

Aim: To know the actions of King John and evaluate their impact on his reputation.
To judge interpretations of John using our historical skills to work out if he has been judged fairly

Step / skill focus:
Knowledge
Consequence
Interpretations

Key Vocabulary:

Magna Carta
Divine Right
Nobles / Barons

Who was King John and has history judged him fairly?



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Task: What makes a good king? Make a list of 3 key features of a good king and 3 key features of a bad king.

(Consider all of the previous kings we've met so far in Year 7)

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King John may not have been the best king ever, but one thing is for sure, he upset almost **EVERYONE** and as a result he was forced to agree to a set of rules that meant he lost some of his power...



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Task: Complete the following paragraph, filling in the blanks

John ruled England from _____ to _____ and was the first _____ to give up some of his _____. He is _____ as Prince John in the stories of _____. In these stories he is a _____ and _____ prince who _____ the people of England unfairly.

Some _____ say John was just as foolish in real life. While others say he was simply _____!

Power

Foolish

Taxes

King

1199

Robin Hood

Unlucky

1216

famous

historians

Wicked



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Task: Copy down the key terms of the Magna Carta

'I, King John, accept that I have to govern according to the law.

So I agree:

- 1. Not to imprison nobles without trial*
- 2. That trials must be in courts; not held in secret by me*
- 3. To have fair taxation for the nobles*
- 4. To let freemen travel wherever they like*
- 5. Not to interfere in Church matters*
- 6. Not to seize crops without paying for them'*



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Task: Having noted the main terms of the Magna Carta from 1215. Write a small paragraph suggesting some of things King John may have done that upset his nobles.

Use the Magna Carta as evidence

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Task: You will now play a decisions game with the winner being the person with the most crowns left at the end. Think carefully about your choices...



You need to consider how King John should react to various situations.

(King John should... Because...)

Record your decisions on your sheet – you will later get a score for each answer you give

Write the following aims in your book, these must be considered...

Your aims as king are:

1. Always appear to be strong and powerful
2. Stop other rulers stealing your land or interfering in your rule
3. Keep the Empire together – lose no land
4. Keep the barons on your side – you need them to fight for you and pay taxes
5. Keep your promises so people trust you

When making your choice, what aim are you meeting?

Decision 1

It is 1199. Your brother Richard has just died. Arthur - your 12 year old nephew – says he should be king. He is supported by most of the barons of the Empire in France, and by the king of France. You are supported by the barons in Normandy and England. Do you:

- a. Agree to share the Empire with Arthur**
- b. Have yourself crowned king and then meet Arthur to discuss an agreement**
- c. Have yourself crowned king and then go to war against Arthur and France**

When making your choice, what aim are you meeting?

Decision 2

Arthur allied with the king of France against you. You capture him. He is only 14, but he has just led an army against you. What should you do with him?

- a. Make him promise to be loyal to you and then set him free**
- b. Keep him prisoner**
- c. Secretly execute him**

When making your choice, what aim are you meeting?

Decision 3

You have lost the war against France and so lost all your lands in France. What will you do about this?

- a. Accept this defeat and give up hope of having an Empire like your brother and father**
- b. Discuss the problem with your barons and accept their suggestions**
- c. Plan to win the lands back – whether the barons support you or not**

When making your choice, what aim are you meeting?

Decision 4

**You need money to pay soldiers to fight for you.
How do you raise money?**

- a. Ask the barons about how much tax they will pay**
- b. Double the amount of tax paid by landowners when they inherit land**
- c. Make the tax paid when land is inherited ten times what it used to be – or even more if you can get away with it.**

When making your choice, what aim are you meeting?

Decision 5

The Archbishop of Canterbury has just died. The monks at Canterbury have chosen who they want to be the next archbishop. In the past, the king has been able to choose the Archbishop. What do you do?

- a. Accept the man the monks want**
- b. Make your own choice and force the monks to accept your man**
- c. Ask the Pope to make an arrangement**

When making your choice, what aim are you meeting?

