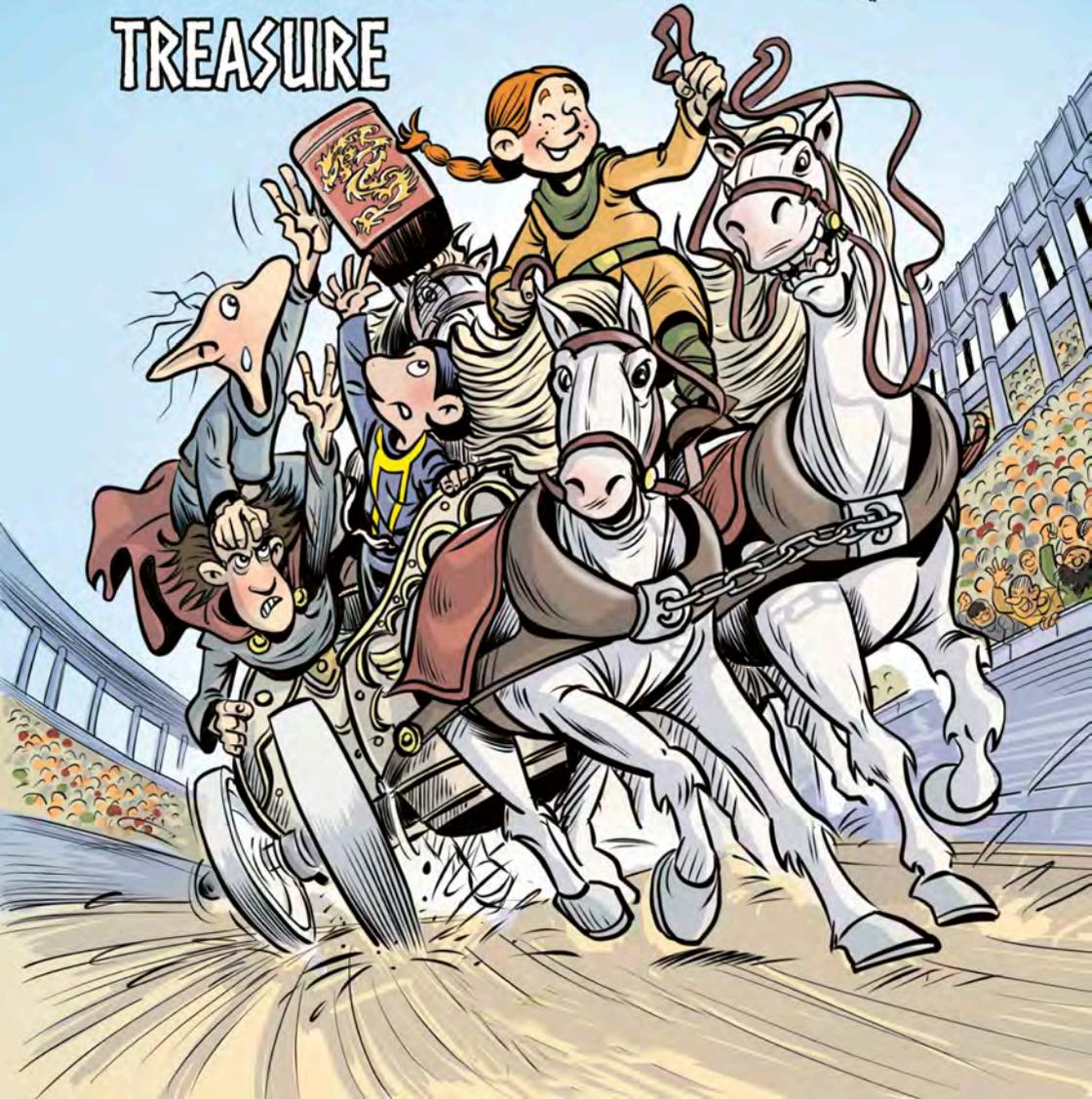


TEACHER'S GUIDE



THE EMPEROR'S  
TREASURE

PATRIK NYSTRÖM & PER DEMERVALL



# Teacher's Guide for Siri the Viking 1: The Emperor's Treasure

Recommended for years 3-4

"This comic about the brave and charming Viking girl Siri is no more or less than a masterpiece. A children's comic firmly in the same class as the best European works."

