**World History**

**Measurement Topic 1:** *The Development of Modern Political Thought*

**Capacity Matrix 1:** *Important Documents and People*

**Learning Goal #1:** *Understanding of the important ideas/belief and effect of the Magna Carta.*

**Directions:**

1. Independently read the article and highlight important information, and add side notes regarding important details.
2. Identify any unknown words and predict its meaning
3. Read the article a second time whole class/or with a partner.
4. Respond to the questions.
5. Respond to the prompt.

***The Magna Carta Background***

The Magna Carta is one of the most important documents in history. It guaranteed the people certain rights, and bound the king to certain laws. At the time, England was mainly operated on a feudal system of land ownership. As time went on, the feudal system underwent some drastic changes. After the death of King Henry II in 1199 A.D., the rule of England fell to his son, Richard I, and later to another of his sons, John. England had been ruled by kings for hundreds of years and these leaders had slowly gained more power. Feudal lords and noblemen became angered when King John lost territory to the French during wars. He also increased taxes and oppressed many of his people, arresting them without trials. The tyrant-like rule of King Richard I and King John was intolerable to British noblemen, who decided to take some power away by writing up a declaration of rights, known as the Magna Carta.

In England, a ‘’revolt of barons” that began in 1214 succeeded in placing limits on what a king could do. In Easter week of 1215, the above-mentioned nobles assembled at Stamford with horses and weapons. They had now persuaded almost all the nobility of the whole kingdom to join them and soon they had a huge army. They then sent letters through England to those earls, barons, and knights who appeared to be still faithful to the king and advised them with threats to abandon the king. The greatest part of these, on receiving the message of the barons, set out to London and joined them, abandoning the king entirely. King John, when he saw that he had only seven knights loyal to him left, feared that the barons would attack his castles and claim them. He sent a request to the barons; that they appoint a time and place to meet and discuss the matter.

King John’s forces were small in comparison to the barons and so on June 15th, 2015, the barons forced King John to agree to a document later called the Magna Carta, or “Great Charter”. This charter guaranteed the rights of English nobles and placed both the king and nobles under the rule of law. While the Magna Carta applied mainly to England’s nobles, it marked an important milestone in the development of English freedoms. Later, some of the rights that applied originally to nobles were extended to all English people. Eventually, they became a basic part of the justice system in the United States.

***What’s in the Magna Carta?***

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| + (1) That the English Church shall be free, and shall have its rights undiminished, and its liberties unimpaired.(17) Ordinary lawsuits shall not follow the royal court around, but shall be held in a fixed place.(20) For a trivial offence, a free man shall be fined only in proportion to the degree of his offence, and for a serious offence correspondingly, but not so heavily as to deprive him of his livelihood.(30) No sheriff, royal official, or other person shall take horses or carts for transport from any free man, without his consent.+ (39) No free man shall be seized or imprisoned, or stripped of his rights or possessions, or outlawed or exiled, or deprived of his standing in any way, nor will we proceed with force against him, or send others to do so, except by the lawful judgment of his equals or by the law of the land.+ (40) To no one will we sell, to no one deny or delay right or justice.+ (61) The barons shall elect twenty-five of their number to keep, and cause to be observed with all their might, the peace and liberties granted and confirmed to them by this charter.+ (63) Both we and the barons have sworn that all this shall be observed in good faith and without deceit. Witness the abovementioned people and many others. | + (1) John gives extensive rights to the Church of England. He is letting the church act alone. (17 ) Courtrooms and court cases should be stationary/kept in one place.(20) People should only be fined based on their crime and income.(30)Sheriffs cannot confiscate/take horses or carts to use without the permission of the owner. (39) No one can be charged with a crime, unless being tried in a court room by their peers/peeps. (40) This article means that people would have to pay bribes to obtain justice in the courts. (61) This article sets up a communion of 25 barons to make sure the king keeps his word.(63) In effect, the king and the barons said: “We mean what we say. Really.”  |

***Significance of the Magna Carta***

Many of the laws written in the Magna Carta are not used today and don't apply to the current system of democracy. However, the act of citizens being able to guarantee their own rights was a major step in forming modern democracies. Among the most important rules from the Magna Carta that we still use today is the writ of habeas corpus, which means "Do you have the body?" in Latin. This rule means that the government can't arrest people without cause or in secret and guarantees the right to due process. This rule was written as the Fifth Amendment to the U. S. Constitution and still guarantees the rights of our citizens to a fair trial in court.

**Questions following the first read:**

1. In what nation/country did King Henry II rule?

2. What does Magna Carta stand for?

3. When was the Magna Carta written?

4. Which document, found in the United States has inspiration found in the Magna Carta?

5. According to the text, what led the nobles to write the Magna Carta?

6. Why would a king be afraid of a civil war?

7.  Why do you feel the ability of citizens to guarantee their own rights was a major step towards securing and protecting rights?

8. Why would some laws written in the Magna Carta not be used and applied in current systems of democracy/law?

9. Who benefited from the Magna Carta and how did they benefit?

**Prompt:** In your opinion, why was the Magna Carta an important step towards the protection of people’s rights? How might the world be different had the Magna Carta not been written?