

Viking Money

The Vikings didn't really use money before they arrived in England. Any coins they acquired were used for their value in gold or silver, along with other **bullion**.



At first, silver was the most common metal used for payment. Jewellery would be cut into smaller pieces – known as **hack silver** and used as **currency**. Traders carried small scales around with them to weigh the silver.

The Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms of England used coins; the Vikings came across these coins early on during raiding. **Danegeld** was also paid to the Vikings to stop them attacking!

Once the Vikings began to settle in England they made their own coins. Lincoln had its own **mint** where coins were made. Here you can see a drawing of a coin made in Lincoln – how do you think we can tell? →

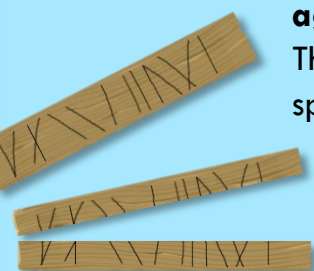


The Vikings only had one type of coin – the silver **penningar** (or penny). Even then, most people valued coins by their weight still. Coins were just an easy way to carry your silver around.

Because the coins were valued by their weight you could cut a coin to make smaller amounts. There was often a ring of dots around the edge to stop clipping. This was when you sneakily shaved off bits of silver from the edge of the coin to make it worth less.

Tally sticks

Reputation was very important to the Vikings and being trustworthy was important. If you wanted to buy something but didn't have the money you could make a **credit agreement**. This meant that you would promise to pay at a later time. The price was carved on the side of a stick of wood and the stick was split so that you could both keep one half. When you came back to pay, the two halves were put together again to show the deal you had agreed. You couldn't cheat by changing the amount because it wouldn't match up with the other half any more!



Activities to try at Home

Viking Coins

Because coins were valued by their weight, the Vikings would chop their coins into smaller pieces so they could pay for cheaper items!



Add up these bits of loose change:



Answers are on the next page!

Have a go at Haggling

When Vikings went shopping they would probably haggle with the trader. This means they would negotiate the price of items they wanted to buy.

Here's an example →



How much does a horseshoe cost?

10 penningars

Will you accept 5?

No Way! I want 8 Penningars

7 penningars! That's my final offer!

I will accept 7. It's a deal!



Haggle
is a Viking word!

Why not set up a Viking food stall at home and have a go at haggling with your family? You can make it into a competition to see who can make the most money or who can get the cheapest prices!

Tally Stick Answers:
A3, B4, C1, D2

Activities to try at Home

Tally Sticks

Can you match these tally sticks back together? Answers are on the previous page!

Top:



Bottom:



Make something to trade

Viking crafts people would make things to sell at the market. Brooches and pendants were popular for both men and women. We used salt dough to make a Thor's hammer pendant and a compass brooch. You could make your own creations using playdough, clay or plasticine.



We made a comb and case using pieces of cardboard from an old cereal box. Combs were carried by Viking men and women. We have found many combs in Lincoln, including the one below.



This special comb case has runes that say 'Thorfast made a good comb'. The original is now in the British Museum. The drawing was by Adam Parsons of Blueaxe Reproductions.