

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES - MAGNA CARTA- THE DEBATE!

MAGNA CARTA – Lesson 3

Teacher's Notes

Aims

This lesson provides pupils with an opportunity to question the historical importance of Magna Carta. It focuses on the 1215 version of Magna Carta and the political context of its creation.

At the end of the lesson pupils will have gathered information that can be used to write a short piece on whether they consider the 1215 version of Magna Carta to be either:

- A collection of complaints and grumbles by the barons which only had benefits for them?

or

- An important statement of key principles about how the king can rule and that had benefits for everyone in England?

Objectives

- To understand the societal context of medieval England at the time of Magna Carta
- To consider the importance of Magna Carta at the time for the different classes of society

Learning outcomes

By completing this lesson pupils will:

- Increase their knowledge and understanding of the political context of the sealing of Magna Carta in 1215
- Demonstrate their ability to interpret historical documents and sources
- Develop an understanding of the importance of Magna Carta in 1215

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

This lesson is presented as 'The Great Magna Carta Debate'. Part one is gathering evidence and deciding if Magna Carta was a collection of grumbles by the barons or a series of principles about how the King should rule for the benefit of everyone. Part two is a structured debate where the students will be required to do some written work and debate.

In groups, pupils examine source documents that show some of the context behind the 1215 Magna Carta and report on their findings. They are then given the full text of Magna Carta 1215 in modern English to review. As a whole group, they will explore and debate the importance of specific clauses.

Using the whiteboard resource

We recommend you familiarise yourself with the resource before using with pupils. The sources used in this resource are those found in Chapters 2 and 3 of the online resource: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/medieval/magna-carta/>

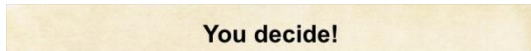
We have provided a break down of each slide, with further notes to support your teaching. **This lesson requires some preparation of printed materials (referenced in these notes).**

SLIDE 1



This displays The National Archives logo.

SLIDE 2



You Decide (Video)

A short video introduction to the lesson.



VIDEO TRANSCRIPT (SLIDE 2):

The Great Magna Carta Debate. Is Magna Carta really as important as historians make out?

On June 15 1215 Magna Carta was sealed by King John. It is now considered one of the most important legal documents in the development of modern democracy. You decide...

Was the 1215 Magna Carta simply a collection of complaints and grumbles by the barons which only had benefits for them?
or Was it an important statement of key principles about how the King can rule that benefitted everyone in England? You decide.

SLIDE 3


You decide!

Was the 1215 Magna Carta:

- a collection of complaints and grumbles by the barons which only had benefits for them?

or

- a important statement of key principles about how the king can rule and that had benefits for everyone in England?

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You decide!

A summary of the key question for the debate

Was the 1215 Magna Carta:


- A collection of complaints and grumbles by the barons which only had benefits for them, *or*
- An important statement of key principles about how he king can rule and that had benefits for everyone in England?

SLIDE 4

Part 1: Gathering Evidence (1215 in context)

Each group has two documents to look at. You will be called upon to share your observations with the rest of the class. Looking at each document, discuss:

- What is the document? (Who wrote it?)
- When was it written?
- Why was it written?
- Make two observations about the time leading up to the sealing of Magna Carta based on this document:
 - Does it suggest that the Barons were simply complaining about the King?*or*
 - Does it reflect a key principle about how he should rule?

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Part 1: Gathering Evidence (1215 in context)

You will need to print and distribute the documents in the file:

Context documents for Lesson 3

There are two documents per group for 4 groups of 5 or 6. Or teachers may wish students to work in pairs. There should be one document per printed page.

Instruct pupils to examine each document, and prepare to report their findings back to the rest of the group.

Each group has two documents to look at. You will be called upon to share your observations with the rest of the class. Looking at each document, discuss:

- What is the document? (Who wrote it?)

