

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES - MAGNA CARTA – INTRODUCTION

MAGNA CARTA – Lesson 1

Teacher's Notes

Aims

This lesson provides pupils with a general introduction to Magna Carta and why it is considered of historical importance.

By the end of the lesson pupils will have gathered information that can be used to write a short piece on what makes something of historical importance, and why Magna Carta is such an important document.

Objective

- To ask questions of a source as a starting point for historical enquiry
- To understand why something has historical value.

Learning outcomes

By completing this lesson pupils will:

- Increase their knowledge and understanding of Magna Carta as a historical document
- Develop an understanding of the importance of Magna Carta today

Connections to the curriculum

Key stage 3, the National Curriculum in England for history

The development of Church, state and society in Medieval Britain 1066-1509:

- Magna Carta and the emergence of Parliament

Method

The lesson asks pupils to share their current knowledge and understanding through a series of questions – before providing model answers from a range of sources.

Using the whiteboard resource

We recommend you familiarise yourself with the resource before using with pupils. We have provided a breakdown of each slide, with further notes to support your teaching.

SLIDE 1



This displays The National Archives logo.

(We have deliberately not referenced Magna Carta to not 'give the game away' for the first activity.)

SLIDE 2

Guess what we are going to do...

- You are about to look at a picture.
- Concentrate hard because you will not see the picture for very long.
- Once you have looked at the picture get ready to share anything that you saw with the rest of the class.
- You will be amazed how much you can see!
- Ready?
- *Really* ready?

 The National Archives

Title Slide – Magna Carta

Bullet points build on click. This slide provides instructions for the activity on the next few slides.

SLIDE 3



Activity 1 (a)

A countdown from 5 to 1 appears on screen – followed by a 1 second glimpse of: an oil painting by Charles H Sims, showing 'Pictures of English history, from the earliest times to the present period'. King John giving his assent to Magna Carta in 1215. Painted between 1925 and 1927, WOA 2602 © Palace of Westminster Collection.

SLIDE 4



Activity 1 (b)

A blank slide for you to record what pupils observed.

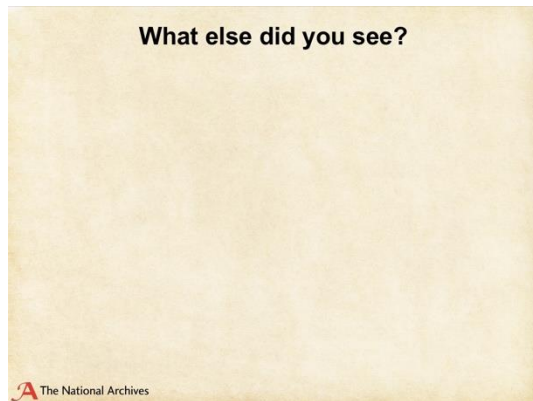
SLIDE 5



Activity 1 (c)

Looking at the painting in more detail. Pupils are asked to identify what e/se they see in the picture, given more time to look at it.

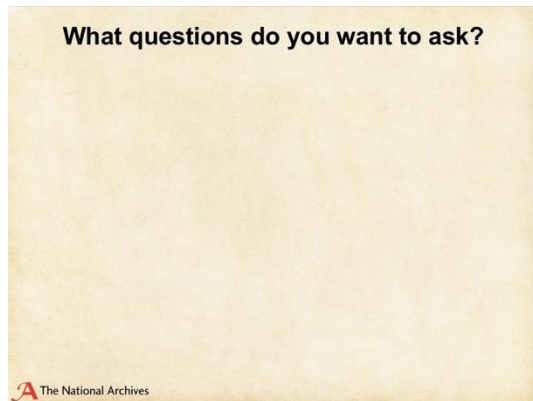
SLIDE 6



Activity 1 (d)

