



Empires in the Middle Ages

Lesson 13: Magna Carta



Review

We have learned about several kings who reigned in England during the Middle Ages.

How did William the Conqueror become king of England?

What changes did King Henry II make to the court system?

What was the nickname of Richard I? How did he acquire that nickname?

Chapter 8: “The Wayward King: King John and Magna Carta”

Vocabulary 13.1

Vocabulary for “The Wayward King: King John and Magna Carta”

1. **succeed**, *v.* to follow or replace someone in a position of power (68)
2. **ancestral**, *adj.* related to a person's relatives from long ago (68)
3. **unsettling**, *adj.* makes people nervous, worried, or upset (69)
4. **inevitable**, *adj.* will happen and can't be stopped (70)
5. **consult**, *v.* to ask someone for advice or information (71)
6. **humiliation**, *n.* a feeling of embarrassment and shame (72)
7. **ballad**, *n.* a simple song, usually telling a story (**ballads**) (74)

Chapter 8: “The Wayward King: King John and Magna Carta”

The BIG Question

Why is Magna Carta such an important document?

Chapter 8: “The Wayward King: King John and Magna Carta”

What does **succeed** mean?

Whom did King John succeed?

What did King John lose control over?

Chapter 8

The Wayward King:

King John and the Magna Carta

THE BIG QUESTION
Why is Magna Carta such an important document?



Richard I

King Richard I died in 1199 CE. Although he had spent very little time in England, people there still mourned the death of Richard the Lion-Hearted. Many people had taken up arms and followed this royal crusader to the hot deserts of the Middle East. Many fought alongside him in battle. Without children to **succeed** him, Richard's youngest brother John became the next king.

King John was not as popular as his brother. For one thing, he failed to hold on to some of England's lands in France. Less than five years after John became king, the king of France attacked the regions of Normandy and Anjou. These were King John's **ancestral** lands. John attempted to defend these lands, but without his nobles' support, he was unsuccessful.



King John lost the lands in orange.

Chapter 8: “The Wayward King: King John and Magna Carta”

Who was especially unhappy with King John?



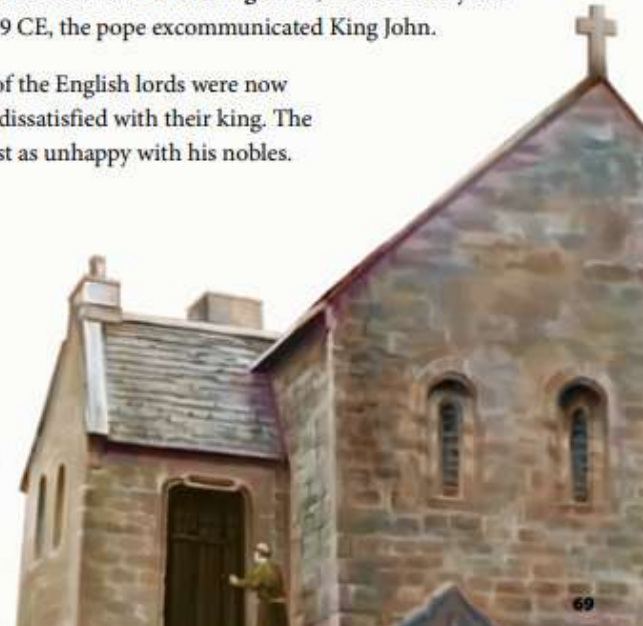
King John holding model of the abbey church he founded

Wars cost money and someone had to pay for them. To do this, King John raised taxes. He taxed nobles and wealthy merchants, and he placed taxes on cities. He also made it more difficult for people to hunt in the royal forests. Dissatisfaction with King John grew among the ruling class.

Then, King John claimed Church property and disagreed with the pope's choice of who should become the archbishop of Canterbury. Now he had yet another enemy. In fact, the pope was so angry with King John that he instructed the priests in England to limit church services. Most people were prevented from participating in the daily and weekly rituals of the Church. These were **unsettling** times, indeed. Two years later, in 1209 CE, the pope excommunicated King John.

Many of the English lords were now completely dissatisfied with their king. The king was just as unhappy with his nobles.