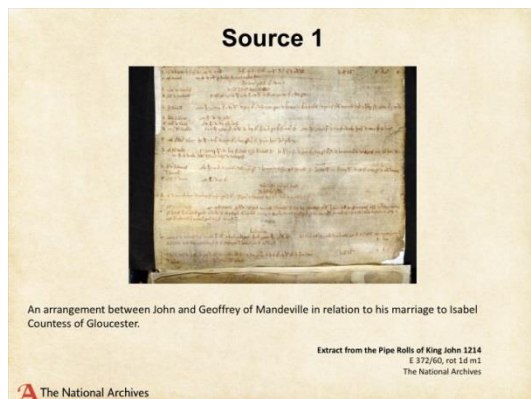
- When was it written?
- Why was it written?
- Make **two** observations about the time leading up to the sealing of Magna Carta based on this document:

Does it suggest that the Barons were simply complaining about the King?

Or

Does it reflect a key principle about how he should rule?

SLIDE 5



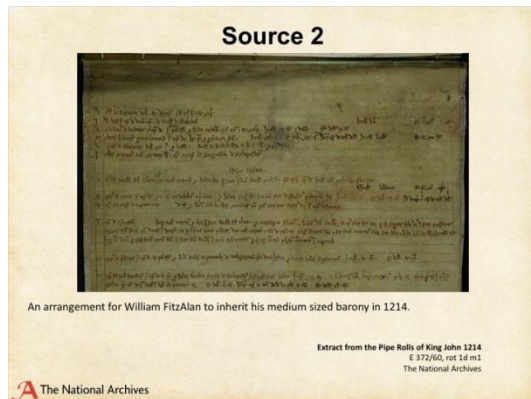
Source 1:

Extract from the Pipe Rolls of King John 1214

An arrangement between John and Geoffrey of Mandeville in relation to his marriage to Isabel Countess of Gloucester.

Ask the pupils who prepared this document to report back on their findings.

SLIDE 6



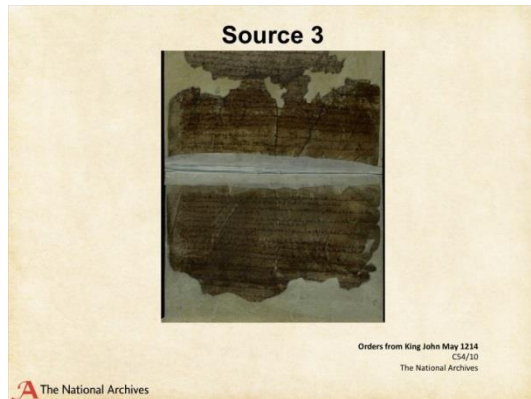
Source 2:

Extract from the Pipe Rolls of King John 1214

An arrangement for William FitzAlan to inherit his medium sized barony in 1214

Ask the pupils who prepared this document to report back on their findings.

SLIDE 7

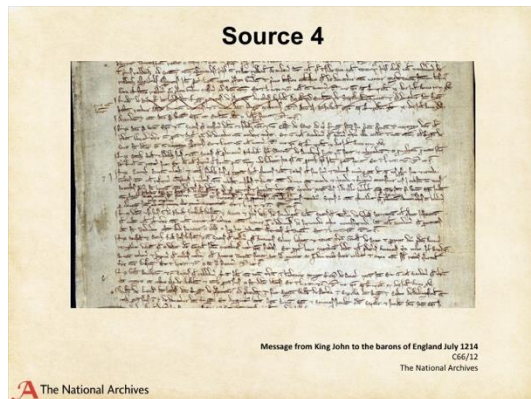


Source 3:

Orders from King John May 1214

Ask the pupils who prepared this document to report back on their findings.

