

King John



twinkl

Who Was King John?

King John reigned (was king) in England from 1199 – 1216 (in medieval times). At the death of his older brother, he inherited **England** and large parts of **Wales**, **Ireland** and **France**.

throne –
the chair
or place of
the king or
queen



He was his father's favourite child and had been desperate to be king for a long time. He had even tried to steal the **throne** from his older brother before.

So John was very pleased to become king after the death of King Richard I.

What Did He Do Wrong?

King John decided to fight a lot. He spent much of his first years as king in battle in France – defending his land and trying to win new lands. *He was actually a brave soldier.*

taxes –
money
paid (like
a bill) to
the king or
queen



Unfortunately, he lost the lands in France. This was very embarrassing for King John. In 1206, he started raising **taxes** to pay for the weapons, soldiers and equipment he needed in battle. He was determined to win back those lands in France.

What Did He Do Wrong?

English people got a bit fed up of paying these taxes, especially when King John kept raising the **taxes** higher and higher. He wasn't doing a very good job of winning back France, so he needed more and more money to keep going on the battlefield.



What Happened Next?

By 1214, many English people decided to **revolt**. By May 1215, the **rebellion** had travelled to London and the city became under the control of the people, not the king.

King John had a big problem. What was he going to do?

revolt – to stop doing what someone is telling you to do

rebellion – a group of people who stop doing what the government or royalty is telling them to do



Dilemma



What Should King John Do?

Look at the scenarios below.

What do you think he should choose?

Can you think of a better one?

Arrest the rebels

Give up the throne

Lower taxes again

Let the rebels arrest you

Come to some sort of
agreement

Escape from England in secret

What Did King John Do?

King John agreed to sign the **Magna Carta**. This was a list of promises that would make England a safe and fair place to live. This is one of the most **important moments** in English history. He signed this at Runnymede Castle on **15th June 1215**.



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