**Sture Hegerfors, The Swedish Academy of Comics**

"With its fast-paced plot, well-researched illustrations and a tough little girl as its main character, Siri the Viking is a great read for all ages. It tells a story about medieval cross-cultural encounters — the kind of story that needs to be heard more often these days."

**The Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul**

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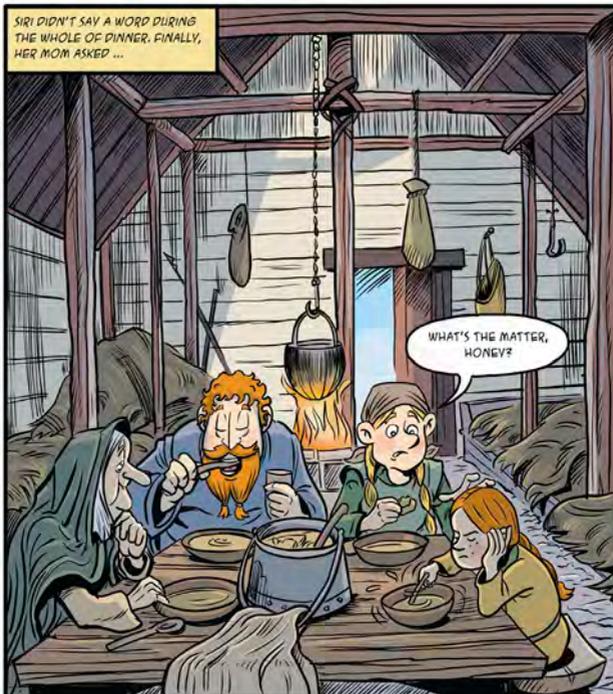
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# Introduction

## About Siri the Viking

**Summary:** Siri the Viking is a series of graphic novels intended for readers age 9-12. The series combines imaginative adventure with historical settings and facts about the Viking Age. The protagonist, a brave and clever Viking girl named Siri, longs to join her father, Viking chieftain Torkel, on his trade voyages. In the first book, *The Emperor's Treasure*, she accompanies him to Miklagard (modern-day Istanbul) to deliver a secret treasure to the emperor. During the course of the voyage, they are pursued by the villainous Ivar and Grim who want to steal the treasure for themselves. However, thanks to Siri's cleverness and courage, they make it safely their destination.

While the individual characters in the *Emperor's Treasure* are fictional, the story takes place in real Viking Age locations. Many aspects of Viking life are presented in an historically accurate way, and a number of facts are emphasized in special fact boxes and in the fact pages at the back of the book. Thus the book can serve both as engaging fiction reading with a multimodal interplay of text and pictures, and as a way of awakening interest in European history, specifically the Viking Age.



## About this Teacher's Guide

**Aims:** This teacher's guide has a twofold focus: developing pupils' literacy skills (with an emphasis on the multimodal graphic novel genre), as well as serving as a tool for teaching the history of the Viking Age. To achieve the first aim, discussion questions, vocabulary words and writing activities have been selected to touch upon the eight reading content domains for Key Stage 2 laid out in the 2016 National Curriculum Test Framework documents:

2a: give / explain the meaning of words in context

2b: retrieve and record information / identify key details from fiction and non-fiction

2c: summarise main ideas from more than one paragraph

2d: make inferences from the text / explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text

2e: predict what might happen from details stated and implied

2f: identify / explain how information / narrative content is related and contributes to meaning as a whole

2g: identify / explain how meaning is enhanced through choice of words and phrases

2h: make comparisons within the text

(Department for Education, 2014)

The Emperor's Treasure, as a graphic novel, is a multimodal text in which the written words are inextricably linked to the illustrations. Therefore, the scope of this framework has been expanded to include both text and pictures, as well as the interplay between them.

Reflection questions dealing with the writer's perspective or the craft of writing are similarly focused on the graphic novel genre.