SLIDE 8

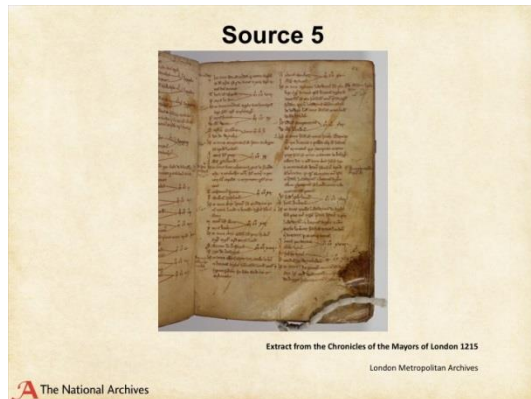


Source 4

Message from King John to the barons of England July 1214

Ask the pupils who prepared this document to report back on their findings.

SLIDE 9

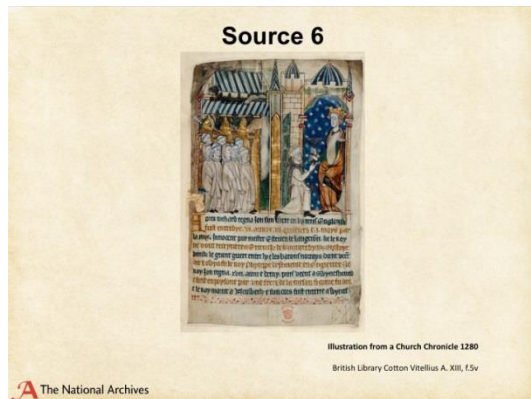


Source 5

Extract from the Chronicles of the Mayors of London

Ask the pupils who prepared this document to report back on their findings.

SLIDE 10

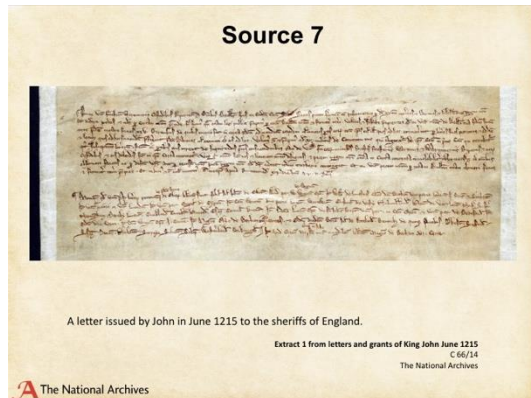


Source 6

Extract from the Chronicles of the Mayors of London

Ask the pupils who prepared this document to report back on their findings.

SLIDE 11



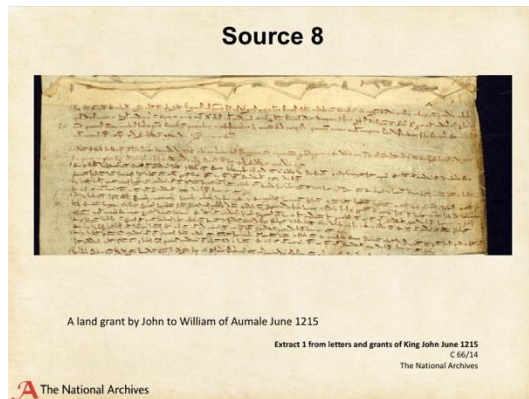
Source 7

Extract 1 from letters and grants of King John June 1215

A letter issued by John in June 1215 to the sheriffs of England.

Ask the pupils who prepared this document to report back on their findings.

SLIDE 12



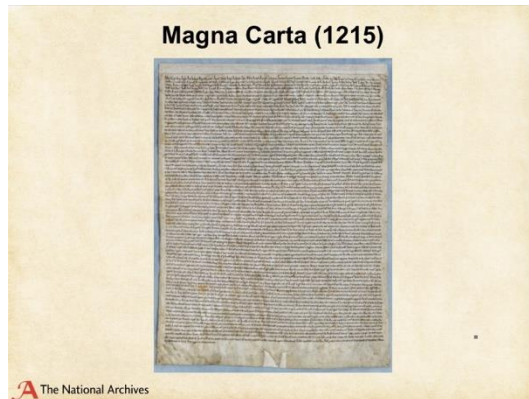
Source 8

Extract 2 from letters and grants of King John June 1215

A land grant by John to William of Aumale June 1215.

