

2.1 HE THINKS IT'S ALL OVER – BUT IS IT?

Find out whether Magna Carta really stopped kings ruling the country

◆ Who was in charge in John's day?



"Welcome to the second part of my book. I'm as puzzled about this part as you are because it's all about what happened after I died! Some people say that after Magna Carta kings lost power and it's my fault. I want you to find out for me whether that's right. Before you begin, make sure you are clear about how the country was ruled in my day and how that is different from today."

ACTIVITY

- Look at the cartoon. Which statement best describes how England was ruled around 1200?
 - Parliament ruled the country.
 - The barons ruled the country.
 - The king ruled the country in whatever way he wanted.
 - The king ruled the country with the barons' help and advice.
- Explain why you think one statement is correct and why the other three are incorrect.
- As a class, try to find the connection between the pictures on the opposite page.

I make all the important decisions about law, tax and war. Sometimes I call the barons and bishops to a council to ask their advice. However, I can run the country without asking anyone for advice.

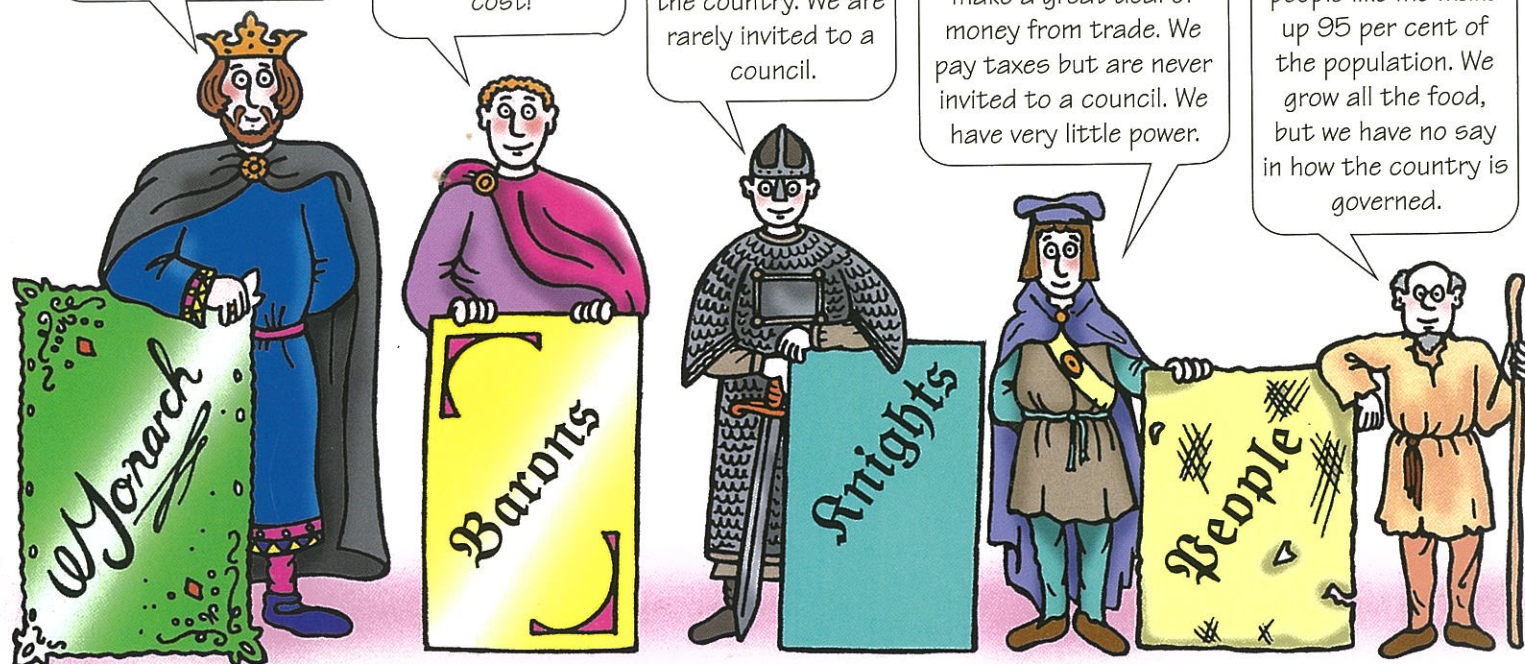
We give the king advice... when he asks for it. We are very rich and powerful so it is risky for the king to ignore us. We can always rebel, as some kings have found out to their cost!

Our barons give us land and in return we fight for them. Some of us own lots of land, but we don't have a say in how the king rules the country. We are rarely invited to a council.

Who ruled the country in King John's time? You can see from this cartoon who had a say in government – and who did not!

I am a merchant. We make a great deal of money from trade. We pay taxes but are never invited to a council. We have very little power.

I work on a farm and people like me make up 95 per cent of the population. We grow all the food, but we have no say in how the country is governed.



Find the connection!

These four pictures have something in common. What is it?



1640s: King fights Parliament. Who will rule the country?



1840s: Millions sign Charter. Every man wants the chance to vote for a Member of Parliament.



1913: Death at the races. SUFFRAGETTE dies for the right to vote for her Member of Parliament.



2000: The Commons discuss abolishing the Lords. Another battle over Parliament.