With regards to history, this teacher's guide provides one historical aspect of focus for each chapter, so that these aspects can be studied in conjunction with reading. Among the suggested activities are some in which the pupils may investigate, reflect on and present specific historical aspects of the Viking Age. This content is well-suited to cross-curricular work with the pupils' history class, providing a contrastive perspective as they study such subjects as "the Viking and Anglo-Saxon struggle for the Kingdom of England to the time of Edward the Confessor" (Department for Education, 2013). As the story takes place in roughly AD 850, it may be interesting to learn about Viking life at home and abroad and to consider a view of Vikings as travelling traders rather than mere pillaging invaders.



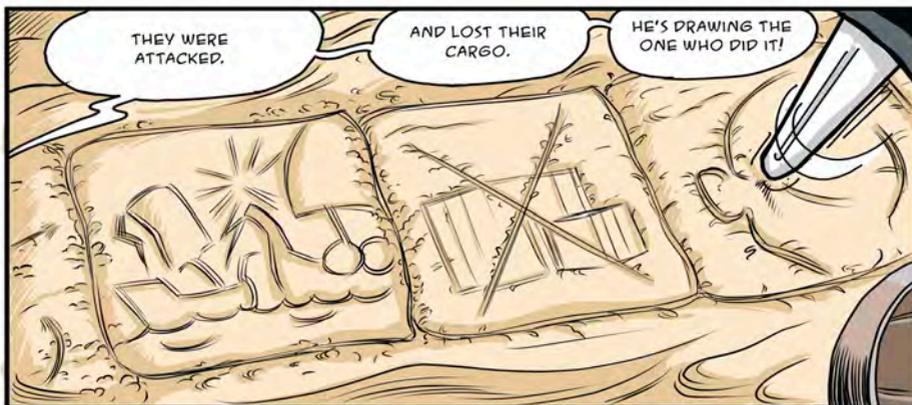
**Structure and application:** This teacher's guide contains a section with **vocabulary words and phrases** for each chapter (as well as the cover, the introduction and the fact pages). These have been selected either because they are uniquely related to Viking history, because they are integral to the story or because they may pose a challenge to certain readers. The teacher may choose freely among them based on the pupils' reading level. The words and phrases may be explained prior to reading or examined in context together after reading.

The vocabulary section is followed by a list of various aspects of **Viking history** that can be studied in conjunction with each chapter. The teacher may choose freely among these suggested themes in cross-curricular lesson planning.

This list is followed by a section with **reflection questions** for each chapter. These questions may be used for individual thinking, partnered talk or class discussion, or a combination. The lists of questions may be used in their entirety, or the teacher may select one or two key questions in order to focus on comprehension or creative writing, adapt the lesson for younger or older students.

The final section of this teacher's guide contains a number of activity suggestions. One or more of these activities may be selected for use parallel to reading the book or upon completion. Among the suggested activities are creative writing projects, as well as projects focused on Viking history.

As a graphic novel, *The Emperor's Treasure* can provide a unique classroom reading experience and can be used in several different ways depending on the pupils' reading levels and the teacher's preference. For example, the pupils may all read silently, or the teacher may read aloud to them while they follow along in their own copies or with the e-book projected on the board. If appropriate, the pupils could also take turns reading aloud or even read specific roles in a dramatized fashion. However the book is read, its multimodal nature must be respected if the pupils are to get the most out of the experience – they must have access to both the words and the pictures.



# Vocabulary words and phrases

**Cover and introduction:** chieftain, "stow away", villainous, cross-cultural, "a knack for", Aesir, chronically

**Chapter 1:** renowned, Miklagard, Dorestad, voyage, "hatching a scheme"

**Chapter 2:** plunder, "steering oar", inherit, Birka, "a handsome reward", gullible

**Chapter 3:** sabotage, "under no circumstances"

**Chapter 4:** Njord, "the forces of nature", Konugard, Loki, "state your business", hailed

**Chapter 5:** "high time", "something fishy", "I can feel it in my bones", helm

**Chapter 6:** "Just to be on the safe side", the Black Sea, interfere

**Chapter 7:** confess, prima, Thrace, chariot, "starting gates"

**Chapter 8:** "final lap", proceed, sewers

**Chapter 9:** "the coast is clear", allegations, audacity, deceived, shall

**Chapter 10:** suitable, cargo, lonesome

**Fact pages:** knarr, dragonships, wares, textiles, Varangians, runes, Hagia Sophia



# Viking history

**Cover and introduction:** The Vikings' place on the timeline (the book takes place approximate A.D. 850) and the other nations in Europe and the world at that time.

