

## King Alfred and the cakes: reading comprehension

King Alfred the Great was the Anglo-Saxon ruler of the kingdom of Wessex in England from 871 to 899. During his twenty-eight year reign he had to deal with many Viking invasions into his territory, but he successfully defended his country against them.



This legend about King Alfred has been told many times over the years.

There was a time when the Danes were attacking Wessex with a large army. King Alfred's forces had broken up and scattered in the Somerset Levels, and Alfred found himself fleeing into the marshes, alone.

That evening he came to a small house. He knocked on the door and a woman answered. King Alfred begged her for some food and a place to stay for the night. The woman saw a dirty, bedraggled man in front of her and took pity on him.

She was in the middle of baking some cakes over a fire and said:

"You watch these cakes while I go out and milk the cow. Make sure they don't burn!"

King Alfred sat watching the cakes and began to think about how he was going to pull his army together to defend his country. He was so absorbed in thought, he did not notice the smell of burning cakes in the air and it wasn't until the woman came back into the house, screaming, that he realised his mistake.

"You silly man!" she shouted, unaware of the fact that he was the king. "You have let the cakes burn and now there is nothing for supper!"

We don't know if Alfred got anything to eat that night; we do know he managed to gather his army, rally his men and beat the Danes in a great battle.



Year 3 English

1) How do we know from the first paragraph that King Alfred was a good king?

---

---

2) Why did King Alfred find himself alone in the woods?

---

---

3) When Alfred knocks on the woman's door, what two things does he ask for?

---

---

4) The woman 'took pity on him'. What does this mean?

---

---

5) Why do you think she took pity on him?

---

---

6) What does the woman ask King Alfred to do?

---

---

7) King Alfred failed in his task and supper was ruined. What caused him to fail?

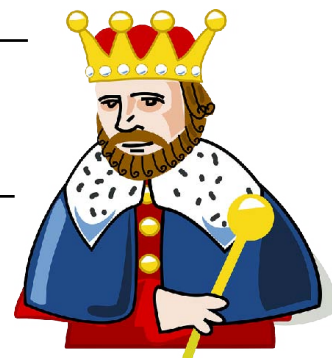
---

---

8) How was King Alfred successful in the end?

---

---



## King Alfred and the cakes: reading comprehension answers

1) How do we know from the first paragraph that King Alfred was a good king?

**He successfully defended his country from invasions.**

2) Why did King Alfred find himself alone in the woods?

**The Danes were attacking and Alfred's army had broken up and scattered.**

3) When he knocks on the woman's door, what two things does he ask for?

**Food and a place to stay for the night.**

4) The woman 'took pity on him'. What does this mean?

**She felt sorry for him / she felt she should help him.**

5) Why do you think she took pity on him?

**He was dirty and bedraggled / He was hungry / lost / homeless.**

6) What does the woman ask King Alfred to do?

**Watch the cakes on the fire and make sure they don't burn.**

7) King Alfred failed in his task and supper was ruined. What caused him to fail?

**He was thinking about how to defeat the Danes and not about the cakes.**

8) How was King Alfred successful in the end?

**He rallied his army and defeated the Danes, keeping Wessex safe.**