

# How significant was the Magna Carta?



	Key Word	Definition
	Archbishop	In charge of the Church in England.
	Baron	Wealthiest men in England.
	Crusade	Wars to reclaim Jerusalem.
	Democracy	Everyone is able to vote for their government.
	Excommunicated	Banned from Church. This means that people could not get to heaven
	Feudal	Everyone owed loyalty to the King in return for land
	Government	Runs the country. During the Middle Ages it was the monarch.
	Magna Carta	Document agreed by John. Restricted the power of the monarchs.
	Parliament	A law-making assembly
	Pope	In charge of the Catholic Church. Lives in the Vatican City in Rome
	Rebellion	Rise up against the monarch.
	Siege	Surround a castle or town. Force it to surrender.
	Tax	Money to be paid to the King.

But this was not a new code of law. It was not even a summary of the great principles of legislation. It was essentially an attempt by the barons to return to the state of affairs before the dominance of the Angevin kings. It did not represent a spirit of "progress" or development in human affairs. None of the participants would have known what those words meant. It was in part a reactionary document. Villeins and slaves, the most numerous portion of the kingdom, were never mentioned. The unfree were of no consequence. Their "progress" over the century was slow and uncertain.

*Peter Ackroyd, Foundation*



	Knowledge Milestones	Extra Knowledge	Expert Knowledge
	Medieval kings were not used to having their power challenged.	Everyone owed their land in return for loyalty. These made kings very powerful.	This was called the feudal system.
	John fell out with the Pope and raised taxes.	The Pope banned John from Church. This is called excommunication.	They disagreed over who had the power to appoint Archbishops.
	The barons rebelled against John.	They were angry that he had lost the French empire.	By May 1215 the barons occupied London.
	John was forced to agree to Magna Carta.	The Magna Carta was agreed on June 15 <sup>th</sup> 1215.	The Magna Carta contained 63 clauses or promised that John agreed to.
	The Magna Carta was important because it limited the King's power.	Taxes had to be agreed and the liberties of the Church restored.	Today three declarations of Magna Carta still remain on the statute book.
	In the short term very little changed as a result of the Magna Carta.	The barons forced John to sign the charter so it reflected their concerns.	There was no provision for villeins or slaves in the Magna Carta.
	The Magna Carta is the basis of our democracy today.	Every English monarch has agreed to Magna Carta.	It is also reflected in the US Constitution and the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

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<https://www.bl.uk/magna-carta/articles/magna-carta-an-introduction>



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<https://podtail.com/en/podcasts/history-extra-podcast/king-john-medieval-monster/>



# Was the Black Death a disaster for everyone?



	Key Word	Definition
	Black Death	Disease that spread across Europe in the 1340s. Spread by rat fleas.
	Buboes	Swelling – a sign of bubonic plague
	Cause	Something that leads to an event.
	Consequence	Something that results from an event.
	Contagious	Condition that can be easily transmitted between people.
	Jews	Followers of the Jewish faith of the Old Testament.
	Miasma	Belief that bad air caused disease.
	Peasants	Poorest members of society. Also known as villeins.
	Pestilence	A fatal, epidemic disease. Often refers to Black death.
	Plague	Official name for Black death. Can be bubonic or pneumonic (lung)
	Revolt	Rise up against the monarch.
	Symptom	A sign of illnesses
	Tax	Money to be paid to the King.

The deaths in 1348-9 are so numerous that the statistics are much easier to talk about than the individual tragedies. Looked at from the safe distance of the twenty-first century, one can see its beneficial effects – how the Great Plague cauterises feudalism, frees up capital, and allows society to develop in a more democratic way. But a visit to the time reminds you, with a sharp shock, of both the reality and the scale of the suffering.

*Ian Mortimer*



	Knowledge Milestones	Extra Knowledge	Expert Knowledge
	The Black Death was a pandemic	It spread across Europe in the 1340s	It is estimated that 40% of the population died.
	People did not know what caused it, so could not treat or prevent it.	People prayed to God and used herbal remedies.	Flagellants whipped themselves to show God they were sorry.
	Trade and wars stopped during the pandemic	Ports and cities like London and Bristol were often affected first.	The Plague passed along known trade routes like Florence in Europe.
	Peasants who didn't die were more valuable and workers were in demand.	Many lords did not have enough workers. This meant that they had to pay their workers.	In 1351 the Statute of Labourers tried to ban the payment of workers.
	The peasants revolted to try and gain more freedoms	They were angry and felt that the young King, Richard, who was only 14, was being misled by his advisers	In 1381 a riot against tax collectors spread across the South East. Thousands of rebels marched on London.
	The revolt failed and the feudal system continued.	The King met the rebels at Smithfield. There was an altercation, and their leader Wat Tyler was killed.	Richard II promised to act on the rebels demands. However, when the rebels agreed to go home, the King ordered their execution.

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