

Anglo - Saxon Runes



Learning Objectives

1. We know that Anglo Saxons used runes as their alphabet.
2. We realise that historians use these runes to find out what happened.

Anglo - Saxon Runes

The letters of the alphabets of the Anglo Saxons, were called runes.

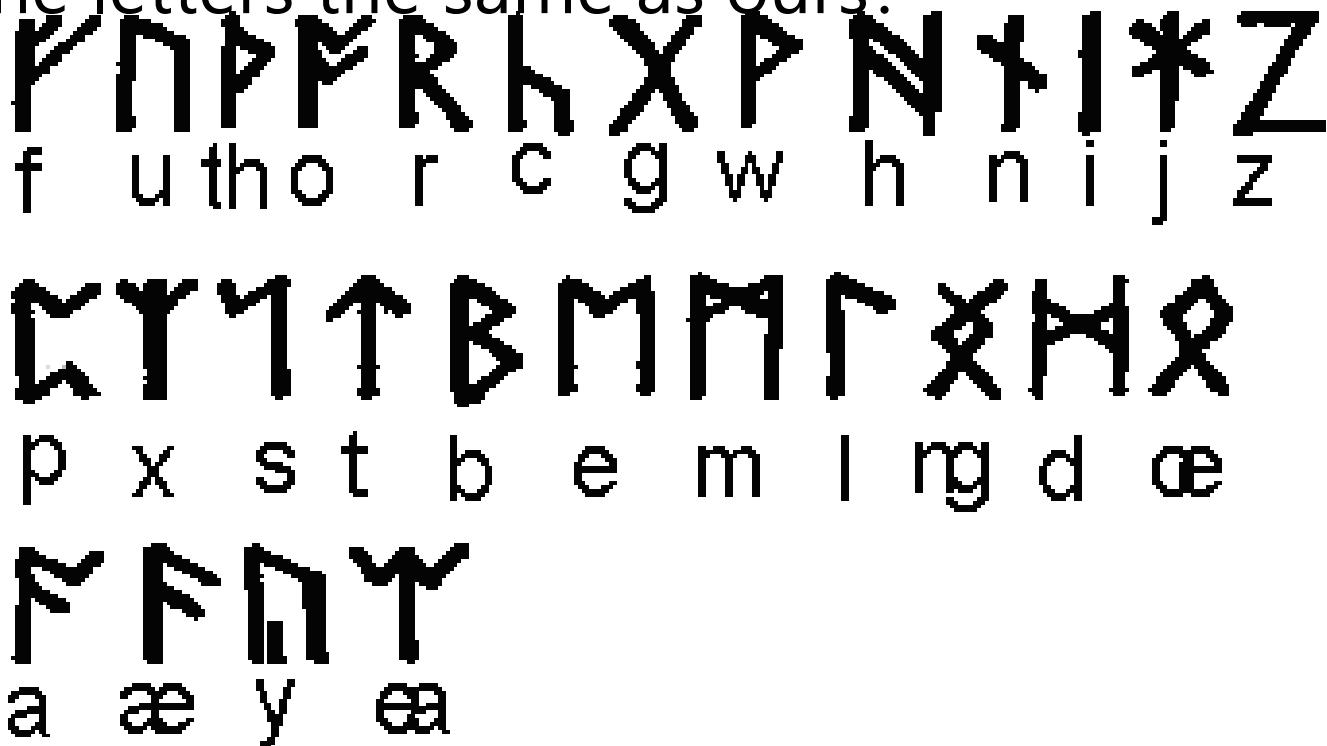
Runes were letters used by the Saxons to write short messages of ownership, like "This belongs to Beowulf".

They were also used to write inscriptions on gravestones, like "Here lies Alfred. We miss him".

There are **28 characters** in this Runic Alphabet.
Although this number seems to vary!

The Alphabet is called a '**Futhork**' from the first 6 letters.