A blank slide for you to record what else pupils observed

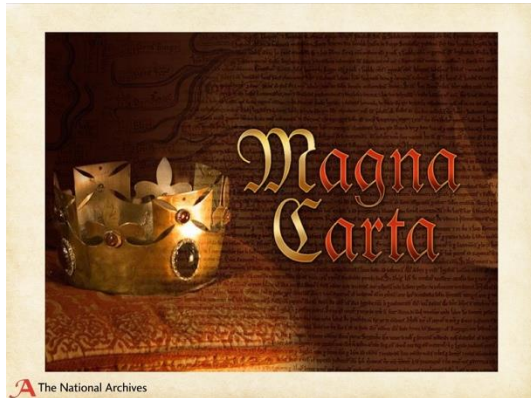
SLIDE 7



Activity 1 (e)

A blank slide for you to record what questions pupils want to ask based on their observation. *What mood is the artist trying to convey? What story is the artist telling? Who is represented in the image?*

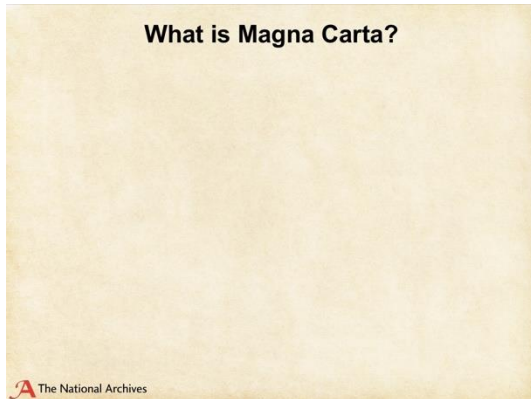
SLIDE 8



Title Slide (Reveal)

A title slide to announce that the lesson is about Magna Carta.

SLIDE 9




Activity 2 (a)


A slide for you to record what pupils already know about Magna Carta

SLIDE 10

What is Magna Carta?

1. It is a document
2. An agreement between King John (1199 – 1216) and a group of “barons” (wealthy landowners)
3. Sealed on 15 June 1215 at Runnymede, near Windsor
4. Limited the powers of the King
5. Gave “rights” to the barons and other “freemen” and to the City of London



 The National Archives

Activity 2 (b)

Some key facts about Magna Carta:

1. It is a document
2. An agreement between King John (1199 – 1216) and a group of “barons” (wealthy landowners)
3. Sealed on 15 June 1215 at Runnymede, near Windsor
4. Limited the powers of the King
5. Gave “rights” to the barons and other “freemen” and to the City of London

SLIDE 11

The man who bought Magna Carta


This is David Rubenstein.


In 2007, he bought the last privately owned copy of Magna Carta (the 1297 version) at Sotheby's Auction House.

According to the Forbes ranking of the wealthiest people in America, he has a net worth of \$2.5 billion.

Listen to him describe how he came to buy Magna Carta.

How much do you think he paid for 'the most famous document in history'?



 The National Archives

Activity 3 (a)

The man who bought Magna Carta

A slide with some facts about David Rubenstein – the man who bought Magna Carta.

Prepares pupils for watching the video on the next screen with purpose. Ask them to consider how much he paid for Magna Carta when it was auctioned in 2007.

SLIDE 12



Video of David Rubenstein recalling how he made a successful bid on Magna Carta when a copy came up for sale in 2007.

SOURCE: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqwSyPUJVo0>
David Rubenstein on the Magna Carta & "Patriotic Philanthropy" (Aspen Institute)

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT (SLIDE 12):

