

Who should have been king in 1066?

[History](#), [Middle Ages](#)



Who Should Have Been King in 1066? Introduction This essay is about who should have been king in 1066. Edward the Confessor died on 5th January 1066. The King of England was usually the son or another close relation of the previous king. Edward had no children or any surviving brother or sister. There were four people waiting to be the next king. They were Edgar Etheling, Harold Godwinson, William Duke of Normandy and Harald Hadrada. Only one of the four people could be the King of England at any one time. This essay will give you an insight into each of the characters.

It will explain who they are, why they should have been king, and what I thought about them. Finally, I will conclude who I thought should have been king in 1066. The Four Possible Kings Edgar Etheling Edgar was Edward's great nephew, the closest relation of Edward. He was born in Hungary in 1052, and was the last prince of the old West Saxons royal line when Edward the Confessor died on January 5th 1066. At the time, it was decided Edgar was too young to inherit the throne, so it went to Harold Godwinson instead. Harold Godwinson became King Harold II, but was killed in the Battle of Hastings later that same year.

The Witan Council chose Edgar as the next king of England. Edgar became king, but resigned only a few months later after he was forced to surrender by William the Conqueror. After abdicating, he went on to live a long life. Edgar should have been king because he was of royal blood and was the closest relation to Edward. He had a claim to the throne because he was a blood relative. Edgar was a direct descendant of Alfred the Great – the most respected of all Anglo Saxon kings. I thought Edgar was too young to be king, and also too young to lead England.

He did not have the wealth, power or strength to be king. He was not considered strong enough to defend the realm from the Normans and the Vikings. Harold Godwinson Otherwise known as Harold of Wessex, he was one of the most powerful men in England, as Wessex was a very rich and important area. He was the son of Earl Godwin of Wessex. He had been an advisor to Edward the Confessor, and had proved himself to be a good leader. Harold and his family had established alliances with all the major nobles of England. On his deathbed, Edward is said to have promised Harold the crown.

Harold Godwinson should have been king because Edward had promised the crown to him on his deathbed. He was the favourite of many English thanes who would choose the next king. In 1066, you didn't have to be the closest relation to be king. Harold was the Earl of Wessex, one of the most powerful leaders in England. He was also the richest man in England. Harold claimed the throne of England was not based on being a blood relative, but he was Edward's brother-in-law. I thought Harold was brave and courageous fighting for his country, and subsequently dying in the Battle of Hastings.

Sadly, he didn't always keep his promises though. He swore an oath to William Duke of Normandy in 1064, to support him to the claim of the English throne. He then went back on his word, saying he that had been tricked into taking the oath. William, Duke of Normandy William was Edward's second cousin. He became Duke of Normandy when he was only seven years old. He ruled as the King of England from 1066–1087. In 1085, he commissioned the collection of the Domesday Book. When Harold broke the oath, William

received religious and political backing from Rome, to start a Holy Crusade against Harold, who the Pope had excommunicated.

On 25th September 1066, William of Normandy's 7, 000 soldiers landed in the South of England. They defeated King Harold's army at the Battle of Hastings, and William became King of England. He rewarded his vassals from Normandy with the lands of many English nobles. William's claim to the throne was based on the fact he believed Harold Godwinson had sworn a sacred oath of allegiance to him and his right to be king. He also justified his claim through his blood relationship with Edward the Confessor, as they were distant cousins. He claimed Edward the Confessor had designated him as his successor.

I thought William had a compassionate side when he saved Harold from a shipwreck. He also helped Edward to protect his throne, by sending Norman soldiers to live in England and protect Edward. Sadly, he also had a ruthless side, ravaging great sections of England, after the English struggled to accept him as his king. Harald Hadrada Harald Hadrada was a very powerful man as he was already the King of Norway. When Edward the Confessor died in 1066, Harald claimed his father and his descendents had been promised the English throne by King Hardicanute, who ruled England from 1040-1042.

In 1066 Tostig, the brother of Harold of Wessex went to Norway to meet King Hadrada. The two men agreed to invade England and in early September, around 300 ships sailed around the coast of England and did some plundering. When King Harold was told by a messenger that Hadrada had invaded with the intention of conquering all of England, he gathered his army. On 25th September, Harold's army arrived in Yorkshire. He took Tostig

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and Hadrada by surprise at Stamford Bridge, and both Hadrada and Tostig were killed.

Harold Hadrada's claim to the throne was based on an agreement between his father and King Hardicanute, the Danish ruler of England. England was ruled by Norwegian kings right up to 1042, when the Saxon King Edward took the throne from them. There were a lot Viking families living in the north of England, who would have liked Harald being the King of England. I thought Harald was a very powerful man who wanted the throne of England like lots of other people. Harald wasn't very strategic and failed to topple the Danish King Sweign II because of his lack of planning, which would ultimately be his downfall.

At Stamford Bridge, he wasn't prepared for Harold and his army and was killed. Conclusion I think Harold Godwinson should have been king after Edward the Confessor died because he was a strong political and military leader in his own right. He was the only Englishman and was promised the throne by Edward, his brother-in-law. Harold was the most powerful man in England. He wanted to unite the various factions in England to bring peace to the land. He thought a strong ruler was needed to bring an end to all the fighting.