**Chapter1:** How Viking society was organized and the nature of life in their villages.

**Chapter 2\*:** The Vikings as traders or warriors. The role of spices in the Middle Ages.

**Chapter 3:** Land areas that were Viking territory, and places they visited. Viking invasions of the British Isles.

**Chapter 4:** Njord, Loki and other gods – the religion of the Vikings.

**Chapter 5\*:** Different kinds of Viking boats made for different purposes.

**Chapter 6\*:** The city of Miklagard (Constantinople) and the Byzantine Empire.

**Chapter 7:** Differences between a Viking village and Miklagard (Constantinople). The Vikings' technology and society compared to that of the rest of Europe.

**Chapter 8:** Public games and races in the Byzantine Empire. Viking entertainment and leisure activities.

**Chapter 9:** The history of gunpowder. Weapons and war during the Viking Age.

**Chapter10:** Viking art and writing.

**Fact pages:** (May be referred to in the chapters marked with asterisks or read last as a separate chapter.)



# Reflection questions

## Certain questions can be used with any chapter, for example:

- What are the most important events that happened in this chapter?
- What do you think will happen in the next chapter? Support your prediction with details from the text.
- Do you see any similarities between the chapter and another book or your own life? (Can be made more specific if the teacher wants to focus on a certain event or aspect of the chapter.)
- Choose a panel. What details of the story are told in the picture, and what details are told in the text? How would the story be different if there were no pictures? How would it be different if there were no words?
- Is there anything in the chapter that you think could be a historically accurate fact? Anything that you think could be made up? Why?
- Is there anything you would like to know more about after reading this chapter – either in the story or in Viking history?

If variation or more specific questions are desired, the following questions can be used after reading their respective chapters:

## Cover and introduction:

- . What kind of book is this? How do you see that? Can you think of any examples of similar books?
- . What is the book about? Support your answer with details from the book.
- . Where and when does it take place? Support your answer with details from the book.
- . Do you think this is fiction or a true story? Or could it be fiction in a historical setting? Support your answer with details from the book.
- . Which characters do you think are good, and which ones are evil? How do you see this? Do the author or illustrator do anything specific to suggest that the characters are good or evil?



## Chapter1:

- Who is Siri, and what does she want? What obstacles stand in her way?
- Siri is described as clever and courageous. What does she do that shows that she is clever? Does she show that she is courageous in this chapter?

Look at the captions (yellow boxes). Normally these boxes are used for the narrator to tell parts of the story.

- In which boxes does the narrator tell the fictional story of Siri? In which boxes does the narrator share facts about the Viking Age? Do you see any differences?
- Are there any boxes in which a character other than the narrator speaks? Who is speaking, and how do you know?



**SIRI**  
THE ADVENTURE-LOVING DAUGHTER OF THE VILLAGE'S CHIEFTAIN. SHE IS HAPPY TO FOLLOW ALONG ON HER DAD'S TRAVELS, WHETHER HE LIKES IT OR NOT. SIRI IS BRAVE, STUBBORN AND GOOD AT SOLVING PROBLEMS.

## Chapter2:

- Who is Eskil, and what does he want? What is your impression of him?
- Who are Ivar and Grim? What is their plan?
- Where do you think Siri is? Do you have a guess as to who is following Ivar and the others at a distance? Support your answer with details from the text.
- How do you see the difference between when a character is speaking in a normal conversational tone, and when a character is thinking or shouting?
- Why does Grim call Ivar "your greediness"? If the author intended this to be funny, can you explain the joke?