The pope ordered English priests to limit church services.



Chapter 8: “The Wayward King: King John and Magna Carta”

The text says, “A major conflict was inevitable.”

Which people or groups would inevitably have a conflict? What happened?

As a result of the feudal system, nobles had a huge amount of power. King John wanted to lessen their power and claim some of their land. The nobles wanted to limit the king’s authority. A major conflict was **inevitable**.

Eventually, King John agreed to the pope’s candidate for archbishop of Canterbury. But by this time, some of the more powerful nobles had already decided to act against him. In 1215 CE, following another English military defeat in France and additional taxes, these nobles rebelled and turned against King John. They captured London. For a short time, there was a military stand-off between the rebellious nobles and King John.



An important group of English nobles rebelled against John in 1215 CE.

Chapter 8: “The Wayward King: King John and Magna Carta”

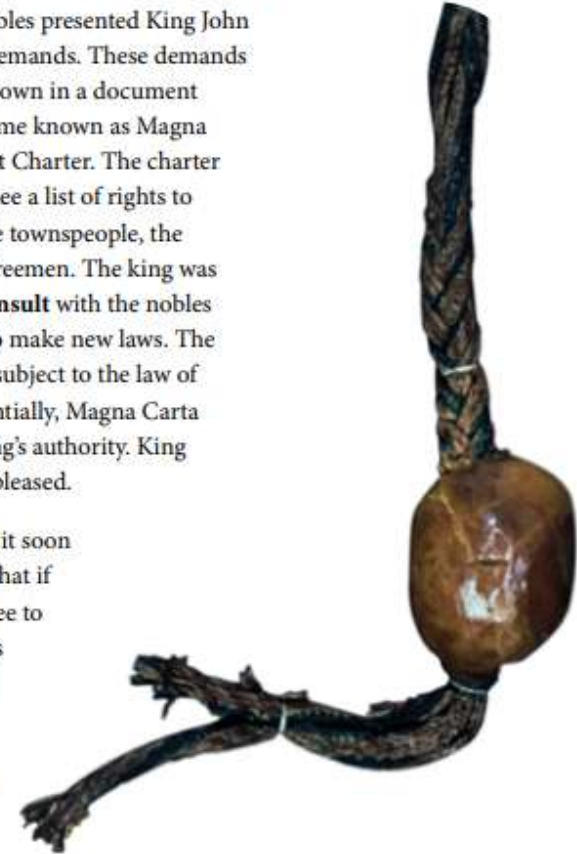
What were the consequences, or results, of Magna Carta for the nobles?

What were the consequences of Magna Carta for King John?

If King John did not like the consequences of Magna Carta, why was the royal seal placed on it, allowing it to become the law of the

In the summer of 1215 CE, both sides agreed to talk about their differences. After much debate, the nobles presented King John with a list of demands. These demands were written down in a document that later became known as Magna Carta, or Great Charter. The charter would guarantee a list of rights to the barons, the townspeople, the Church, and freemen. The king was required to **consult** with the nobles if he wanted to make new laws. The king was also subject to the law of the land. Essentially, Magna Carta limited the king's authority. King John was not pleased.

However, it soon became clear that if he did not agree to the charter, his nobles would continue to rebel. In June 1215 CE, an official seal was placed on Magna Carta. Copies of Magna Carta were sent out to different parts of the kingdom. Magna Carta was an important written statement that limited the power of English kings.



An official seal was placed on Magna Carta.

Chapter 8: “The Wayward King: King John and Magna Carta”

Magna Carta

Magna Carta really only benefited some members of society: feudal lords, the Church, the merchant class, and, in a general way, all freemen. Still, the document stated that the king must consult with others if he wanted to make new laws or raise taxes, and that courts must recognize the rule of law. In this respect, it is considered to be one of the most important documents in English history. Many of the ideas in this document have been included in the constitutions—or governing documents—of modern democracies.

King John did not have to endure this **humiliation** for too long. Four months later, he died of a fever as conflict continued to rage throughout England. King John's son Henry was crowned king of this troubled land. Henry III was just nine years old!

Within 50 years of King John's death, England would have a new governing body, or parliament. This parliament included the king, the lords, the knights, and the townspeople in England, providing more people a say in the government and laws.



