The Anglo-Saxon Age: A Very Short Introduction
John Blair

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The Anglo-Saxon Age: A Very Short Introduction covers the era from the emergence of the earliest English settlements around the year AD 450 to the Norman victory in 1066 providing a brief introduction to the political, social, religious, and cultural history of Anglo-Saxon Britain. The Anglo-Saxon age lasted for 600 years. This period encompassed an age that shaped England’s landscape and culture in profound and long-lasting ways. Anglo-Saxon Britain was a fragmented, non-urban, warrior society: a multi-ethnic community. This gradually changed over time as the early medieval cultures united to give shape to the Britain that was to come.

The Crusades: A Very Short Introduction
Christopher Tyerman

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The Crusades: A Very Short Introduction examines this topic by bringing together issues of colonialism, cultural exchange, economic exploitation, and the relationship between past and present. Crusading fervour gripped Europe for over 200 years, creating one of the most extraordinary, vivid episodes in world history. The legacy of the ideas and imagery of the Crusades has resonated through the centuries, inspiring Hollywood movies and great works of literature. Despite their powerful hold on our imaginations, our knowledge of them remains obscured and distorted by time. Were the Crusaders motivated by spiritual rewards, or by greed? Were the Crusades an experiment in European colonialism, or a manifestation of religious love? How were they organized and founded?

Machiavelli: A Very Short Introduction
Quentin Skinner

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Machiavelli: A Very Short Introduction considers the life and impact of the Florentine Renaissance humanist, diplomat, historian, and political theorist Niccolò Machiavelli. Machiavelli taught that political leaders must be prepared to do evil so that good may come of it, and his name has been a byword ever since for duplicity and immorality. This VSI considers whether his sinister reputation is deserved, focusing on his three major political works, The Prince, the Discourses, and The Florentine Histories. This new edition discusses how Machiavelli developed his neo-classical political theory through engaging in continual dialogue with the ancient Roman moralists and historians, especially Cicero and Livy.

Magna Carta: A Very Short Introduction
Nicholas Vincent

Magna Carta: A Very Short Introduction outlines the context and history of one of the most famous constitutional texts in world history. Magna Carta's origins in the troubled reign of King John are examined, and the significance of the role Magna Carta played thereafter as a symbol of the subject's right to protection against the absolute authority of the sovereign is explored. How and why is Magna Carta still significant today, and what is its importance in relation to issues of law and politics, and also to human rights? This VSI includes a full English translation of the 1215 Magna Carta.

Medieval Britain: A Very Short Introduction
John Gillingham and Ralph A. Griffiths

Medieval Britain: A Very Short Introduction covers the establishment of the Anglo-Norman monarchy in the early Middle Ages, through to England's failure to dominate the British Isles and France in the later Middle Ages. Out of the turbulence gradually came stronger senses of identity in Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. Yet this was an age, too, of growing definition of Englishness and of a distinctive English cultural tradition. What impact did the Norman Conquest have on life in the British Isles? What did medieval Britain look like? Where did people live? How did they earn a living?

The Middle Ages: A Very Short Introduction
Miri Rubin
The Middle Ages: A Very Short Introduction explores the variety, change, dynamism, and sheer complexity of the period of European history between 500 and 1500 and the impact that this period has had on the modern day world. From the provinces of the Roman Empire, which became barbarian kingdoms after c.450–650, to the northern and eastern regions, which were increasingly integrated into Europe, this volume describes the emergence of a truly global system of communication, conquest, and trade. The Middle Ages also considers the challenges of life in Europe at that time—at all levels of society—by looking at the various facets of kinship and family, agriculture and trade, and groups and individuals.

The Norman Conquest: A Very Short Introduction
George Garnett

The Norman Conquest: A Very Short Introduction considers one of the most profound turning points in English history. The Norman Conquest in 1066 was the last time England was successfully invaded, cataclysmically transforming a disparate collection of small nations into a European state. But what actually happened? How was the invasion viewed by those who witnessed it? And how has its legacy been seen by generations since? This VSI reveals how dramatically English life was changed, from its language to its law, and focuses on the differing ways the conquest has been viewed by historians and in folklore ever since.

The Renaissance: A Very Short Introduction
Jerry Brotton

The Renaissance: A Very Short Introduction sees the period of the Renaissance as a time of unprecedented intellectual excitement cultural experimentation and interaction on a global scale. However, there was a darker side of religious discord, slavery, and massive inequality of wealth and status. The Renaissance stands as one of the defining periods in world history. Between 1400 and 1600, European perceptions of society, culture, politics, and even humanity changed in ways that affect not only Europe but the entire world. What were the key issues that defined the period, in its art, architecture, literature, advancements in the fields of science, trade, and travel?

The Vikings: A Very Short Introduction
Julian D. Richards

The Vikings: A Very Short Introduction explores the world of the Vikings. From the Migration Period to the year 1066, this book looks at their rise to power, their culture and society, their influence on the modern world, and the ways their memory is kept alive today.
The Vikings: A Very Short Introduction reveals the history, society, and culture of the Vikings, and their expansion overseas for trade, colonization, and plunder. How did the Vikings express their identity through their artistic expression, rune stones, their ships, and their religion? How has their legacy influenced the medieval Icelandic sagas, nationalism of the 19th century, Wagner, and the Nazis? The Viking reputation is of bloodthirsty seafaring warriors, repeatedly plundering the British Isles and the North Atlantic throughout the early Middle Ages. Yet Vikings were also traders, settlers, and farmers, with a complex artistic and linguistic culture, whose expansion overseas led people to cross the Atlantic for the first time in European history.