## Chapter 3:

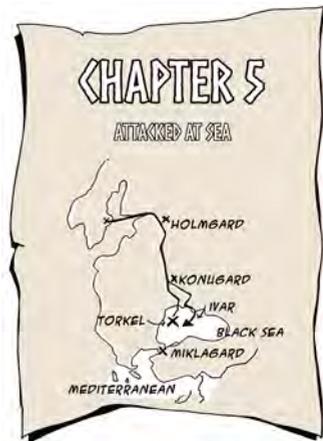
- How did Siri manage to follow along on the voyage?
- Would you say that Siri's father is too hard on her, not hard enough on her or just hard enough on her? Why?
- What does Grim try to do, and why does he fail?
- Do you see any sound effects in this chapter? Have you seen anything similar in other comics before? Why do you think the author and the illustrator chose to include them?

#### Chapter 4:

- . Why do they get stuck in Konugard? How does Siri solve the problem?
- . Do you think that Siri's plan would have worked in real life? Why or why not? Can you come up with a better plan?
- . Every chapter begins with a title and a picture. Do the title and picture work well for this chapter? Why or why not? If you look at the title page for chapter 5, what does it suggest about what is going to happen next?

#### Chapter 5:

- . What does Ivar try to do? How does he fail?
- . How would you describe the relationship between Ivar and Grim? Support your answer with details from the book.
- . What is Torkel's goal with the voyage? What obstacles has he encountered so far?
- . Do you see any similarities between how the problems in the story have been solved so far?
- . The other chapters in the book begin with a picture from the chapter. This chapter begins with a picture of a map which does not actually appear in the chapter. What does the map show? How does this affect the reader's experience?



#### Chapter 6:

- . Who is Zack? How would you describe him? Support your answer with details from the book.
- . What was Eskil's secret plan?
- . Can you think of any hints earlier in the book that suggested that Eskil had a secret plan? How do these hints affect the reader's experience when he finally shows up?

## Chapter 7:

- Why do Torkel and Eskil get arrested?
- What happens with the box in this chapter?
- What difference do you notice between Siri and Zack when they are talking about the horses?
- Have there been any lowercase letters in this book so far? How is this compared to other comics? Compared to other kinds of books? Why do you think the author and the illustrator chose to do this?



## Chapter 8:

- What problems does Siri have at the end of the chapter? What knowledge does Zack have which can help?
- Why do you think that Zack can find his way to the palace through the sewer?
- In stories, it is common for the challenges the main character faces to get harder and harder until things seem most difficult toward the end. Do you think this story follows that pattern? Why or why not?

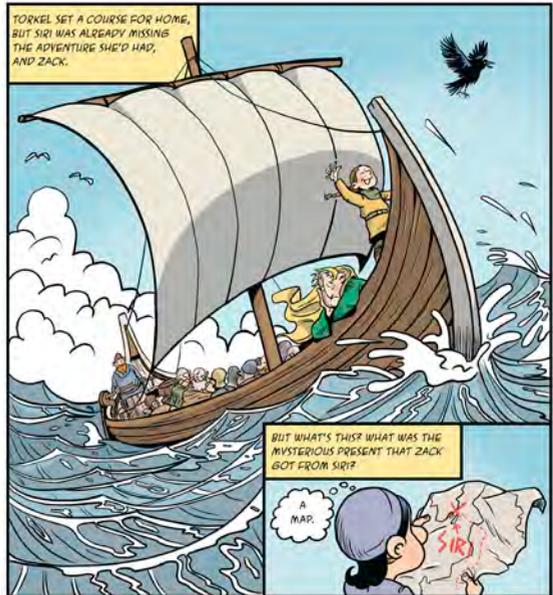


## Chapter 9:

- Why do Ivar and Grim fail with their plan (twice)?
- This chapter is called "An Unexpected Surprise". What surprises occur in this chapter? Which one do you think the title is referring to?
- Were there any hints in previous chapters that suggested that Zack was the emperor's son?
- What problems have been solved in this chapter? Are there any problems left that need to be solved?

## Chapter10:

- Is selling Eskil's boat a "suitable" punishment for him? If so, why?
- Which characters have succeeded with their goals in the end? Which characters have failed?
- Is it really a "happy ending"? Why or why not?
- Does anything in this last chapter suggest that the authors intend to produce a sequel? If so, what do you think will happen in the sequel?



