

# Magna Carta

## What has it ever done for us?

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...

One of the four original copies of the Magna Carta, sealed at Runnymede, June, 1215 – this one is held in the British Library, London – see [www.bl.uk/collection-items/magna-carta-1215](http://www.bl.uk/collection-items/magna-carta-1215)





## ***Magna Carta Workbook – An Introduction.***

Many people, all around the world, see the creation of the Magna Carta as a really important moment in the development of democracy, individual freedom and, to some extent, the foundation of constitutional government. In this sense the ‘symbolic’ meaning (what the Magna Carta represents) is, perhaps, more important than what it actually says – but that is for you to decide! This workbook is designed to provide you with some background information about the Magna Carta, how it came about, what it meant and why it is seen as so important.

However, the workbook is about much more than this – it provides you with a range of materials, activities and ideas that you can use to help you discuss the meaning of the Magna Carta and the ideas it contains and the relevance of these to life today, to you, your school, your family, your friends and your community. The workbook will help you support your students challenge the ideas contained within the Magna Carta as well as thinking about how decisions about freedom and democracy and our daily lives are made – and by whom.

In addition, we have designed the workbook to help you identify, think about and discuss the relevance of Magna Carta to you today. In doing so you might want to consider some of the following questions.

Does the Magna Carta still have any relevance? Do the ideas and values the Magna Carta represents still have meaning in today’s multi-national, globalised and complex world? What issues are not covered? What should be covered? How has society changed and what would a new Magna Carta, written by your students today, contain? What rights, responsibilities and freedoms would it highlight and how would it work?

Working through these and related questions represents the ‘**Modern Day Magna Carta Challenge**’ through which we are inviting you to create a new ‘Magna Carta’ for today reflecting your students’ concerns, hopes and values in terms of individual rights and freedoms and the relationship of these to wider issues of local and global justice and fairness, democracy and freedom and environmental and ecological sustainability.

Working in small groups we invite you to use this workbook to help you think critically and creatively about what a **Modern Day Magna Carta** should contain and look like and then to create one in any medium you wish. This might be the creation of a ‘historical document’ a bit like the original or it might be something completely different. It could be a story, a poem, a song, a painting, a digital charter, a film or even an art installation – it is entirely up to you. But more of all that later, first we need to set the scene.



# THE BACKGROUND

**Magna Carta** (which is Latin for Great Charter) was the outcome of an agreement between King John and the Barons (the rich land owners) about how England was to be governed. The Barons had grown increasingly unhappy with the power of the King and they wanted to limit the King's power and strengthen theirs.



# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MAGNA CARTA

Magna Carta was sealed in **June 1215** at Runnymede (on the banks of the Thames just outside London) by King John. It came after the barons had rebelled against the king because they did not like the way he was ruling.

For many the main importance of Magna Carta is that it put in writing for the first time the principle that the king (**monarch**) was not above the law and that in governing the country, the monarch must act within the law.

Magna Carta included a clause that said 25 barons could force the king to keep to the rules it set out. This was unique; the monarch had never before been forced to obey the law in this way.

Magna Carta also set out 63 clauses (**rights**). These included important legal rights, for example, that no one shall be arrested or imprisoned, except by the judgement of their equals and according to the law of the land and that no one will be denied justice.

**Three clauses** remain in force today with the best known being that everyone has a right to

**“ everyone has a right to trial by their equals.**

trial by their equals. This is similar to a trial by jury today and something that affects every person in the United Kingdom.

Many people see the Magna Carta as a key influence in the development of democratic rights across the world including, for example, the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the United States of America.

So in summary Magna Carta has been seen as important because -

- It established for the first time that the monarch was not above the law
- It gave specific rights to (a limited number of) people including the right to a fair trial
- It gave very limited rights to women (widows could not be forced to marry against their will)
- It is seen as the start of a process that eventually led to democracy as it is known today.



# TEACHERS

## *How to use this pack*



This resource pack outlines a range of activities, case studies, subject matter and directions for further investigation. Information is available in both paper copy and via the Augmented Reality app. The resources have been designed to support your navigation of information in a way which best suits your needs. We welcome you to:

- Select and reject materials as appropriate for your cohort/s.
- Communication and language are key to this project. We welcome you to: build pupils' vocabulary by supporting them to demonstrate understanding of key words from the glossary.
- Build opportunity to stimulate group debate, collaboration, disagreement and negotiation.
- Differentiate materials to suit your class age, ability and learning needs.
- Adapt the content to align with or supplement existing curriculum design.
- Use the selected materials as the basis for a new project.