Decision 6

The Pope chooses Stephen Langton to be next archbishop. He says you must accept Langton or he will close down all churches in England

- a. Refuse to accept Langton because the Pope has no right to interfere in your reign**
- b. Accept the Pope's choice because Langton will be a good Archbishop**

When making your choice, what aim are you meeting?

Decision 7

You are just about to invade Wales when you hear that some of your barons are planning to murder you. What do you do?

- a. Order the rebellious barons to send their sons as hostages and carry on with the invasion. Then tell the barons you will kill their sons if they carry on rebelling**
- b. Abandon your invasion and deal with the problem of the barons instead**

When making your choice, what aim are you meeting?

Decision 8

You are still worried about rumours of rebellions and plots among your barons. What do you do?

- a. Agree to discuss the way you are ruling the country with the barons**
- b. Bring in foreign advisers and soldiers you can trust. Give them castles and important lands to keep them loyal.**

When making your choice, what aim are you meeting?

Decision 9

You want to invade France to win back some of the land you lost. The barons will not support you. They also will not pay scutage – a tax paid by lords who did not want to fight themselves

- a. Threaten the barons who won't fight or pay with really harsh punishment**
- b. Abandon the plans to invade France**

When making your choice, what aim are you meeting?

Decision 10

You invaded France, but the French troops defeated your army in battle. The barons are still complaining about high taxes, foreign advisers and the way you run the country. There are still no church services in England and the Pope is threatening to help the French King. The Pope suggests a peace agreement if you accept Langton. What will you do?

- a. Agree reluctantly to the agreement**
- b. Refuse the pope's offer**

When making your choice, what aim are you meeting?

Decision 11

The King of France is threatening to invade England and some of the barons might help him. They want you to lower taxes, get rid of foreign advisers and soldiers, and agree to consult them about how to govern. What do you do?

- a. Agree reluctantly with them**
- b. Tell them you were chosen by God and can do whatever you want.**

When making your choice, what aim are you meeting?

Decision 12

You agree to Magna Carta only because you were forced to. Now the barons are having their own discussions. What do you do?

- a. Hold meetings to get the barons to work together in the hope that they will help you win back land in France**
- b. Build up your army to attack the rebel barons and put an end to Magna Carta**

You are King John – are you the weakest link?

Decision 1

a. Lose 2 crowns – what a weak choice!

Decision 1

b. Lose 1 crown – not quite as bad as (a)

Decision 1

c. Gain 1 crown - good choice – makes you look strong

You are King John – are you the weakest link?

Decision 2

a. Lose 3 crowns – are you mad to set him free?

Decision 2

b. Gain 1 crown – make sure he can't escape

Decision 2

c. Lose 1 crown – executing him means he won't be a problem – but will people ever trust you again?

You are King John – are you the weakest link?

Decision 3

a. Lose 2 crowns – you would look like a weak failure!

Decision 3

b. Gain 1 crown – it's your best chance

Decision 3

c. Lose 1 crown – you can't win without barons' support

You are King John – are you the weakest link?

Decision 4

a. Gain 1 crown – you really must consult the barons about tax

Decision 4

b. Lose 1 crown – everyone will hate double taxes

Decision 4

c. Lose 2 crowns – Everyone will be furious

You are King John – are you the weakest link?

Decision 5

a. Gain 1 crown – you will look a bit weak, but it won't cause any further problems

Decision 5

b. Gain 1 crown – a bit risky but you'll probably get away with it

Decision 5

c. Lose 1 crown – it looks as though you're giving power away to the Pope

You are King John – are you the weakest link?

Decision 6

a. Lose 2 crowns – you really don't need another problem right now!

Decision 6

b. Gain 1 crown – at least it keeps the Pope on your side

You are King John – are you the weakest link?

Decision 7

- a. Lose 1 crown – you look strong, but no one will ever trust you and they'll hate you even more than they do now!**

Decision 7

- b. Gain 1 crown – it looks a little weak but it's more important to deal with the threat from the barons**

You are King John – are you the weakest link?

