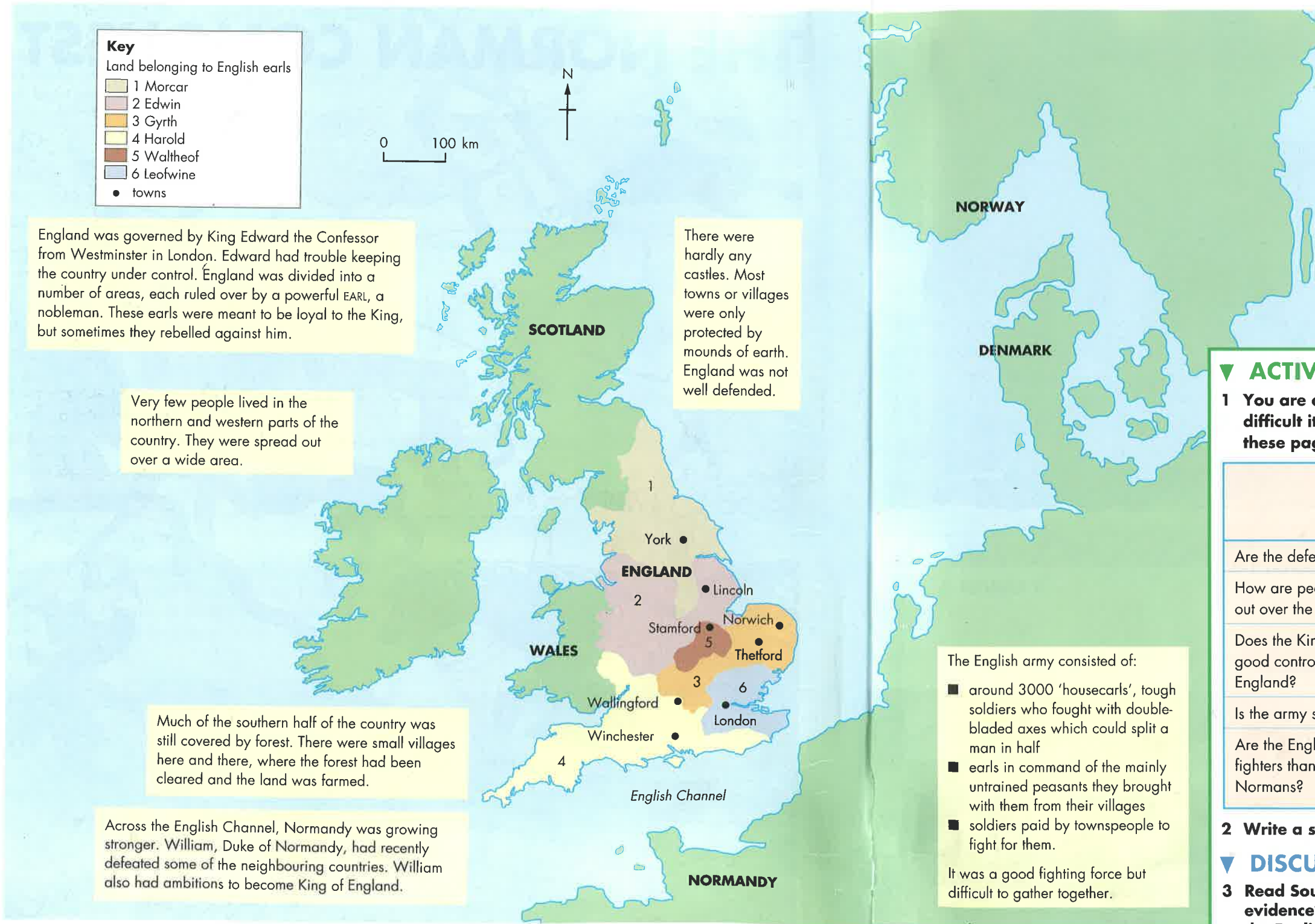# England in the 1060s

William, Duke of Normandy, is thinking of invading England. On pages 8–9 you are going to be a spy for the Normans to find out if England was a strong country in 1066.

Key
Land belonging to English earls
- 1 Morcar
- 2 Edwin
- 3 Gyrth
- 4 Harold
- 5 Waltheof
- 6 Leofwine
- • towns

0   100 km

England was governed by King Edward the Confessor from Westminster in London. Edward had trouble keeping the country under control. England was divided into a number of areas, each ruled over by a powerful EARL, a nobleman. These earls were meant to be loyal to the King, but sometimes they rebelled against him.

There were hardly any castles. Most towns or villages were only protected by mounds of earth. England was not well defended.

Very few people lived in the northern and western parts of the country. They were spread out over a wide area.

Much of the southern half of the country was still covered by forest. There were small villages here and there, where the forest had been cleared and the land was farmed.

Across the English Channel, Normandy was growing stronger. William, Duke of Normandy, had recently defeated some of the neighbouring countries. William also had ambitions to become King of England.

SCOTLAND
NORWAY
DENMARK
ENGLAND
WALES
NORMANDY

York
Lincoln
Stamford
Norwich
Thetford
Wallingford
London
Winchester

English Channel

The English army consisted of:

- around 3000 'housecarls', tough soldiers who fought with double-bladed axes which could split a man in half
- earls in command of the mainly untrained peasants they brought with them from their villages
- soldiers paid by townspeople to fight for them.

It was a good fighting force but difficult to gather together.

▲ **SOURCE 1** A map of England in the 1060s showing major towns and earldoms (areas ruled by an earl)

▼ **SOURCE 2** Descriptions of the English and the Normans in the 1060s written by William of Malmesbury, a monk. He was half English and half Norman by birth

a) The English, at that time, wore short garments reaching to the midknee; they had their hair cropped; their beards shaven; their arms covered with golden bracelets; their skins covered with punctured designs. Drinking parties were very common and they drank until they were sick. Drunkenness weakens the human mind and they often fought with rashness and fury rather than with military skill.

b) The Normans were very particular in their dress and ate and drank with care and not to excess. They were used to war, and could hardly live without it. They were fierce in rushing against the enemy, and where strength failed they tricked and deceived the enemy.

▼ ACTIVITY

1 **You are a Norman spy sent by William to see how easy or difficult it will be to INVADE England. Use the information on these pages to complete a copy of the table below.**

	What have you discovered?	Would this make it easier or harder to invade?
Are the defences good?		
How are people spread out over the country?		
Does the King have good control over England?		
Is the army strong?		
Are the English better fighters than the Normans?		

2 **Write a short report for William telling him your findings.**

▼ DISCUSS

3 **Read Source 2 again. How reliable is this source as evidence? Do you think the monk who wrote it favoured the English or the Normans?**