Ask the pupils who prepared this document to report back on their findings.

SLIDE 13



Magna Carta (1215)


Print and provide each pupil with a copy of the English Translation of Magna Carta:

Magna Carta 1215

You may ask them to study the clauses and highlight those that they think are for the common good – and those that only really benefit the barons.


SLIDE 14

Magna Carta (1215) Introduction



JOHN, by the grace of God King of England, Lord of Ireland, Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and Count of Anjou, to his archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls, barons, justices, foresters, sheriffs, stewards, servants, and to all his officials and loyal subjects, Greeting.

KNOW THAT BEFORE GOD, for the health of our soul and those of our ancestors and heirs, to the honour of God, the exaltation of the holy Church, and the better ordering of our kingdom, at the advice of our reverend fathers Stephen, archbishop of Canterbury, primate of all England, and cardinal of the holy Roman Church, Henry archbishop of Dublin, William bishop of London, Peter bishop of Winchester, Jocelin bishop of Bath and Glastonbury, Hugh bishop of Lincoln, Walter Bishop of Worcester, William bishop of Coventry, Benedict bishop of Rochester, Master Pandulf subdeacon and member of the papal household, Brother Aymeric master of the knighthood of the Temple in England, William Marshal earl of Pembroke, William earl of Salisbury, William earl of Warren, William earl of Arundel, Alan de Galloway constable of Scotland, Warin Fitz Gerald, Peter Fitz Herbert, Hubert de Burgh seneschal of Poitou, Hugh de Neville, Matthew Fitz Herbert, Thomas Basset, Alan Basset, Philip Daubeny, Robert de Roppeley, John Marshal, John Fitz Hugh, and other loyal subjects.

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Magna Carta (1215) Introduction


Ask and answer questions as a whole group about the wording of the introduction:

Which barons and churchmen were present when John accepted the Charter?

You will notice that the bishops and churchmen are listed before the earls and barons. What does this tell you about the importance of the Church and the need that both king and barons had for its support?


SLIDE 15

Magna Carta (1215) Clause 1



(1) FIRST, THAT WE HAVE GRANTED TO GOD, and by this present charter have confirmed for us and our heirs in perpetuity, that the English Church shall be free, and shall have its rights undiminished, and its liberties unimpaired. That we wish this so to be observed, appears from the fact that of our own free will, before the outbreak of the present dispute between us and our barons, we granted and confirmed by charter the freedom of the Church's elections - a right reckoned to be of the greatest necessity and importance to it - and caused this to be confirmed by Pope Innocent III. This freedom we shall observe ourselves, and desire to be observed in good faith by our heirs in perpetuity.

Who benefits from this clause?

 The National Archives

Magna Carta (1215) Clause 1


Ask and answer questions as a whole group about Clause 1:

Who benefits from this clause?

What does this tell you about the Church's involvement in Magna Carta?


SLIDE 16

Magna Carta (1215) Clause 2



(2) If any earl, baron, or other person that holds lands directly of the Crown, for military service, shall die, and at his death his heir shall be of full age and owe a 'relief', the heir shall have his inheritance on payment of the ancient scale of 'relief'. That is to say, the heir or heirs of an earl shall pay £100 for the entire earl's barony, the heir or heirs of a knight 100 shillings (£4) at most for the entire knight's 'fee', and any man that owes less shall pay less, in accordance with the ancient usage of 'fees'

Who benefits from this clause?

 The National Archives

Magna Carta (1215) Clause 2


Ask and answer questions as a whole group about Clause 2:

Who benefits from this clause?

