

Can I understand how Anglo Saxon society was structured?



We know lots about how Anglo Saxon society was structured from two important sources.

The Domesday book from 1085 describes land holdings and property ownership.

The Law-code of King Ethelberht of Kent (600's) talks of compensation and punishment dependant on the status of the offender and injured party.

Law-code of King Æthelberht of Kent



Great Domesday Book



Who was in charge?



In Anglo-Saxon times, the king was the most important person in each kingdom, and some of the kings liked to claim that they were 'bretwalda', or over-king of all Britain.

However, the kingdoms were not united and in reality there was nobody who was in charge of all of Britain.

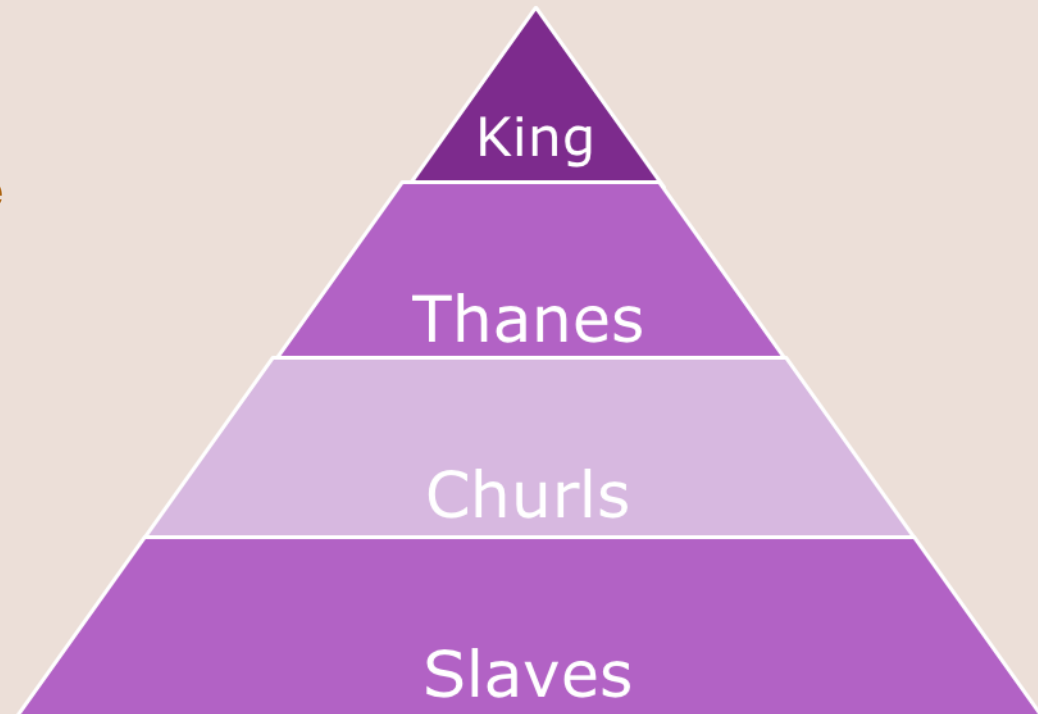
As well as each kingdom, there were other distinct roles in Anglo-Saxon society too, each with its own level of importance.

King – the leader of each group of settler.
The most important of all.