Decision 8

- a. Gain 1 crown – a difficult choice but you might be able to reduce the opposition!**

Decision 8

- b. Lose 2 crowns – bringing in more foreigners will increase people's distrust**

You are King John – are you the weakest link?

Decision 9

a. Lose 3 crowns – do you really want the barons to rebel – that's what will happen!

Decision 9

b. Gain 1 crown – you have so many problems you will have to forget about France for now

You are King John – are you the weakest link?

Decision 10

a. Gain 1 crown – at least that gets the Pope on your side!

Decision 10

b. Lose 2 crowns – refuse the Pope's offer? – you're in big trouble now!

You are King John – are you the weakest link?

Decision 11

a. Gain 1 crown – you really don't have any choice!

Decision 11

b. Lose 2 crowns – there will be a civil war!

You are King John – are you the weakest link?

Decision 12

a. Gain 1 crown – you must try to stop the barons attacking you

Decision 12

b. Lose 2 crowns – the barons will now get rid of you – permanently!

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What do these maps suggest about the reign of King John?



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Now we have more background knowledge to King John, let's start to analyse some interpretations of him.

We'll need to be careful with some of the information and question its reliability before we accept everything it says...



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As we read the following what are your thoughts about John?

Many people saw John as a cruel and evil King. His wife hated him and he hated her, anybody who showed their fondness of her John had strangled.

On one occasion he let off a robber who had murdered a priest and when the church said that the priest had been a good man, John said "good" because "good priests are my enemies".

At Canterbury, he threw out of the Cathedral all the blind and the crippled monks; any who refused to leave were murdered.

John was a good administrator (getting things done) but he was very cruel and deceitful (dishonest).

John also imprisoned his nephew, Arthur and after the gaoler refused to burn out his nephew's eyes with hot irons, John did it himself with a knife in a drunken rage. He then threw the body into a river.

John also visited and travelled to all parts of the country and checked that officials were not being corrupt. He made sure that the poor, the widowed and children were looked after.

He also stopped the Jews from being persecuted (picked upon).

Task: Write a paragraph summarising King John so far...

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Task: What are the problems of judging the strengths and weaknesses of a king based on a (Disney) movie made 700 years after the events?

Think about PURPOSE – Why was it made? Where might they have got their information from? Did the makers have a certain viewpoint already? Etc...

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Does King's Lynn play a part in the story of King John?



Facts about the treasure	Rumours about the treasure	Possible causes of John's death	Possible locations of the treasure
<u>Task:</u> On a clean page (landscape) draw out this table...			

What is the suggestion if someone has a statue of them built?

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Did King John really lose his treasure (and his life) in Lynn?

In 1216 King John was fighting a war against his rebellious Barons. He was unpopular as he had lost a lot of land to the French. On 9th October he visited Bishop's Lynn. John's friend, the bishop of Norwich also had a palace in Gaywood and John was still popular in Lynn as he had earlier granted the town a royal charter.

"He passed through the town of Lynn. It's people received him with joy, and gave him large presents."

Roger of Wendover (a monk)

John stayed in Lynn until the 12th October before heading north to Newark via Wisbech. John became ill on the journey and died just as he reached Newark. John's treasure, the crown jewels of England, have not been seen since.



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After leaving Bishop's Lynn, John went the long, but safer way North via Wisbech but sent his baggage train of 2000-3000 people across the mudflat causeways of the Wash, saving 9 miles. Now the land has been drained and the it is possible to cross at Sutton Bridge, but in John's day the sea came in as far as Wisbech itself and the journey was perilous if not accompanied by local guides.



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John's men and treasure were never seen again. It is supposed that they were either trapped in quicksand or caught out by the rising tide and high waves.

"Then he marched north. But, in crossing the river Wellester (now the river Nene), he lost all his waggons and baggage horses, together with his money, priceless vessels and everything – men and horses. No one escaped to tell the king of the disaster."

