

1. How much did William centralise government?

- Norman government used the hide (and the wapentake) for working out tax obligations and kept the shire and the hundred. William also maintained the Witan, or a royal council that worked in similar ways. The Norman economy used the Anglo-Saxon system of silver pennies and the royal treasury remained at Winchester, although William kept a tight control.
- William reduced the power and number of Earls. He made Earldoms smaller and more compact. Earls were tenants-in-chief and subject to the same requirements as Williams barons.
- William only used his most trusted followers as his regents (e.g. Lanfranc, or his wife Matilda)

Ways in which William centralised Norman England:

- **Fiefs and Homage** – he used grants and forfeits to ensure his supporters remained loyal
- **Royal Domesne** (lands that were held by the crown at the time of the Domesday Book) and forest – to bring in an income and for personal hunting.
- **Feudal system** – everyone who used land depended on the King
- **Knight Service** – tenants-in-chief had bands of troops, but these troops owed loyalty to the King
- **The Domesday Book** – a complete guide to what his tenants-in-chief were worth and so what they could be expected to pay the king
- **Economy** – Geld tax was paid to the King. The King also used reliefs to gain more revenue and ensure loyalty from his tenants-in-chief
- **The Church** – the King owned all Church land too and had the right to appoint bishops. Lanfranc's reforms centralised power in the Church.



2. How much did William centralise law enforcement?

- In Edward the Confessor's reign, the shire reeve, or sheriff had two main roles – they were the King's representative – they collected revenue owed to the King from the shires and towns including the geld tax. They also administered justice and ensured the shire met its military obligations.
- After the Norman conquest, the sheriff's two roles stayed similar, but William changed the people doing the job – replacing Anglo-Saxons with Normans. William did keep some of Edward the Confessor's sheriffs at first, but replaced them all by 1071.
- Some Anglo-Saxon sheriffs had joined the rebellions against Norman rule, so replacing them with loyal followers was a priority for William in maintaining control.
- Norman sheriffs answered to nobody but the king. The King required them to keep close control of their shires and those who failed had to forfeit their role.
- The Normans kept the same legal system, but added new laws to punish rebellion against Norman control. Norman sheriffs lost some responsibilities when Church courts started to judge religious cases and when the feudal system led to manorial and baronial courts taking over legal issues.
- Sheriffs kept their role of organising the defence of the shire and gathering the fyrd, but this now ran alongside Knight service, which the sheriff was not responsible for. The sheriff's main military role was usually as custodian of the King's castles in the shire.
- Sheriffs were entitled to a share of the revenues they collected. They also kept some of the money paid in fines and some of the geld tax. Sheriffs also paid a set sum to collect revenues, but could keep any profits. They were also at the forefront of land grabs
- Forest Laws were introduced, protecting animals for the king to hunt. It was an offence to carry hunting weapons in the forest. It became difficult for those that depended on the forest for timber and food. There were harsh punishments for those in the King's forest. Foresters patrolled the land. With time, the forest became a source of income for the crown.

3. Why was the Domesday Book significant?

- William ordered a survey of England in 1085. Men investigated the landholdings of each shire: who held what land, what taxes they owed the King and whether they could pay more. It was mostly completed by August 1086 and was called the Domesday Book.
- It was significant to Norman government for financial, legal and military reasons. No other European country had such a detailed survey of landholding. The Domesday Book provided a highly detailed survey of almost the whole of Norman England.

Financial significance – tenants-in-chief did not pay geld tax on some of their land. It is possible that William had a plan to reverse some of these privileges as way of extracting more money. The Domesday book was an ideal guide for working out what financial opportunities were whenever a tenant-in-chief died or forfeited their fief.

Legal significance – the book included many cases of Anglo-Saxons claiming that land of theirs had been taken from them. Surveys were made as fairly as possible, with everyone in each hundred having a say who really owned what. The Domesday Book therefore had a role in sorting out legal disputes over land.

Military significance – the council that William held about the Domesday Book was primarily called to discuss ways to counter a new Viking invasion threat in 1085. Although problems in Denmark meant the invasion never happened, William took the threat seriously, bringing thousands of soldiers in from Normandy. Although the Domesday Book did not record Knight Service, it may have been connected to this preparation, seeing how many extra soldiers each tenant-in-chief could provide.