This clause shows the barons are trying to re-establish old customs and pay the old fees to inherit land they used to pay rather than the higher charges which John introduced. What does this tell you about the beneficiaries of Magna Carta?

SLIDE 17


Magna Carta (1215) Clause 39, 40



(39) No free man shall be seized or imprisoned, or stripped of his rights or possessions, or outlawed or exiled, or deprived of his standing in any other way, nor will we proceed with force against him, or send others to do so, except by the lawful judgement of his equals or by the law of the land.

(40) To no one will we sell, to no one deny or delay right or justice.

Who benefits from these clauses?

 The National Archives

Magna Carta (1215) Clause 39, 40


Ask and answer questions as a whole group about Clauses 39 and 40:

Who benefits from these clauses?

These clauses establish the right to trial by jury.

SLIDE 18


Magna Carta (1215) Clause 50, 51



(39) No free man shall be seized or imprisoned, or stripped of his rights or possessions, or outlawed or exiled, or deprived of his standing in any other way, nor will we proceed with force against him, or send others to do so, except by the lawful judgement of his equals or by the law of the land.

(40) To no one will we sell, to no one deny or delay right or justice.

Who benefits from these clauses?

 The National Archives

Magna Carta (1215) Clause 50, 51

Ask and answer questions as a whole group about Clauses 50 and 51:

Who benefits from these clauses?

This seems to be a case of the barons removing evil advisers who have led King John astray. Or is there some other possible explanation?

SLIDE 19

Magna Carta (1215) Clause 61


(61) Since we [King John] have granted all these things for God, for the better ordering of our kingdom, and to end the disagreement that has arisen between us and our barons, we agree that the barons shall elect twenty-five of their number to watch over and keep the peace and liberties granted and confirmed to them by this charter.

If any complaint is brought to us [King John] by four of the twenty-five barons and we do not solve within forty days, the twenty-five barons may rebel against us with the support of the whole community of the land, by seizing our castles, lands, possessions, or anything else ... until they have solution they want. Having secured the solution, they may then resume their normal obedience to us.

Any man may support the barons and rebel against us.... Indeed, we will order any of our subjects who are unwilling to rebel to do so.

[This is a simplified version of clause 61]

Who benefits from this clause?

 The National Archives

Magna Carta (1215) Clause 61

Ask and answer questions as a whole group about Clause 61:

Who benefits from this clause?

What does this Clause mean? How does it affect the power of the King?

Note: We have simplified the transcript.

SLIDE 20

Part 2: The Magna Carta Debate

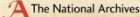
Was the 1215 Magna Carta:

- a collection of complaints and grumbles by the barons which will only had benefits for them?

or

- a important statement of key principles about how the king can rule and had benefits for everyone in England?

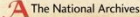
Write a paragraph on your own conclusion, referencing sources and clauses from the Magna Carta (1215)

**Part 2: The Magna Carta Debate**

Remind pupils of the original question – and set them a task to write up a paragraph or two on their own conclusions. This will inform their stance on the debate.

SLIDE 21

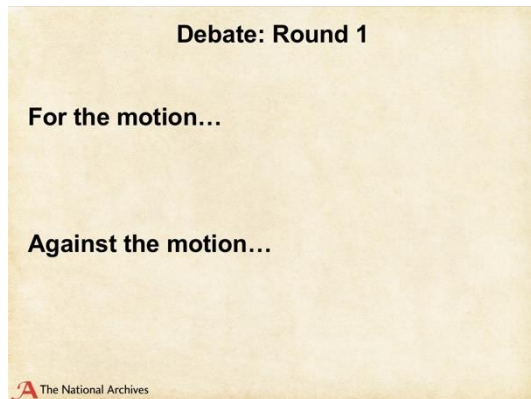
Motion is: This House believes that...

**Motion is: This House believes that...**

Discuss with students how to frame a motion for debate – and type up or write the proposition on this slide.

