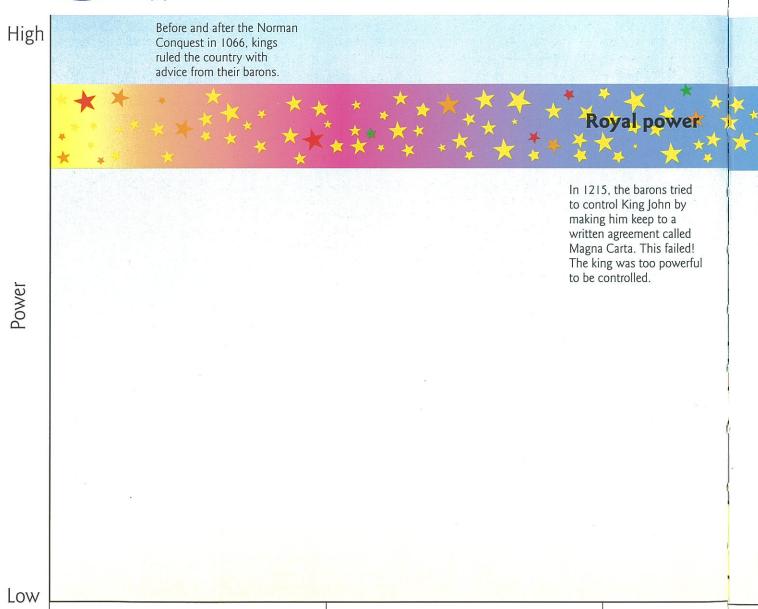
King John's second question: did kings lose all their power?

"So, I was wrong about Parliament! It was my grandson, Edward I, who started regular meetings of Parliament. He sounds like a tough, clever king to control Parliament. But what happened after Edward? Here's my second question: did kings lose all their power after that? My theory is that once Parliament got going kings didn't have any power left."



1100

ACTIVITY

- I Look carefully at the timeline, and think about royal power and the power of Parliament.
 - a) What stayed the same between 1000 and 1500?
 - **b)** What changed?
- 2 The barons tried three methods of controlling the power of the king.
- a) What were the three methods?
- **b)** Did any of them succeed?
- 3 Do you agree with King John's theory that he was the last king with any real power? Think about whether kings had lost all their power to Parliament by 1500. Then write a report to King John explaining why you agree or disagree with him.

In the 1260s, the barons again tried to control a king. This time it was Henry III. They held meetings, called parliaments, so that they could run the country. This failed too. The king was still too powerful to

> Edward II and Richard II both tried to rule the country without advice from the barons. The barons rebelled against them both. The barons won, but they were still faced with the problem of how to control the king. If, at any point, the king regained control he would execute the rebels. They realised that the only way to control a king was to execute him and choose a new king. This is why both Edward and Richard were deposed.

Parliament met regularly during the 1300s and 1400s. England was at war with France and kings needed Parliament to agree to taxes. In return, kings listened to complaints from Parliament and were willing to agree to requests. The knights and merchants (the Commons) attended more and more regularly. By 1337, Edward III had agreed that whenever the Lords met, the Commons should also meet. They met in separate rooms and this is how we get the names the 'House of Commons' and the 'House of Lords'.

Parliament in 1500 was very different from Parliament today:

- The king was firmly in control. He only called Parliament when he needed it and it only met for a few weeks at a time.
- The House of Commons had little real power. It was expected to agree to the king's plans for taxation, but it rarely discussed important issues such as foreign policy.
- The House of Lords was far more powerful than the House of Commons. The barons and the bishops were the wealthiest people in the country and could influence the
- Only the rich could vote for Members of Parliament. 95 per cent of the population had no say in how the country was governed.

Power of Parliament

Edward I held the first regular meetings of Parliament so that he could get agreement for taxes to fund his wars more easily.

1300

1000

Time

1200

1400