Roger of Wendover (a monk)

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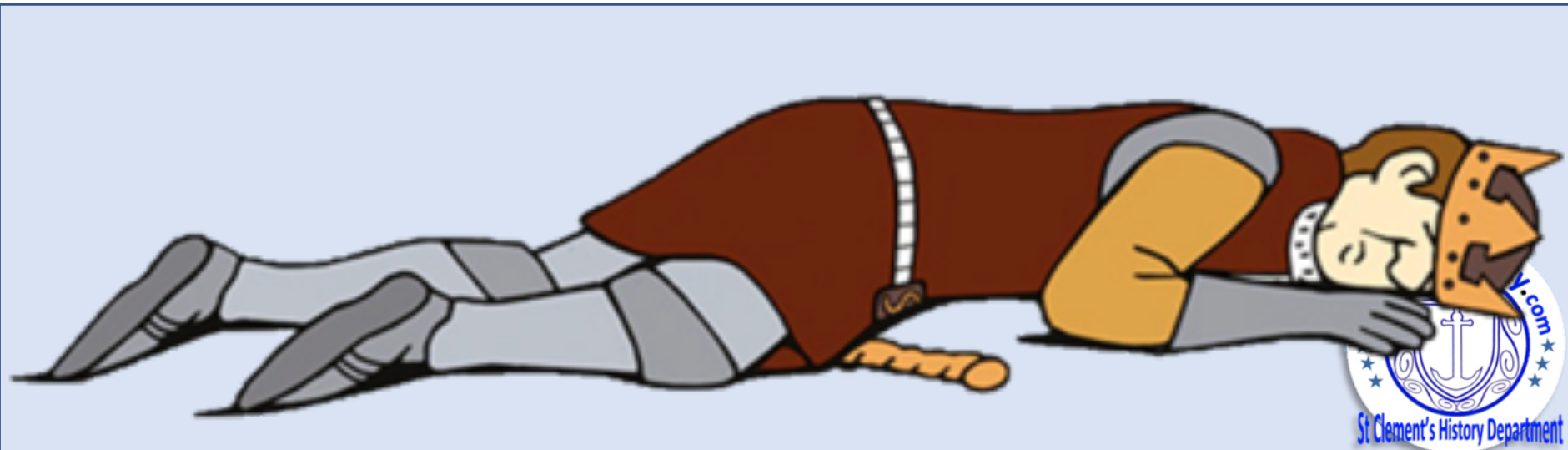
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Did King John really lose his treasure (and his life) in Lynn?

Some accounts claim he overindulged while in Lynn, eating and drinking large amounts, and that he soon fell ill, but continued on his journey anyway. He died of this overindulgence.

Others put the cause of death as dysentery, a disease caused by drinking dirty water. If John fell ill while still in Lynn, was it our water that killed him?

John was unpopular, and many people believe he may have been poisoned, put in either his ale, his peaches or plums. One suggestion is he was poisoned by a monk called Brother Simon while stopping at a monastery near Boston, on his way to Newark. Simon was a member of the rich Cistercian order of monks. The treasure was never lost and Brother Simon sold it to give the money to his religious order.



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So where is King John's treasure?

Still buried. The treasure would now be under reclaimed farmland near Sutton Bridge. The best guess Ordnance Survey map reference is TF 473 177 GB if you want to get digging. It is estimated it would now be under 20 feet of silt though.

In the 1930s American treasure hunters paid locals for their help to find it. Nottingham University also took soil samples to work out the route the baggage train took.

A man called Robert Tiptoft, Baron Tibetot, suddenly became very wealthy in the 14th century. It was rumoured that he found the treasure (it would have been under less silt then) and sold it.

It was never lost in the Wash. Monks sold it to make money.



It was never lost in the Wash. In fact it never left Lynn. The treasure was used as security for a loan to King John, used to fight the barons. King John arranged for it to be “lost” in Lynn. As he died soon afterwards he was never able to come back for it.

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Task: Add a further paragraph of new information to your King John notes

Homework: Create a balanced poster / biography of King John using your notes and any further research. It should include a 'selfie' with you and King John in town! 😊