Form a statement to the effect that Magna Carta is the foundation stone for modern democracy.

SLIDE 22

**Debate: Round 1**

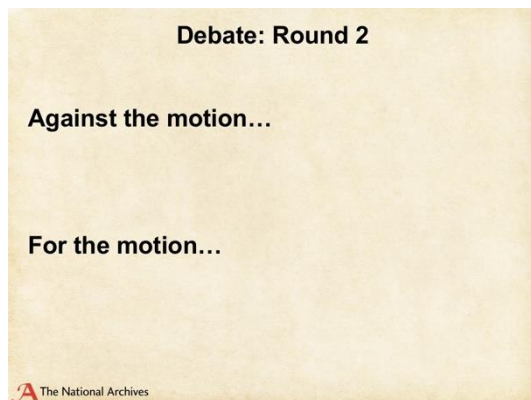
During the debate you (or nominated pupils) act as chairperson and timekeeper. It is important you keep events moving.

Select up to 6 pupils to represent different sides of the argument (with an equal number representing each side).

In turn, one pupil will present a case *for* the motion (the proposition) and then one pupil will present a case against the motion (the opposition).

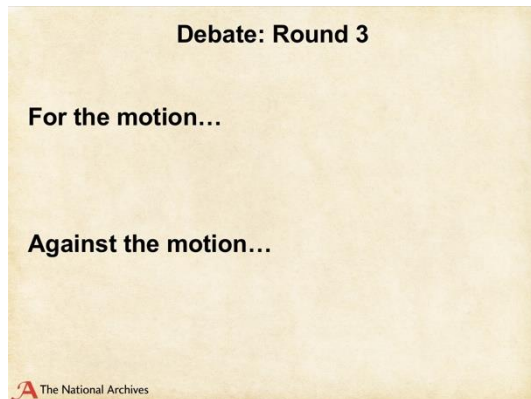
In the first round. The pupil speaking **for the motion** will go first – the opposing pupil will respond to their argument, trying to persuade the rest of their class one way or the other. The "audience" should not be passive. There is an opportunity for them to question the speakers, and to give their own opinions from the floor.

SLIDE 23

**Debate: Round 2**

In the second round. The pupil **speaking against** the motion will go first – the opposing pupil will respond to their argument, trying to persuade the rest of their class one way or the other. The "audience" should not be passive. There is an opportunity for them to question the speakers, and to give their own opinions from the floor.

SLIDE 24

**Debate: Round 3**

In the third and final round. The pupil speaking **for the motion** will go first – the opposing pupil will respond to their argument, trying to persuade the rest of their class one way or the other. The "audience" should not be passive. There is an opportunity for them to question the speakers, and to give their own opinions from the floor.

SLIDE 25

**Discussion from the floor...**

Here is an opportunity for any other pupil to raise an argument and for you to moderate any misconceptions heard through the debate.

SLIDE 26

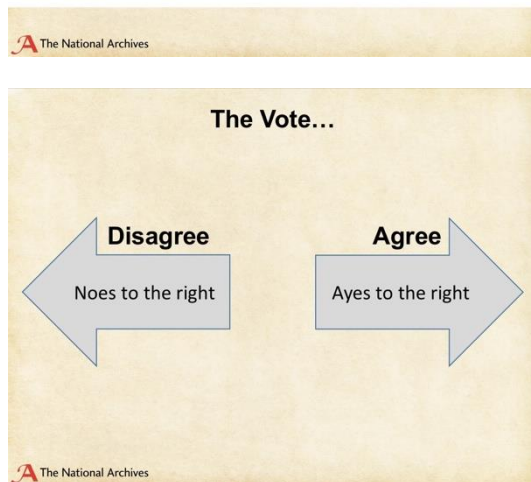
You decide!

You decide!



Replay the short video introduction – and ask pupils to consider which way they intend to vote.

SLIDE 27



The Vote ...

Collect votes for and against the motion.