***The most important aspects of these resources are that they stimulate debate and support the pupils to respond by creating an artefact.***

# GROUP ACTIVITY

## *You have the right to...*

Taking the original Magna Carta as a starting point have very quick discussion about the following questions – don't take longer than 2 minutes on each one. This should help you really focus on the key rights and ideas you see as most important.

Maybe work in small groups and take it in turns to write down what the rest of the group say – different person for each question.

What **rights** do you have?

Who **defines** these rights?

What does **society owe** citizens?

What do **citizens owe** society?

What **responsibilities** do you have if you accept those rights?

What rights **should** you have?

# LET'S TALK

## *Language and Communication*

Language, the meaning of words, the way they are used and who controls what gets written and said are crucial issues in relation to this project.

For example Magna Carta was written in Latin in a country where most people could not read and certainly could not understand Latin – what does that suggest to you? Was the Magna Carta really a document for everyone or was the use of Latin and the written form of language a way of really making the document about specific groups of people (in this case the very, very rich and very powerful)?

Language, or more importantly the way it is used, often works to make us think in particular ways about particular things. For example, some people would argue that language often encourages us to think in ways that are too simple, too straightforward – in what can be called 'binary opposites'. If we draw up a list of words in one column it is all too easy to match them to something that seems directly opposite:

<b>man</b>	<b>woman</b>
<b>female</b>	<b>male</b>
<b>child</b>	<b>adult</b>
<b>cold</b>	<b>hot</b>
<b>good</b>	<b>bad</b>
<b>war</b>	<b>peace</b>
<b>freedom</b>	<b>slavery</b>
<b>night</b>	<b>day</b>

But is this a helpful way to think about the world, about society and key issues?

**Working with a classmate can you draw your own list of binary opposites but then add a third column and think of other words that might be matched without necessarily going for the direct opposite.**

man	woman	person

Discuss the outcomes with other classmates. What does this exercise tell you about language and how it can be used?

Why might the power and use of language be important when we are thinking about rights, freedom and democracy?

# GROUP ACTIVITY

## *They came from Planet X!*

(Although to be more accurate – you have travelled to Planet X).

You and all your classmates have travelled to a new planet to create a new society. There will be lots more people arriving in a few days so you need to create a Bill of Rights for the new planet and everyone who will live there. So,

**1**

**Working on your own write a list of ten rights that you think will be needed for Planet X and the people who will live there.**

**2**

**Work with another colleague to compare your lists and then agree on a shared list of ten.**

**3**

**Work with another pair (that makes four to, again, compare lists and agree on a shared set of ten.**

**4**

**Now, as a whole class can you reach an agreement on what the ten rights should be?**

**5**

**What sort of document will you put these into?**

**6**

**How will you communicate the ten rights to everyone as they arrive on their new home?**

**7**

**How will you ensure people accept these rules and stick to them?**





# RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## *What's in the balance?*

So far we have talked a lot about individual rights and freedoms but, some would ask, what about the balance between these rights and freedoms and other people's rights and freedoms or, wider issues of collective concern? How do we balance these two or three things? How do we do this in a much more complex and diverse society where there are many more identities, values, ideas, beliefs and groups than there were – certainly in the time of Magna Carta.

Equally difficult to answer is the question: *'how far can or should we go in restricting the rights of those in wealthy and industrially developed countries in order to protect the rights of those in developing countries and other parts of the world'?*

Furthermore, what about the balance between individual rights and environmental sustainability issues? How do we balance the rights of individuals and their ability to choose how and where they want to live, with protecting the planet, its eco-diversity, and indigenous peoples?

Can we even begin to think about protecting the rights of those people yet to be born and who might inherit a world that has been environmentally damaged beyond repair by those of us free to live as we wish today?

**Working in groups of four or five can you make one list of rights and one list of responsibilities that could be placed on either side of an imagined see-saw to reach a workable balance between rights and responsibilities? Once you have completed this task you can work through the questions below – keep a note of your reflections and of how you reached the decisions you made. This will be helpful later on when you start to work together on creating your Modern Magna Carta,**

- Is it possible to do this?
- How do we evaluate the rights of an individual against the rights of the environment?
- What sort of factors did you use to make the judgements you made?
- What things did you place more value on and how did you reach these decisions?
- Did you all agree?
- Do you think your views will change as you grow older?

