

Grade 9 Answer

How Far Do You Agree

16
Marks

Question:

'The main reason for Norman victory in the Battle of Hastings was the Norman tactics.'
How far do you agree? Explain your answer.

You may use the following in your answer:

- Feigned retreat
- Luck

You must also use information of your own.

(16 marks)

Answer:

The main reason for Norman victory in the Battle of Hastings was the effectiveness of their tactics, which played a crucial role in overcoming the Anglo-Saxon forces. One notable tactic was the feigned retreat, a strategic maneuver that exploited the discipline and formation of the English troops. During the battle, the Normans pretended to flee, causing a significant portion of Harold's forces to break their shield wall in pursuit. Once the English soldiers were lured away from their defensive position, the Normans turned and counter-attacked, taking advantage of the disarray and vulnerability of their opponents.

While the effectiveness of Norman tactics was crucial, William's leadership skills were also a significant factor in the victory. He displayed remarkable ability in maintaining morale among his troops throughout the battle. Harold's forces had a well-deserved reputation for their strength and seemed invincible at various points. When rumors spread that William had been killed, many Normans began to waver. However, William's quick thinking in removing his helmet to reveal his identity reinvigorated his troops and halted the retreat. His presence and leadership were vital; without his determination and motivational skills, the Norman army might have succumbed to despair and disbanded, especially when facing the strong defense of the Anglo-Saxon forces.

Moreover, some historians argue that luck played a critical role in the outcome of the Battle of Hastings. William's initial plan was to launch the invasion in the summer, aligning with Harold's expectations. However, adverse weather conditions delayed his crossing of the English Channel. This delay meant that when the battle finally took place in October, Harold's forces had already been weakened by their prior engagement with the Norwegians at Stamford Bridge, resulting in a smaller and less prepared army for the Norman invasion.

In conclusion, while Norman tactics were a primary reason for victory at the Battle of Hastings, it was William's leadership and the element of luck that also played crucial roles. The successful execution of tactics, combined with strong leadership and favorable circumstances, ultimately led to the Norman conquest of England.

Feedback:

This answer would get 16/16 marks because the pupil has explained three reasons why the Normans were victorious (Norman tactics, William's leadership and luck). They have explained each point in depth using historical information, and directly linked to the question throughout. They have also made a judgement and justified it in their conclusion.

