William’s army are ordered forward to the bottom of the Senlac Ridge. From here they shoot at the English.

10.00am William sends all of his infantry against the English shieldwall.

11.00am The Breton infantry lose heart and retreat back down the hill. Panic spreads among William’s infantry and they believe William has been killed.

11.30am William’s infantry turn and retreat down the hill. William removes his helmet to show that he is still alive and to stop his infantry from running away from the battlefield. Some English fyrd soldiers chase the retreating Norman infantry but they are cut down by William’s cavalry.

## William’s cavalry attack

12.00 noon William launches all of his cavalry against the shieldwall but they fail to break through. The cavalry pretend to run away in panic; some English fyrd soldiers fall for the trick and chase after them. The cavalry turns around and slaughters them.

## The final attack

2.00pm William orders his soldiers to fire high up in the air so that their arrows drop down onto the heads of the English.

2.30pm William throws all of his remaining cavalry and infantry at the weakened English line.

3.00pm Harold’s brothers, Leofwine and Gyrth, are killed as the English fight desperately to hold the shieldwall together. Even Harold joins the fighting.

4.00pm William’s army finally bursts through the shieldwall and breaks the English up into small groups of exhausted soldiers.

## The end of the battle

5.00pm Harold is killed, surrounded by his bodyguard. The English fyrd, seeing their king dead, flee the battlefield.

5.30pm The remaining housecarls retreat from Senlac Ridge, fighting as they go. They stop at the top of Caldbec Hill and make their final stand. They fight to the death.

**Points to consider**

* How well positioned were the two armies at the start of the battle?
* Who showed the better leadership during the battle?
* What do you think it might have been like fighting in the battle?