Are the letters the same as ours?



f u th o r c g w h n i j z

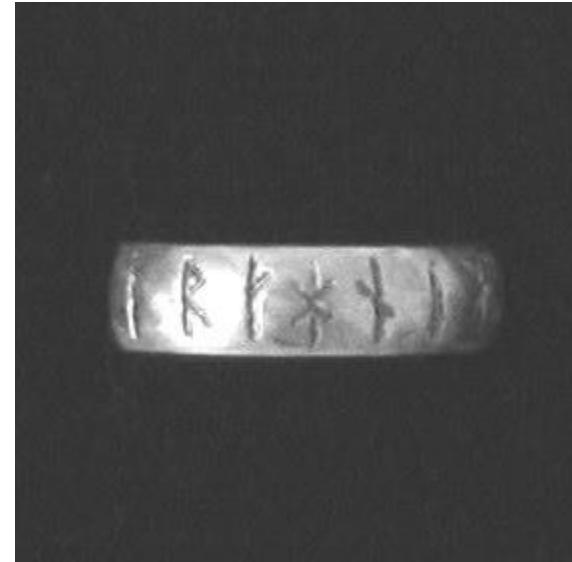
p x s t b e m l ng d œ

a æ y ea

Carving of Runes

- They were usually carved on wood or stone (not written in books).
- The runes consist mostly of vertical and diagonal marks, with notably fewer horizontal marks or curves.
- It is thought that runes were designed this way to help carving in wood.
- Runes were thought to have magical powers and Saxons thought they would protect them from illness and danger.

Where can we see runes?



What do runes tell us?

- Historians use runes to find out information from the past.
- The earliest surviving runes are dated to about A.D. 200.
- These early runes up to about A.D. 650 appear to all use the same "futhark".
- Most of these older inscriptions are very short and cryptic, and in most cases it is hard to translate them or even be sure what language they are.

Can we de-code this?

þ M · H V B B | ↑

V R

þ M R M · F + X · B F k h · F X F | +

þ ð þ ð R h X þ N * I * Z
f u th o r c g w h n i j z

þ Y I ↑ B M M I F X H X
p x s t b e m l n g d æ

þ F Þ Þ Y
a æ y æ

The famous book ...

The Hobbit

Or

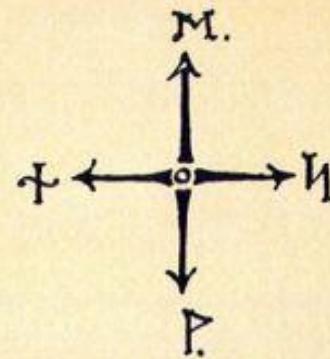
There and Back Again

The Author J.R.R. Tolkien uses a variant of the Anglo-Saxon runes for the writing on Thror's map.

Can we translate it?

Look at the symbols on the compass points

↑ East lie the Iron hills
where is Dain.



VI
PINN
PONHIXN
PMNMRM
NHRQ·NPA
PMHFBRM
FH: .PP.

Here of old was Thrain
King under the Mountain

the Running River

Here is
the gateway
of the Long
Lake

Far to the North
are the Grey Mountains
the Withered Heath
whence came the
Great Worms.

Thror's Map

The Desolation of Smaug

YRPM·BA·PM·XRM·A·YR
R·M·H·PM·Y·P·M·P·R·P·H·H·H·H
R·H·Y·F·M·Y·M·Y·M·T·T·X·Y
H·Y·P·I·P·Y·M·Y·Y·T·Y·X·H·Y·
Y·P·Y·M·Y·R·Y·Y·Y·Y·Y·Y·Y·Y·Y·Y·Y
Y·M·Y·Y·Y·Y·Y·Y·Y·Y·Y·Y·Y·Y·Y·Y·Y·Y

In Esgaroth upon
the Long Lake
dwell Men

↓ West lies Mirkwood the Great
there are Spiders.

Here flows the
Forest River
Elvenking

Can you write using runes?

- Can you write your name using the runes?
- You may have to design your own rune if there is a letter missing.
- Can you write a secret message and then get someone else to de-code it?
- Can you carve your name into the clay?
- Super Challenge de-code the message on the map!