



• Oseberg Ship
• Cart
• Detail of animal head post
**Images Museum of Cultural History
University of Oslo**



Buried Maths

The Oseberg Ship is a beautiful Viking ship discovered by a farmer in Norway. It was found in a mound or small hill and was part of a grave. It was found in 1903 but is believed to have been buried in AD 834. It is one of the best Viking objects found so far and tells us a lot about how important people, from this time in history, were buried.

The ship is 21.5 metres long and 5 metres broad (wide). There are holes for 15 pairs of oars. The ship was part of an elaborate grave to honour two women whose skeletons were found in the mound. One woman was around 80 years old and, the other, 50 years old.

These magnificent items were also found in the mound:

5 wooden posts carved with animal heads, 4 sleighs (sledges), 1 cart, 5 beds, 1 ornate bucket.

These ordinary items were there too:

3 long combs, 3 iron pans, 7 wooden bowls, 10 simple buckets, 18 shovels (spades), 2 oil lamps and 7 glass beads.

Questions

- How many years was the ship in the ground before it was discovered?
- Measure your classroom with a tape measure or metre ruler. Would the ship fit in your classroom?
- Measure your school hall. Would the ship fit in your hall?
- Measure your playground. Would the ship fit in your playground?
- Add together how many oars were needed to row the ship and how many people needed to do the rowing. What number do you get?
- What was the age difference between the two women found in the ship?
- Record the items found in the ship on a bar chart. Use the horizontal axis for numbers and vertical axis for the items. Use a different colour for the ordinary items group and for the magnificent ones. Which group has the most items? How many more shovels are there than buckets?