LO: To write a Biography based on the life of King Alfred the Great.



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| Adjectives |  |
| Similes |  |
| Expanded noun phrases |  |
| Past tense |  |
| Third person |  |
| Chronological order of key events |  |

Born in 849, a **weak, sickly child** with four older brothers, Alfred was an unlikely king. However, from his youth he proved to be **brave** and **intelligent,** a man who valued wisdom and knowledge and saw himself as part of a wider **Christian** community. He was inspired by his early trips to Rome and developed a view of kingship based on firm **moral** and **religious** grounds.

A fierce and brave warrior, Alfred is described as charging at his enemies like a wild boar. In 871 his brother Aethelred died from his injuries and Alfred became king. Alfred’s personal qualities enabled him to rally his people and inspired them to continue their struggles even when the odds seemed overwhelming. Alfred proved himself to be a clear-sighted tactician, a valiant, insightful leader. He was courageous, willing to deal with his enemies in order to buy more time for Wessex. By converting **Guthrum to Christianity** and adopting him as a foster son he effectively neutralised one of his most dangerous enemies.

One of Alfred’s greatest innovations lay in the system of **burhs** or fortified garrisons that he established as part of his defences. Provisioned by the surrounding countryside, these well-defended settlements attracted merchants and craftsmen. Careful town planning laid the basis for later development and growth. Alfred introduced a**rota system** into the military which meant that farms and fields were not neglected during time of war and could continue to supply the army with provisions. Alfred also recognised the importance of a strong **navy** in preventing Viking attacks on the land. He built large warships and brought in foreign craftsmen to supply expertise where necessary. He also reissued **coins** with a higher silver content and a new design in order to restore faith in the economy. **Taxation** and a written system of laws, together with a keen sense of **justice,** enabled him to carry out his reforms.

One of Alfred’s deepest regrets was the loss of knowledge which had resulted from the Viking **destruction of the monasteries** and the **fall in literacy rates**that had followed. He believed that all English freemen should be literate and that the clergy should be schooled in Latin. Alfred himself learned Latin when middle-aged in order to undertake the **translation** of important classical texts into English. He imported scholars from overseas and **set up a school**at court.

Alfred was a great leader in battle, but an even better leader during peacetime. Once peace had been established with the Vikings, Alfred went about rebuilding his kingdom. Alfred died in 899 and was succeeded by his son Edward. It would be his grandson Aethelstan who would be called the first King of England.