# *From Magna Carta to the European Convention on Human Rights and Beyond!*

This section will introduce a set of 'foundational documents' and asks students to consider them in relation to the Magna Carta, and discuss how valuable/useful they are. Possible documents might include:

## **MAGNA CARTA**

[www.bl.uk/collection-items/magna-carta-1215](http://www.bl.uk/collection-items/magna-carta-1215)

## **ENGLISH BILL OF RIGHTS**

[www.national-archives.gov.uk/pathways/citizenship/rise\\_parliament/making\\_history\\_rise.htm](http://www.national-archives.gov.uk/pathways/citizenship/rise_parliament/making_history_rise.htm)

## **BILL OF RIGHTS IN U.S. CONSTITUTION**

[www.archives.gov/historical-docs/document.html?-doc=3&title\\_raw=Constitution+of+the+United+States](http://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/document.html?-doc=3&title_raw=Constitution+of+the+United+States)

## **UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

[www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/](http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/)

## **THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**

[www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf)

## **UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE**

[www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf)

## **EUROPEAN CONVENTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

[www.unicef.org.uk/UNICEFs-Work/UN-Convention/ments/DRIPS\\_en.pdf](http://www.unicef.org.uk/UNICEFs-Work/UN-Convention/ments/DRIPS_en.pdf)

There are a number of ways in which students might engage with these documents from simply reading them to undertaking close comparisons between two or more documents. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Students take one of the older documents and discuss the way the document is physically constructed. For example how it is made, how it is written and how it is designed. Having done this students should then think about what the physical composition and design of the document might tell us about who the document was written for and how the information in it would be distributed. Students can then move to a discussion of how the construction and distribution of later documents (ECHR or UNDHR) is different from those of earlier periods.



**Finally they can be asked to think about how a new ‘Magna Carta’ would be distributed and discussed today (#NewMagnaCarta/Like Bill of Rights on Facebook/Twitter etc).**

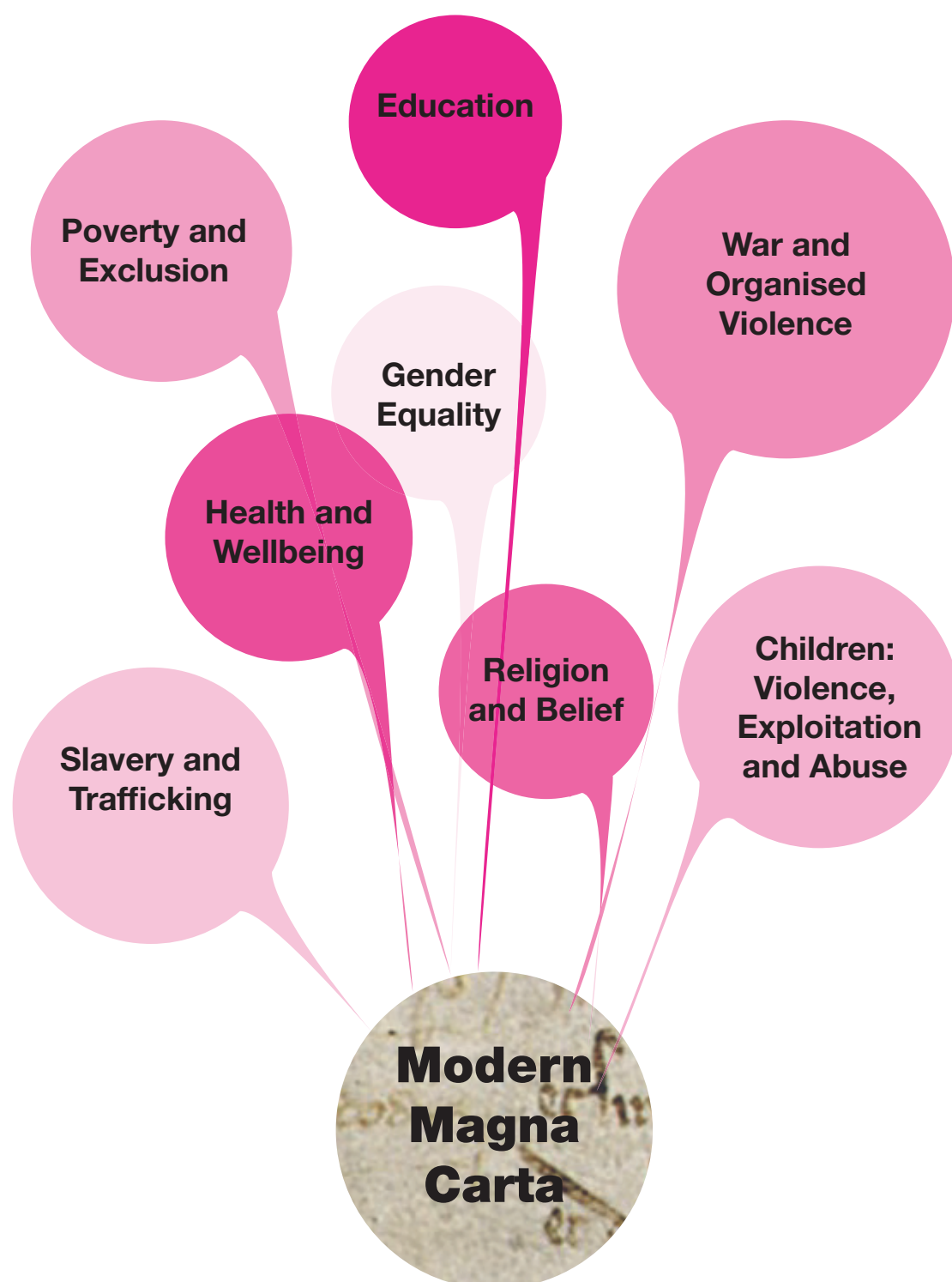
2. Working in small groups of up to four students, take three different examples of these ‘foundational documents’ (or perhaps others they have found or know about) and systematically compare them. They could look at the language used and see if they can identify any differences and similarities in phrasing, in structure or perhaps in the words used.
3. Students can be asked to undertake a short piece of independent or group research in which they find as many declarations of rights as they can and assess what’s missing and whether the declarations achieve what they aim to achieve.





