**World History**

**Measurement Topic 1: The Development of Modern Political Thought**

**LT#1: What are the important ideas found in the Magna Carta and the English bill of Rights?**

**Directions:**

1. Number the paragraphs
2. Independently read the article and circle words you don’t know, find the definition.
3. Read the article a second time whole class/or with a partner.
4. Highlight information and write a side note for each paragraph.
5. Respond to the questions and respond to the prompt.

**What is the Significance of the Magna Carta?**

After the death of King Henry II in 1199 A.D., the rule of England fell to his son, Richard I, and later to another of his sons, John. England had been ruled by kings for hundreds of years and these leaders had slowly gained more power. However, the tyrant-like rule of King Richard I and King John was intolerable to British noblemen, who decided to take some power away by writing up a declaration of rights, known as the Magna Carta.

The [Magna Carta](http://www.livescience.com/2458-magna-carta-changed-world.html) is one of the most important documents in history. It guaranteed the people certain rights, and bound the king to certain laws. At the time, England was mainly operated on a feudal system of land ownership. However, feudal lords and noblemen became angered when King John lost territory to the French. He also increased taxes and oppressed many of his people, arresting them without trials.

In 1215 A.D., these fed-up citizens drafted the Magna Carta (Latin for Great Charter) and forced King John to sign it upon threat of civil war. While it initially was meant to protect the interests of the noblemen, in time, the rights established by the Magna Carta were also extended to commoners.

Many of the laws written in the Magna Carta are not used today and don't apply to the current system of [democracy](http://www.livescience.com/20919-democracy.html). However, the act of citizens being able to guarantee their own rights was a major step in forming modern democracies.

Among the most important rules from the Magna Carta that we still use today is the writ of habeas corpus, which means "Do you have the body?" in Latin. This rule means that the government can't arrest people without cause or in secret and guarantees the right to due process. This rule was written as the Fifth Amendment to the [U.S. Constitution](http://www.livescience.com/32590-why-is-the-constitution-so-difficult-to-interpret.html) and still guarantees the rights of our citizens to a fair trial in court.

**Answer the following questions in complete sentences:**

1. In what nation/country did King Henry II rule?

2. What does Magna Carta stand for?

3. When was the Magna Carta written?

4. Which document, found in the United States has inspiration found in the Magna Carta?

5. According to the text, what led the nobles to write the Magna Carta?

6. Why would a king be afraid of a civil war?

7.  Why was the Magna Carta an important step in history? Why is it an important document?

8. Why would some laws written in the Magna Carta not be used and applied in current systems of government/democracy/law?

9. Write a small 3-5 sentence paragraph describing the Magna Carta and why it was created.

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**Magna Carta background**

The Magna Carta asserts/states that all – including a king, prime minister, or president – must abide/follow by the laws of the nation. While the Magna Carta was only a document it was powerful due to its wording that limited the king’s power. The fact that the barons are given the authority to enforce this document in Chapter 61 reinforces the principle/idea that the king could no longer ignore or violate established laws, traditions, or customs, nor could he arbitrarily/randomly infringe/override the rights of his subjects. In short, the king would be compelled to accept the rule of law or be punished for violating the rights of his subjects/people in his kingdom.

The Magna Carta promised laws that were good and fair. It states that everyone shall have access to courts and that costs and money should not be an issue if someone wanted to take a problem to the law courts.

It also states that no freeman (i.e. a person who was not a serf) will be imprisoned or punished without first going through the proper legal system. In future years the word "freeman" was replaced by "no one" to include everybody.

The last few sections deal with how the Magna Carta would be enforced in England. Twenty five barons were given the responsibility of making sure the king carried out what was stated in the Magna Carta - the document clearly states that they could use force if they felt it was necessary.

**Parts of the Magna Carta**

63 laws found in the Magna Carta

9. Neither we nor our officials will seize any land or rent in payment of a debt, so long as the debtor has movable goods sufficient to discharge the debt. A debtor's sureties shall not be distrained upon so long as the debtor himself can discharge his debt. If, for lack of means, the debtor is unable to discharge his debt, his sureties shall be answerable for it. If they so desire, they may have the debtor's lands and rents until they have received satisfaction for the debt that they paid for him, unless the debtor can show that he has settled his obligations to them.

17. Ordinary lawsuits shall not follow the royal court around, but shall be held in a fixed place.

*Simple text: Court rooms and court cases should be stationary/kept in one place.*

20. For a trivial offence, a free man shall be fined only in proportion to the degree of his offence, and for a serious offence correspondingly, but not so heavily as to deprive him of his livelihood. In the same way, a merchant shall be spared his merchandise, and a husbandman the implements of his husbandry, if they fall upon the mercy of a royal court. None of these fines shall be imposed except by the assessment on oath of reputable men of the neighbourhood.

*Simple text: People should only be fined based on their crime and income*

30. No sheriff nor bailiff of ours, nor any one else, shall take the horses or carts of any freeman for transport, unless by the will of that freeman.

*Simple text: Sheriffs cannot confiscate/take horses or carts to use without the permission of the owner*

31. Neither we nor our bailiffs shall take another's wood for castles or for other private uses, unless by the will of him to whom the wood belongs.

*Simple text: No one is allowed to take another person’s wood* ***(property)*** *without their permission*

38. No bailiff, on his own simple assertion, shall henceforth any one to his law, without producing faithful witnesses in evidence.

*Simple text: A person cannot be charged with a crime, unless there is correct evidence*

39. No freeman shall be taken, or imprisoned, or disseized, or outlawed, or exiled, or in any way harmed - nor will we go upon or send upon him - save by the lawful judgment of his peers or by the law of the land.

*Simple text: No one can be put in jail without being tried in a court room by their peers/peeps*

40. To none will we sell, to none deny or delay, right or justice.

*Simple text: No one could buy their freedom from jail*

(61) The barons shall elect twenty-five of their number to keep, and cause to be observed with all their might, the peace and liberties granted and confirmed to them by this charter.

*Simple text: To make sure the king followed the rules, 25 elected men would watch over the actions of the king, this group would later become the English Parliament*

**Questions following the following questions in complete sentences:**

1. Identify two rights granted in the Magna Carta.
2. Who was expected to follow the laws/rules listed in the Magna Carta?
3. Why was the Magna Carta created? What was it designed to do?
4. What is the main right being protected in article 9, 30 and 31?
5. Who lost the most and who gained the most with the creation of the Magna Carta?
6. Many of the articles/laws found in the Magna Carta deal with crimes and punishments. Why would it be important for these types of laws to be added in the Magna Carta?
7. According to article 61, a group of 25 men would be elected to watch over the king. How do you think the king responded/reacted to this law/rule and why do you think this law/rule was added?