

Warmer – The Magna Carta

Here is a short history of the Magna Carta. Unfortunately it has four factual errors. This means there are mistakes in the history (the spelling and grammar are fine). Work in pairs and find the four things you think are wrong.

The Magna Carta

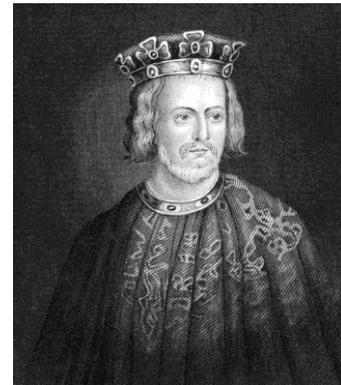
What is it?

The Magna Carta is an 800-year-old document, which limits the power of kings and queens. It was agreed at a meeting in June 1215 at Stonehenge (near the town of Salisbury) and written on sheepskin.

Stonehenge**King John of England**

Why was it created?

The king of England at the time was John. He needed money because he lost millions of pounds playing cards in a game at Lincoln Cathedral. As a result, he kept raising taxes and introducing new ones. People who did not pay could be thrown into prison. The barons, or wealthy landowners, were unhappy about these taxes and forced King John to the meeting.



Where is it now?

Today the Magna Carta document, signed by King John, can still be seen in the British Museum in London. There are also copies at Salisbury and Lincoln Cathedrals.

Salisbury Cathedral**Lincoln Cathedral**

Task 1 – Quiz: The Magna Carta towns

Work in small groups. Answer the questions.



1. Which famous US president shares his surname with a Magna Carta town?

- a) Theodore Roosevelt
- b) Abraham Lincoln
- c) George Washington

2. What does 'St' in Bury St Edmunds mean?

- a) street
- b) station
- c) saint

3. The City of London (the oldest part of London) is famous for ...

- a) theatres
- b) banking and finance
- c) shopping malls

4. What is the nickname for the City of London?

- a) the Square Mile
- b) the Big Apple
- c) the Pink City

5. The River Thames connects ...

- a) London and Canterbury
- b) London and Runnymede
- c) London and St Albans

6. The smallest pub in England is in Bury St Edmunds. What is its name?

- a) the King's Head
- b) the Red Lion
- c) the Nutshell

7. The Queen is the head of the English Church. Who is number 2?

- a) the Mayor of London
- b) the Archbishop of Canterbury
- c) the Bishop of London

8. What is the name of a famous old English collection of stories?

- a) *London Life*
- b) *Runnymede Reader*
- c) *Canterbury Tales*

Task 2 – Reading: Magna Carta towns. *Read the five texts and answer the questions.*

1. Canterbury

Canterbury had often been at the centre of political opposition to kings because of its position as the centre of religion in England. The Archbishop of Canterbury was the head of the English church.

In 1207 Stephen Langton, who had strong beliefs about the proper role of kings, became Archbishop of Canterbury against the wishes of King John.

3. City of London

On Sunday 17th May 1215, while everyone was at church, the barons took over the City of London, installed their own mayor and then used this to force King John to meet them at Runnymede.

King John agreed that Londoners could elect their own lord mayor every year as long as the mayor promised to support the king. New lord mayors still make this promise 800 years later.

5. Runnymede

This is where King John and the barons met and formally agreed the Magna Carta in June 1215. It is believed that the field at Runnymede, on the bank of the Thames, may have been a meeting place from ancient times, so using this place showed how serious the Magna Carta meeting was. In addition, the location was accessible both from Windsor Castle and from London. Travel was possible by boat or by horse.

2. St Albans

St Albans earns its place as a Magna Carta Town, as on 4 August 1213 barons and church leaders met with the King's representative at St Albans.

The King's representative agreed to pay back money to landowners which King John had taken in illegal taxes. However this agreement only led to a demand for more rights.

4. Lincoln

Lincoln was an important town in 1215. It had grown rich from the wool trade and was also a centre for learning and religious study.

The Bishop of Lincoln was one of the 25 barons who attended the Magna Carta meeting at Runnymede. However, after the Magna Carta was agreed, peace did not last long and a civil war began. After fighting up and down the country, King John died in October 1216 at Newark Castle, the home of the Bishop of Lincoln.

Runnymede



- a. Which town was economically strong? Why?
- b. In which town did the barons take control? How did they do it?
- c. In which town did a church leader challenge the King's authority? Why?
- d. In which town did the King try to make the landowners feel less angry? Was he successful?
- e. Which of the above places is not a town? What is it?

Task 3 – Role play: You’ve won a holiday!

Work in pairs.

Congratulations!!! You have won a week’s holiday for two. All you need to do now is choose your holiday from the following options ...

Student A

You want to do the Magna Carta tour

St Alban’s Cathedral


Travel to the UK and stay in a 5-star London hotel in the old City of London.

Day 1: Explore the dynamic capital; where ancient and modern sit side by side. Day 2: Visit Runnymede, the beautiful riverside location where King John met the barons. Spend the afternoon at Windsor Castle. Day 3: Discover Canterbury with its glorious cathedral and old streets. Day 4: Examine the Magna Carta at the British Library. Days 5-7: Develop your own itinerary. We will be happy to help!

Student B

You want to go the beach in Cornwall

St Ives, Cornwall


Travel to Cornwall and experience the delights of the English seaside.

Need to relax and unwind? Cornwall in the south-west of England is just the place to do it. Go for walks along the coast, try your hand at surfing, or simply relax on the sandy beaches.

Stay at a local bed and breakfast with full English breakfast included. In the evening, enjoy fish and chips or other traditional English dishes at the many local restaurants.

Go online and research your trip. Make notes about your plan.

- *How will you travel?*
- *Where will you stay?*
- *What will you do?*

Now role play the situation. Who can win the argument?

Task 4 – Writing: design your own UK tour

Plan a one-week holiday to the UK for one of the following:

- *A sports fan*
- *A music and art lover*
- *A history enthusiast*

Give a daily itinerary, with descriptions.