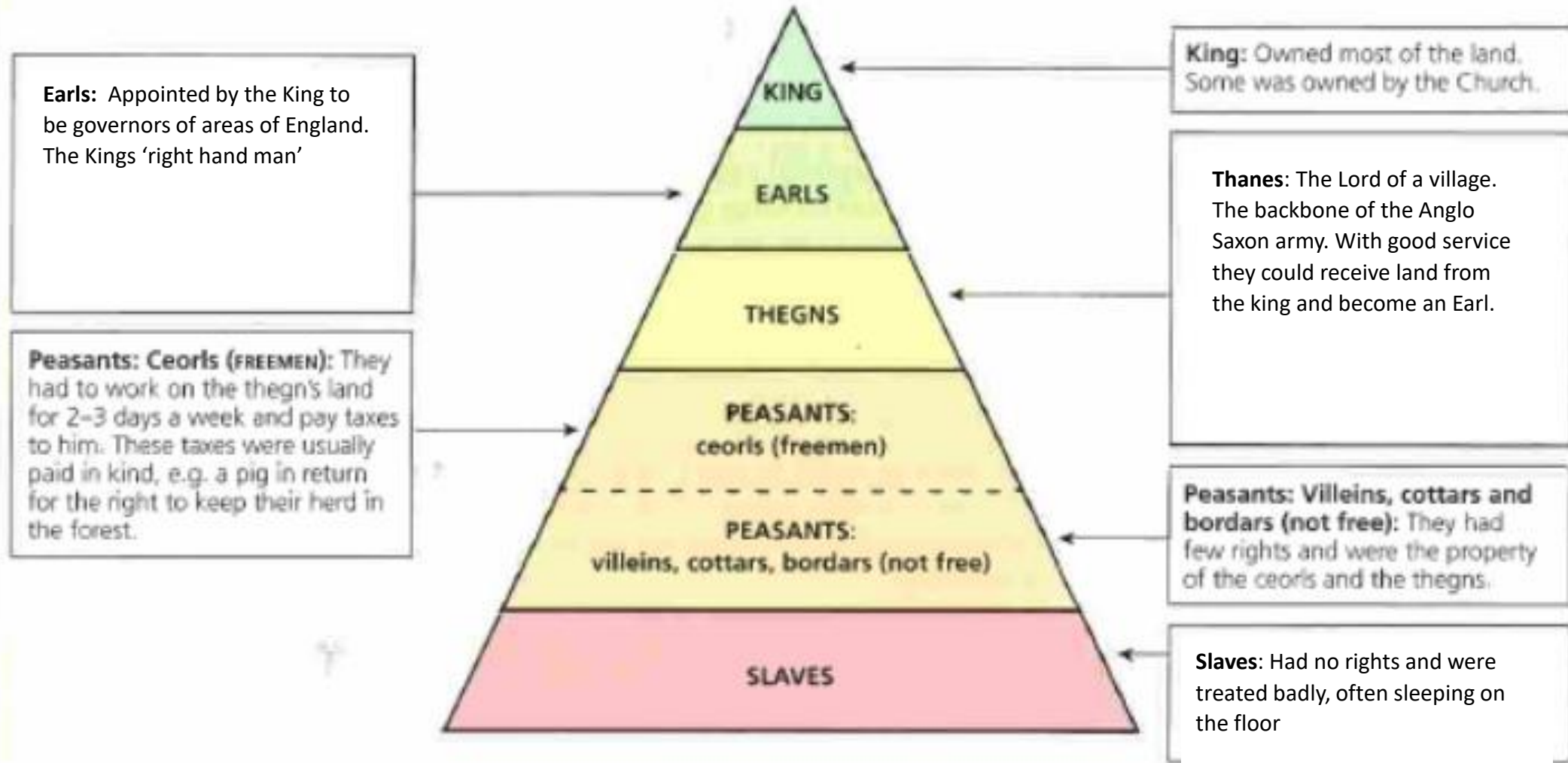
Thane – second important, a thane was the lord of his village and his job was to help the kings to rule the land.

Churl – these were the people who lived freely in the villages.

Slave – considered least important of all were slaves. These were usually people who could not pay their debts or those captured in battle.



ANGLO-SAXONS



Explore: Click on the link below and try the activity which explains the roles of different members of Anglo Saxon society.

BBC Bitesize - Anglo Saxon groups

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zxsbcdm/articles/zqrc9j6>

Watch: Take a look at this clip which tells us a little more about the different members of society.

Explanation of the hierarchy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GoHhDXomCQ0>

