

Why did william win the battle of hastings essay sample



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1066 was the time of the medieval period, home to one of the most famous battles in British history: the battle of Hastings. Although there are many reasons for why William of Normandy won the war, it was based not only on their success, but some of Harold Godwin's failures.

Harold Godwin was crowned as king as soon as his predecessor, Edward the Confessor, died. However, there were some problems. Edward had already promised the throne to William of Normandy and that had in fact sent Harold to Normandy to confirm this promise, or at least that is what William claimed, although he easily could have made this up to swing the favour to his side for when he won; the English were suspicious enough.

However, when Edward the Confessor died, Harold was voted in by all the leading noblemen in the country despite his promise. Things were further complicated for Harold in that, as well as William of Normandy, there was another contender who thought he had an equal claim to the throne. This was Harald Hardrada.

William, enraged that he had not immediately become king, launched war on England, but was forced to wait until the winds changed and they could cross the channel. Harold, anticipating this, set up his troops on the coast, and was ready and waiting for their approach. However, then more bad news arrived. Harald Hardrada had arrived in the north.

Harold then had to make an important decision: wait to see if William arrived, or go and fight Harald in the north. In the end he had no choice but to go up north and defend that part of the country.

The English fought a great battle, and thrashed Harold. However, in their absence, the winds over the channel changed, and the Normans arrived on the coast, well prepared, well rested, and ready to fight.

Edward's troops were tired by the time they got back down to the south, having already fought an important battle, and were nowhere near prepared to fight a war; their fighters were tired, and many of them were left behind while moving down south. Also, many of them were wounded,

When Harold's troops arrived at the scene, they were standing on top of a high hill, an advantageous position. They also created a wall of shields to block any potential arrows that could be coming their way; a clever strategy.

In the beginning the battle was going well for Harold and his army, who from their position and wall of shields, were at least able to block the advances of the other side. However, the Normans soon came up with a clever plan, and pretended to retreat, causing the English to chase them, losing their hill position AND wall of shields.

As soon as they were off the hill, the Normans turned around and started to attack. The English, being tired and injured, were already weak and could barely withstand this attack. Then rumours went round claiming that Harold Godwin, their leader, was dead, shot down by an arrow in his eye. This was the turning point.

It was then that his troops started to retreat, or at least what was left of them. Those who could not were left behind and killed by the Normans.

It seems obvious now that both sides in the battle had equal amount of skill and preparation, but that only one had enough luck to win the final battle. It could have turned out differently, if perhaps, the wind had not changed when Harold was away, or maybe if Harald Hardrada had not tried to invade at all. It seems, if these things had not happened, there would have been a very different outcome.