Marble coffin lid of King John

Which members of the English society benefited from Magna Carta?

How did Magna Carta change King John's power? Cite evidence from the text.

What type of modern government is based on many of the ideas from Magna Carta?



Copy of Magna Carta from 1225 CE

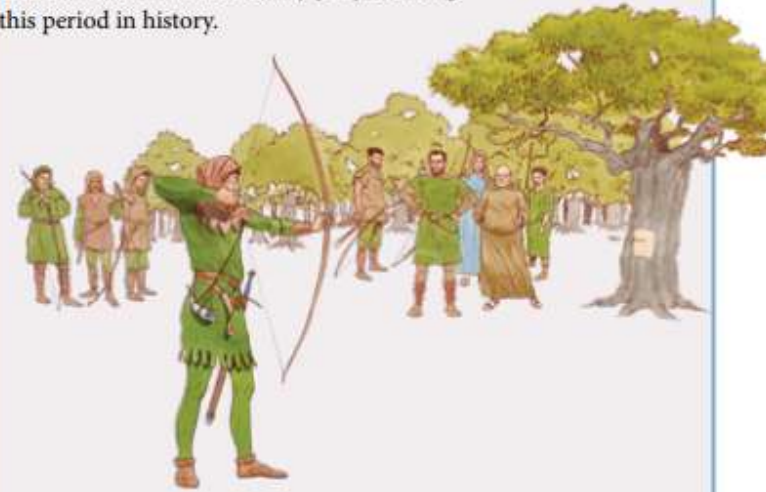
Chapter 8: “The Wayward King: King John and Magna Carta”

Who was Robin Hood, and did he really exist?

If he did exist, why might he be considered a hero?

Robin Hood

Did the English hero Robin Hood really exist? It is difficult to say. The earliest reference to the legend of Robin Hood appears to date from about 1377 CE, and the oldest manuscript is from the late 1400s. The stories of Robin Hood's adventures first appeared in the form of **ballads**. As the legend goes, Robin and his band of men lived in the forests of northern England. Robin was thought to be a hero because he challenged the local lords, and even the king. English kings had raised taxes and introduced strict hunting laws, which prevented many people from entering royal forests. It is possible that there really was an outlaw like Robin Hood who challenged these laws. However, it is also possible that a fictional character named Robin Hood was created by storytellers to explain how difficult life was for many people during this period in history.



Robin Hood and his band of outlaws

Chapter 8: “The Wayward King: King John and Magna Carta”

What were some of the things a lady-in-waiting needed to learn?

What was the final purpose of training to become a lady-in-waiting?

If You Were a Lady-in-Waiting

Queens during the Middle Ages would have had ladies-in-waiting to attend to them. If you are destined to become a lady-in-waiting, you too will leave home at an early age to begin your training. Only girls from noble households can wait upon other noble ladies, including members of the royal family.



Young girl from a noble family



A lady-in-waiting learned to sew.

Therefore, your training takes place in a noble household. You are expected to acquire excellent manners. You learn to dance, sew, and ride a horse. You learn to read and, often, to speak a foreign language. You might even learn to be a skillful archer.



A lady-in-waiting would brush her mistress's hair.

Your many duties include helping to dress your mistress, brushing her hair, and helping her bathe. You also tend to her clothes, repairing them and cleaning them. As with all ladies-in-waiting, the purpose of your training is to ensure you eventually marry a nobleman.