# KEY THEMES

This section of the workbook breaks down some of the over-arching issues and ideas of general notions of rights, freedoms and democracy into key themes and critical areas. These are listed below. Each theme will have its own 'pull out' activity that is designed to support students and teachers in exploring the issue and its relevance. Links to case studies for each topic can be accessed through the Augmented Reality app.





# BRINGING YOUR LEARNING TO LIFE

On each of the Key Theme A4 sheets you'll see a logo



This is because the pages incorporate an additional dimension - a technology called Augmented Reality (AR).

AR makes any piece of printed material interactive. Using a smartphone or tablet, AR enhances the quality and range of information available. It allows you to explore more on the themes by giving you quick and simple access to digital content (video, graphics or text) you view on your phone or tablet by simply scanning designated images within this information pack.

## How it works.

- Go to the Apps store and put “eyei” into the search bar, click on eyei and download the app - it won't take long and it's free.
- Open the app on your handset and you will see the camera view opens automatically.
- Go to one of the images that is marked with an eyei logo (above), and get the whole image in the camera view.
- At the bottom of the screen, you will see a camera icon - simply tap that and a scan of the image will start. If the image appears out of focus, you can tap the focus button on screen, but most of the time that won't be necessary.
- Within seconds, the printed material will appear to come to life and you will see the extra content that we have linked to that particular image, giving you even more information on the theme you're looking at.
- To scan further images on other key themes, simply tap the cross in the right hand corner of the screen and repeat the process.
- Every time you scan an image, the link to the content will be saved in the apps history, which is accessed by tapping the menu symbol in the top left hand corner of the screen, so you can easily go back and view the content whenever you like.
- Please note that the eyei app needs a 3G/4G or Wifi connection and so data charges may apply.



# EXTRA EVENTS

## *Find out more and get involved*

2015 marks both the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sealing of the Magna Carta and the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of what is now Oxford Brookes University. During this year we are very proud to be an official part of national events celebrating the Magna Carta. In addition to this workbook we are offering the following activities to young people in schools and colleges across Oxfordshire and beyond.

### **Modern Magna Carta Challenge**

As you will have read in this workbook, this is a challenge to young people to create a physical response to the Magna Carta in relation to the world they live in today. What is missing? What should a modern charter include?

The best of these exhibits will be displayed in a city-wide exhibition, A Modern Magna Carta, in Oxford Brookes University's Glass Tank Gallery from June 22-24 July and then at the Museum of Oxford from 29 July - 19 August 2015. The exhibition at the Glass Tank Gallery will include an exclusive friends, family and teachers evening for the students involved, provisionally set for Thursday 2 July 2015.

This challenge is open to all year groups and we are entirely flexible on how it can be introduced in schools and colleges. For example, it could form part of History or Art lessons, be added to a PSHE style programme or run as an extra-curricular activity. In support of this we have History and Art academics who are happy to run workshops in schools and colleges to inspire students and help them to form some initial ideas for their exhibit. As the exhibition draws nearer we are also happy to collect exhibits from schools and colleges ourselves.

### **Magna Carta Symposium**

This is a unique one-day event to be hosted at Oxford Brookes University on Thursday 18 June 2015. The symposium will be cross-disciplinary and will feature staff and students from across the University delivering workshops inspired by the Magna Carta, as well as a keynote speech from a special guest speaker. The symposium is aimed at students in Years 10-13 and is free to attend. Lunch will be provided and contributions towards coach costs are available.

It would be fantastic to secure your involvement in these activities and we hope that you will join us in celebrating both the Magna Carta's 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary and our own 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. For more information or to secure your involvement in either or both of these activities please e-mail: [magnacarta2015@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:magnacarta2015@brookes.ac.uk).