"So I decided right then and there that I would go back the next night and buy it. And I didn't want to tell anybody, because it sounds presumptuous to say to your wife: 'I'm going to buy the Magna Carta tomorrow.' And I would say I didn't want to tell my children because they would say 'How much less money does this mean for us?' So I didn't do it. I just rearranged my schedule, I got back there the next night. I go there on time. They put me in a little room. I thought you'd go down and wave your hand or something... but they didn't – they say 'go into this little room'. Go in the room, they lock the door, telephone – maybe some of you have done this. And they start bidding and you get carried away. Any of you been in an auction and you get carried away and you bid a little more than you thought you going to bid. Has that ever happened to anybody? So I'm bidding and bidding and I'm feeling good about it and all of a sudden the guy says 'Sold!'. So okay - and it was me. So the Head of Sotheby's who was the auctioneer comes in and say 'Who are you? We've never seen you before.' I said who I was. He said: 'You can afford this, right?' Yeah I can okay. Then it's yours and you can slip out the side door and nobody will ever know - we don't tell people. But there are 100 reporters there who want to know where it's going to go. So I said I'll talk to them, I'll tell them why. And I went out and said look I wanted to give this a permanent loan, upon my death will go to the National Archives, as a small down payment on my obligation to this country because I came from very modest circumstances and I rose up to have much more wealth than I really need and I want to give back to the country made a possible."

SLIDE 13

How much did David Rubenstein pay for Magna Carta?



The National Archives

Activity 3 (b)

Multiple choice quiz – How much do pupils think David Rubenstein paid for Magna Carta? Ask pupils to make a guess and justify their decision. To help contextualize the amount of money, the slide offers comparisons:

\$22,000 buys a very expensive, designer mobile phone.

\$2.2m buys one of the most expensive sports cars in the world.

\$22m buys Rihanna's house.

\$22bn puts a man on the moon.

SLIDE 14

How much did David Rubenstein pay for Magna Carta?

\$22m



The National Archives

Activity 3 (Reveal answer)

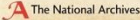
David Rubenstein paid as much as Rihanna's home – for an 800-year-old bit of parchment.

Observe that Magna Carta must be important to be worth that much. Raise the question: *What makes something important?*

SLIDE 15

What makes something important?

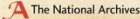
- Monetary value?

**Activity 4 (a)**

What makes something important? Ask pupils to consider this question (what makes something important to *them* – not necessarily of historical importance). Record answers on this slide.

SLIDE 16

What makes something important in History?

**Activity 4 (b)**

What makes something important in History? Ask pupils to consider this question (what makes something important to *them* – not necessarily of historical importance). Record answers on this slide.

SLIDE 17

What makes something important in History?

1. People at the time thought that it was important
2. It affected a lot of people
3. It affected people deeply
4. It affected people for a long time
5. It led to other important events
6. It still affects attitudes and beliefs today

Geoffrey Partington
The Idea of an Historical Education (1980)

Activity 4 (Model answer)

What makes something important in History? This slide builds with 6 statements about historical importance (Source: *The Idea of Historical Education*, published 1980; Geoffrey Partington)

SLIDE 18

What does Magna Carta represent?**What does Magna Carta represent?**

Ask pupils to watch the video in the context of ‘historical importance’ – Why is Magna Carta considered so important? What has it come to represent?

TRANSCRIPT (SLIDE 18):

1215 and Magna Carta limits the power of the king for the first time, as the Barons lay down the law with King John... In 1258 Simon de Montfort's Great Council and the Provisions of Oxford gave a small group of 'Commoners' a wider hand in governing the realm. Like father like son, Henry tried to back out of the agreement, prompting a civil war. De Montfort won, and at his 1265 Parliament called representatives from towns and cities together - another first. Then the 'Model' Parliament of 1295 gave boroughs and shires two representatives each. 1430 and the vote was given to freeholders of land worth 40 shillings or more. And the Putney Debates of 1647 saw the 'Levellers' argue for voting rights for all. It was nearly 200 years before the Great Reform Act of 1832 swept away 'rotten boroughs' extending the vote to the new industrial cities. Reforms followed reforms... followed reforms - and the electorate grew... And in 1918 universal suffrage was finally achieved for men over 21 and women over 30 - a decade later matched at 21. Today every eligible UK citizen over 18 has the right to vote for their representative in Parliament.

What have you learned?

Reflect on everything you have learned so far about Magna Carta:

List 5 bullet points on why it was so important and write these up in a paragraph

or

Create a 30 second video explaining your views

What have you learned?

Ask pupils to reflect on everything they have learned so far about Magna Carta.