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Medieval Musings

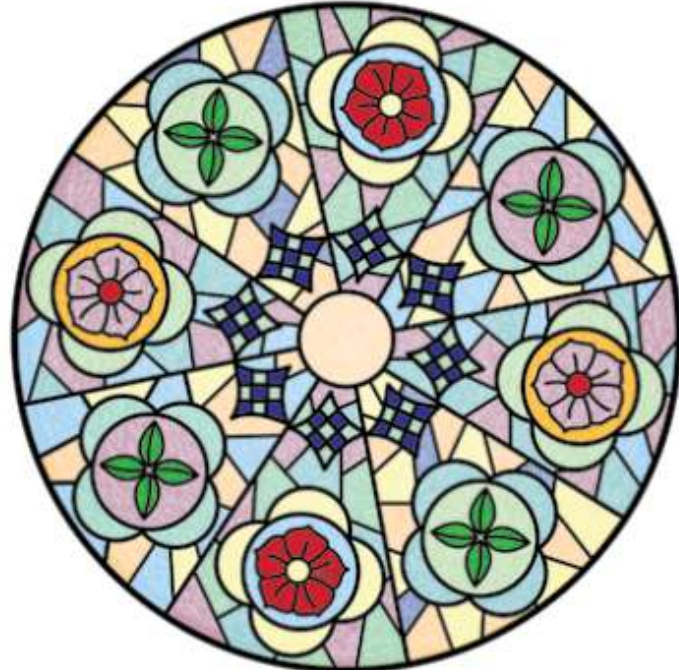
1. King John inherited a nickname that pokes fun at the fact that he did not have as much land or wealth as other kings. What was his nickname?
2. Skilled craftsmen made armor. What kind of craftsmen did this?



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Letter Quest

Find the letter in this stained-glass window and record it on Activity Page 2.3.



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Chapter 8: “The Wayward King: King John and Magna Carta”

Discuss the Chapter

What does ***wayward*** mean?

Chapter 8: “The Wayward King: King John and Magna Carta”

Discuss the Chapter

What does **wayward** mean?

- Behaving in an unacceptable way

Chapter 8: “The Wayward King: King John and Magna Carta”

Discuss the Chapter

Why did the author use the word ***wayward*** to describe King John in the title?

Chapter 8: “The Wayward King: King John and Magna Carta”

Discuss the Chapter

Why did the author use the word **wayward** to describe King John in the title?

- King John took actions that both the Church and the nobles disagreed with.
- For example, he objected to some of the Church’s decisions, he lost land to France, and he taxed the people of England.

Chapter 8: “The Wayward King: King John and Magna Carta”

Discuss the Chapter

Why is Magna Carta considered to be one of the most important documents in English history?

Chapter 8: “The Wayward King: King John and Magna Carta”

Discuss the Chapter

Why is Magna Carta considered to be one of the most important documents in English history?

- It changed the balance of power in England by giving certain people rights, such as having a say in creating laws.
- It provided a basis for some ideas that were incorporated in the constitutions of modern democracies.

Word Work – *Inevitable*

Definition

Will happen and can't be stopped

From the Text

“A major conflict was *inevitable*.”

Part of Speech

Adjective

Practice

If I carry too many heavy books, it is *inevitable* that I _____.

If I don't tie my shoelaces before running, it is *inevitable* that I _____.

Sentence

When you are learning to do something new, making mistakes is *inevitable*.

Language – Writing a Persuasive Paragraph

- ❖ A ***persuasive paragraph*** states an opinion and tries to ***persuade*** people to agree.
- ❖ Sentence 1: State your opinion.
- ❖ Reason #1 with a transition word (First of all...)
- ❖ Reason #2 with a transition word (In addition... Second of all...)
- ❖ Reason #3 with a transition word (Lastly.... Finally...)
- ❖ Final Sentence: Use a concluding sentence to retell the opinion in a different way.

Language – Writing a Persuasive Paragraph

Persuasive Paragraph Rubric

	Exemplary	Strong	Developing	Beginning
Introduction	Sentence clearly expresses an opinion in the student's own words	Sentence states an opinion	Sentence loosely expresses an opinion	Sentence does not state an opinion
Body	All details in supporting sentences provide reasons that reinforce the opinion and incorporate vivid, showing language	Most details in supporting sentences provide reasons that reinforce the opinion	Some details in supporting sentences provide reasons that reinforce the opinion	Few or no details in supporting sentences provide reasons that reinforce the opinion
Conclusion	Sentence clearly expresses an opinion in the student's own words	Sentence states an opinion	Sentence loosely expresses an opinion	Sentence does not state an opinion
Structure of the piece	Excellent transitions so that all supporting sentences flow smoothly	Some transitions between supporting sentences	A few transitions between supporting sentences	No transitions between supporting sentences
	All information has been paraphrased	Most information has been paraphrased	Some information has been paraphrased	Little or no information has been paraphrased