## Fact pages:

- The purpose of these pages is to convey facts about the Vikings rather than to tell a fictional story. What differences do you see between these pages and the previous chapters? Do you notice any details that suggest that these pages are conveying facts?
- Do you think Siri was a real person? Why or why not?
- Do you think that Harald Hardrade was a real person? Why or why not?
- Is there any fact that was new for you or that you found especially interesting?



A VIKING NAMED HALVDAN ONCE CARVED SOME RUNES INTO THE HAGIA SOPHIA CATHEDRAL IN ISTANBUL. YOU CAN STILL SEE THEM THERE, A THOUSAND YEARS LATER!

WAS HE HOMESICK FOR THE NORTH? OR WAS HE JUST BORED? THE WORLD MAY NEVER KNOW.



# Activity suggestions

## History

- 1. Viking maps.** Draw a map of the Vikings' world with the names that they used for important places: Dorestad, Holmgard, Miklagard, Birka, etc. Choose at least one of these places and write a short text about it.
- 2. Viking boats.** Choose a type of Viking boat. Look up pictures and try to create your own model out of clay, wood, tinfoil or other materials. Write a short text explaining what kind of boat you have chosen and how it was used.
- 3. The Viking trade game.** (Teacher instructions.) Choose a number of wares (for example, furs, iron goods, textiles, glass, spices and honey). Write lists for 3-5 different "trading ports" with historical names located in various parts of the classroom. Each port should be supplied with 4 lists with different prices for the various wares (for example, Holmgard: furs: 2, iron goods: 4, textiles: 2, glass: 3, spices: 6, honey: 1). Divide the pupils into trading teams and give each team a paper marked with 4 of a certain ware, which they start with (for example: "4 honey") and zero of all other wares. The pupils must stay together in their teams as they travel around to the various trading ports where they may trade with the merchants according to the current prices – for example: 2 glass (value of 3 apiece) for 1 spice (value of 6 apiece). The merchants update the pupils' papers by crossing out the old numbers and writing new ones. Each group may only make one trade per port before moving to the next port. Four times during the course of the game, the price sheets are switched on a given signal. The students try to get as much of the wares as they can. This game can be played as a barter version where the prices are just numbers on paper, or as a cash variant with pieces of paper or other tokens representing money. The merchants may be played by adults, or by pupils who volunteer for the role.
- 4. Viking gods.** Draw a picture of one of the Vikings' gods and write a fact box describing this god. Another element of Viking mythology may also be chosen.



## English:

- 5. Dissect a panel.** Choose a panel in the book which you think uses text and illustration together in an effective way. Draw a copy of the panel. Write a list of all the information that is communicated by the text (and what kind of text is used – for example, sound effects, caption, speech bubble, thought balloon etc.) and a list with all the information communicated by the pictures.
- 6. Character bio.** Choose a character from the Emperor's Treasure. Draw a picture of this character and write your own description of him or her. Make a list of examples of this character's words or actions that demonstrate how he or she lives up to your description.
- 7. Condensed version.** Write a short version of the Emperor's Treasure, using one or at most two sentences to express the most important events in each chapter. Alternatively, this short version could be written as a comic with at most 10-15 panels. (Feel free to use captions to express transitions and cover what has happened between panels.)
- 8. Create your own comic book character.** Create a character of your own who could exist in the world of the Emperor's Treasure. Draw the character and write a description of him or her.
- 9. Missing chapter.** Write a new chapter of the Emperor's Treasure – for example, something that happens while Siri and Torkel are in Holmgard, or while Ivar and Grim are on their way home. The chapter may be written as a comic or merely as text, with a single comic panel showing one scene.
- 10. Comic book.** Write your own short comic about yourself or a made-up character. Try to use speech bubbles, sound effects, captions and thought bubbles.
- 11. Siri theater.** Choose a chapter and enact it as a short skit in a group, with different group members playing the various roles.
- 12. Book review.** Write a review of the book with a summary and some elements that you liked, as well as some that you did not like, with motivations.

Stevali Kids  
Visionsvägen 13  
393 60 Kalmar

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AUTHOR: PATRICK NYSTRÖM  
ILLUSTRATIONS: PER DEMERVALL

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BY  
JOSEPH A. DAVIS