

# King john and magna carta research paper example

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John was born on 24th December 1166 to Eleanor of Aquitaine and Henry II of England. John spent most of his early life at Fontevrault as a magister. He was later taught by Ranulph Glanville, who was a leading English administrator. John spent some time with his elder brother, Henry the Young King. Here, he gained military and hunting skills which were very important in his later life as a king. John grew up as a hospitable, witty, genial and a generous man. Nevertheless, he was also known for his rage and sensitivity. In fact, he was known to bite and gnaw his fingers when angry. John was nicknamed Lackland by his father. This is because; Henry had difficulty resolving the issue of succession. In fact at this time, Henry the Young King had been given the kingship mantle. However, Henry II had not given him any formal powers. Moreover, he was promised Anjou and Normandy as part of his future inheritance. Therefore; at an early age it was apparent that John would never inherit any lands. Henry II and John's elder brothers' engaged in a battle which strengthened the relationship between John and his father. It is after this time that many pieces of land were given to him. However, the most notable inheritance was in 1177 when Henry II dismissed William FitzAldem for a ten year old John, as the Lord of Ireland. However, it was after the death of his brothers that John became the King of England. The Eastern and Northern Rebel barons didn't agree with John's rule. They opposed his style of leadership and thus organized for a resistance. This prompted John to seek for a peace agreement, which was later named the Great Charter or Magna Carta. Indeed, it was extremely important for King John, the barons and the church to sign this document.

Many historians see Magna Carta as a sign of surrender. However, according

to King John it was a stalling action. He took this step to show his reasonableness to the baronial majority who had not made their mind on the resistance to his rule. King John was not a pleasant person. In many occasions he lied to his subject. He incarcerated innocent people so that he steals their possessions. He never valued promises, because he could make the promise and turn his back against it. However, his inhumane rule turned against him when he seized the monastery. He also banished all the monks in the monastery and took the land and all the wealth in it. This made the archbishop furious and he wanted ways of controlling the Kings powers. At this time, John had observed pre war tensions, and he was preparing a team of mercenaries. Therefore, he wanted to buy time. Indeed, he succeeded in doing this by looking for support from the pope. Hence, when he signed the peace agreement it was just to help him arrange for the troop that could help him overcomes his opposers. In fact, as with other promises, he went to the pope to influence him to denounce the treaty. This was still helpful to him as it could give him enough time to attack the barons. In addition, John didn't want to be seen as if he has initiated the fight, therefore, he benefited from this treaty. This is because; it was to King John's advantage when the pope denounced the treaty that it compromised his right which appointed him as the Kings feudal lord. Pope reasoned that the charter is demeaning and shameful, as well as unjust and illegal. Thus, instead of supporting the barons, he excommunicated the rebel barons. However, it was the failure of this agreement that led to the first baron's war. Nevertheless, according to John's plans things went as he had planned. This is because he never wanted to make the first move in the war with barons, a plan which the barons fell

for. Indeed, at the time that the barons made the move, King John had established his territory and had arranged for mercenaries and forces that could enhance his success. Thus, his acceptance to sign the treaty was not a sign of surrender but a strategy that was well planned. It gave him enough time to prepare expertise and heavy equipments to use in the war. This lengthy time and denounce of the charter also enabled him to weaken the rebels and strengthened his position.

Magna Carta was a list which detailed the important rights that the King and people needed to know and practice. Most of these rights were already law by the time of the treaty. However, they were restated in the Magna Carta so that there would be no confusion or negligence. In addition, there were new rights added in the Great Charter. One of the significant rights which were added was that; the barons would keep watch over the king. However, the most sublime right added was that, the barons would seize the king's castles incase he failed to honor his promise. Therefore, a team of 25 barons was to be formed to watch and monitor the king. This gave barons the authority to ensure that the kings' rule full of lies, empty promises, torture of the innocent and forceful seizure of people's possession was curtailed. In addition, the Great Charter meant that the king would fire his most trusted but hated mercenary captain since the charter demanded a council of 25 members. Hence, according to the barons, this charter was the best to put the tyrant king under the law of the land for the first time in the history of Britain. In addition, this charter was important to safeguard the rebels from any of the usual king's comebacks. In particular, the ten chapters which dealt with finances elaborated the best way that taxes should be collected

without forcefully taking people's belongings. This is because; all the means and form of taxation had to be accepted by the 25 membership council. Moreover, the charter had 15 chapters preventing the king from exploitation of any loopholes in the feudal custom. This meant that there were no relief payments and scutages; thus it helped in banning the previous warship abuses. Therefore, this charter meant that the barons finally would find ways of cutting down on the Kings oppressive government. Furthermore, they had the authority to ensure that the king only implements what is written in the law. However, the most vital gain in the charter was the fact that people's right was finally included in the Kings leadership.

The Magna Carta was not only a success to the barons, but also to the church. This is because the peace agreement promised protection of the church rights. This meant that the King would not meddle in the church activities and thus avoid a repeat of what led to excommunication of the King John. John quarreled with the pope on who should succeed the Archbishop of Canterbury and this prompted the pope to excommunicate him. This time people of England suffered greatly due to one man, King John. This is because the pope put England under a law, which stated that, there would not be any christened marriage until the pope allows it. However, according to the church laws, any person born out of marriage is doomed to hell and would never go to heaven. Thus, the England church was put into a lot of strain. Furthermore, protection of the church rights and ensuring justice in all king's undertakings was very essential in ensuring that the king's powers and authority that allow him to forcefully meddle in church properties are protected. Therefore, this law was very important in preventing

incidences like the one that occurred when the king seizure the monastery. In summary, it was important for King John, the church and the barons to sign the treaty of Magna Carta. This is because, this treaty helped the king to strategize and weaken the barons who resisted his rule. On the other hand, it was necessary for the barons to control and limit the powers of the king. Indeed, it gave them powers to throw the king out of his castle should he fail to heed to his promise. Finally, the Great Charter was essential for the church because it promised protection of the church rights.

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