

# Example of explanations of terms essay

Countries, England



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William the Conqueror (about 1027-87) – was the King of England from 1066, of the Norman dynasty's origin. From 1035 – was the Duke of Normandy. Having strengthened the ducal power in Normandy, he managed to create a strong, well-trained army of heavy knights and infantry (about 10 thousand people). In 1066 he landed in England and defeated the Anglo-Saxons army of King Harold II at Hastings – “ William's path to the throne was clear” (“ William the Conqueror. Biography”). Accession to the throne of William the Conqueror marked the beginning of a constructive period in the history of England. The accession of William had huge implications for the development of England. He founded a unified English kingdom, established mighty legal power over the conquered territories, created an army and navy, performed the first census of land – the “ Domesday Book”, began to build first stone fortress (the first in 1078 was the Tower). English language was enriched with many hundreds of French words, but still for 3 more centuries was considered as a “ vulgar dialect” and was not used among the nobility. William the Conqueror was a ruler who managed to keep territories of England and Normandy in unity under his mighty fist. However, “ the Conqueror's death (in 1087) was followed by the collapse of order in Normandy and, within months, by the outbreak of a war of succession between his sons” (Bates, “ William I (1027/8-1087)”).

The common law – is a historically established in the medieval England legal system, which characterizes that the main source of law is recognized by legal precedents. Encyclopedia Britannica defines it as “ the body of customary law, based upon judicial decisions and embodied in reports of decided cases”. Laws regulate certain areas of relations, but are not

consolidated into a single system, everything that is not regulated by law, and the interpretation and application of the law are determined by the common law. Because of the great attention of the common law on rights of individuals and on limitations of state power theory of this type of law “forms one of the most important foundations of modern liberalism” (Sommerville, “ Custom, common law and constitutionalism”). The name “common law” is explained by the fact that decisions of the royal courts in London had the power for the whole territories of England, as opposed to local customs. As a result of the Norman conquest of England in 1066 a major role in the administration of justice was entrusted to the royal courts of London, in the process of which activity a rule of precedent developed gradually. Later in the XIX century the Equity law, another constituent of the law in England was united with the common law, which formed new legal system, which, hence, led to the loss by common law of its status of a single leading source of law.

Magna Carta Libertatum (The Great Charter) – was the first “ non-written” constitution of England. Magna Carta is traditionally considered to be the first legal document, in which the basis of the concept of human rights was laid, preconditions for the further strengthening of freedom and the rule of law in society were created. It is a charter, signed by King John Lackland (King John) on June 15, 1215 and which later became one of the fundamental constitutional acts of England, although most of the items of the Charter were revoked later by the Acts of Parliament, when only three out of sixty-three remain in action nowadays. Formally, prior to the signing of the Magna Carta, it was a petition setting out the requirements of barons and was called

“ Articles of the Barons”. Of particular importance is article 39, which prohibits the arrest of any free person, imprisonment, deprivation of possession, outlawry, banishment, other infringement of the rights of free men, except by the lawful judgment of the Court (which strengthened the Institute of the Jury) (“ The Magna Carta”). Thereby, it was guaranteed that every free man had to stand trial before any legal action would be taken against him. The Magna Carta is a significant memorial of medieval law of England and a part of the British constitution (along with the Habeas Corpus Act, the Bill of Rights of 1689 and the Act of Succession 1701). Later Magna Carta became a cultural heritage of the mankind being incorporated into a list of the UNESCO`s Memory World programme (BBC, “ The Magna Carta”).

Parliament, in general terms, – is the highest representative and legislative body in the states where the separation of powers is established. The birthplace of modern parliamentarism, and of modern parliament itself, is considered to be England. The first time when the word “ parliament” was used was in 1236, the word, which described consultative meetings of the English monarch with his nobles and prelates, had a meaning of “ an event arranged to talk” and had French origin (“ The first Parliaments”). The inverse image of the parliament was formed in England in the XIII century, when King John of England was forced to sign the “ Magna Carta”. According to the charter, the king had no right to impose new taxes without the consent of the council. United Kingdom – was the first country where the parliament assumed full power in the country. Historically, parliament in England, as well in other states, acted as a buffer between the government (the monarch) and the society, functioning as a form of people`s

representation in the government. Often, the parliament played a crucial role during the social upheavals in England, which is regarded as one more proof of its importance: the English Revolution of the XVII century, the dissolution of parliament 1653, etc. Still, it was deeply believed in the Medieval England that the “ assembly existed as much to serve the interests of the king`s subjects” as well of the king`s own interests (Dodd, “ The birth of Parliament”).

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