

Video transcript

Who was Alfred the Great?

Excuse me. Yes, you... Did you know, that is the statue of Alfred the Great. Ever wondered why he was so great?

Well let's start at the beginning...

This is a great-o-meter to help you keep score. Plus meet the man himself, Alfred, born in 849 and the youngest of five brothers.

He was never expected to be king. What do we think now, great or not?

Alfred learned to read after his mother challenged her sons to recite a poem by heart from her favourite book.

Excellent, we are on our way to greatness.

Despite suffering from illness all his life, he outlived all his brothers and takes the throne in 871.

However, he had to immediately defend his throne from Guthrum, a Viking warlord.

Alfred flees and hid in the Somerset Levels. So far, Alfred the "not so great"...

But eventually Alfred regrouped and raised an Anglo-Saxon army that defeated the Vikings at the Battle of Edington.

Alfred and Guthrum agreed to peace and to divide up the country.

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Alfred kept Wessex in the southwest, Guthrum took the Viking lands in the North East, known as the Danelaw. Over time Alfred brought the English kingdoms together and his coins call him the 'King of the English'.

However, his defining moment of greatness was when he translated books from Latin, which only a few people could understand, into English, so more people could read them.

Beginning a new age of literacy and knowledge.

For which he became known as 'Alfred the Great'.

Do we agree that Alfred was great?

But not modest...

Well, that was 'great', I 'greatly' appreciate you joining me on this journey - oh, I think Alfred may want his crown back.

