

## **Explain the consequences of the Norman Conquest on England. (10 marks)**

### **SYK paragraph**

As with the crusades historians are divided over the impact that the Norman Conquest had on the development of England. Whether it created or just accelerated change is debatable.

### **SWYG paragraph**

Whilst change certainly occurred as a result of William's victory at Hastings, continuity also remained for there was much about England that William admired. Some changes were almost immediate whilst others took time.

### **Paragraph 1**

The most obvious and immediate change following the death of Harold II was the subsequent end to the line of Saxon kings who had ruled England since the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The Normans would rule England for the next 88 years.

### **Paragraph 2**

Many changes that took place were as a direct result on William's need to subjugate the English. The Feudal System was introduced as a control and was to remain in place until its eventual collapse in the 1420's. Hand in hand with the Feudal system went a program of castle building across England. These changes saw wholesale change in land ownership and reduced the peasant population to a social level not much better than slaves under Norman rule. Rebellion was dealt with firmly.

### **Paragraph 3**

The Pope's support of William was rewarded with the Church being given substantial land. Again a program of building was started which saw churches, monasteries and cathedrals sprouting up all over England. Many of these still survive today. William allowed Church courts to be set up which caused problems for later kings particularly Henry II with Becket.

### **Paragraph 4**

Like the Romans before them, the Normans realised the value of trade. The Saxons had done much of their trading with Scandinavia, whereas the Normans were more continental in their approach. This would benefit England in the future.

### **Conclusion/summary**

However despite all the changes, William did recognise that much of the Saxon law system and local government was impressive and needed to be retained (kept). The mixing of the best of Norman and Saxon traits was to create a great race, which in time would rule a large part of the world, dominate the seas and be the envy of the civilised world. It is unlikely that those Saxons who fell at Hastings would look back at English history and feel that their sacrifice was wasted!