

Your enquiry - stage 2: How did the barons try to solve the problem?

Now you know why the barons gave John such a bad scorecard. After his defeat in France in 1214 they saw their chance. They did not want to get rid of him as king but they did want him to change the way he was ruling England. What happened next was one of the most famous events in English history.

Solution 1: Magna Carta

In January 1215 the barons met the King. They demanded he must change the way he ruled the country. John agreed to a meeting in April, but did not turn up!

It looked as though a civil war was going to start between John and the rebel barons, but there were also many barons who did not want civil war, including the great William Marshal. They talked both sides into attending a meeting at Runnymede, near Windsor Castle, in June.

John agreed to some rules about how to govern the country. These rules were written down in a charter, known as the Magna Carta - The Great Charter.

Magna Carta contained 63 rules (called clauses) describing how the King should treat all freemen in the country. The freemen were the barons, bishops and merchants. Magna Carta did not say anything about ordinary people.

ACTIVITY 5

1. Here are seven of the most important clauses of the Magna Carta, but they are incomplete. **If you had been one of the barons how would you have finished off each of these clauses?** Use pages 8-10 to help you. Your teacher will be able to tell you what the actual document said.
2. Discuss with a partner why you think John especially **disliked Clause 61**.
3. One of these clauses is still **very important today**. Which one do you think this is?

Clause 1. The English Church shall be ... The King must not ... with the Church.

Clause 2. When a baron inherits land he shall not ...

Clause 8. No widow shall be forced to ... as long as she wishes to live without a ...

Clause 12. The King must not demand taxes without ...

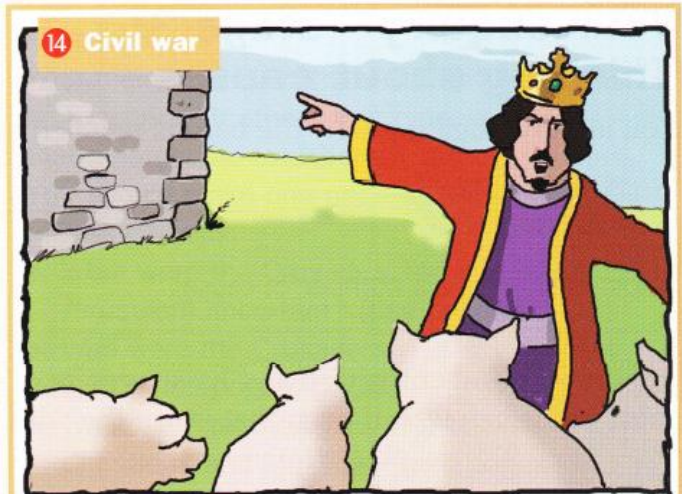
Clause 39. No freeman shall be arrested or imprisoned without ...

Clause 51. All ... soldiers must leave the country.

Clause 61. The barons shall choose 25 barons to make certain the King keeps this charter. If he breaks the charter, the 25 barons can take action to make him keep it. They can take his castles and lands but must not attack the King, his Queen or his children.



John never intended to keep to the rules of Magna Carta. He objected to Clause 61 in particular because he believed that nobody could tell the King what to do. He had only agreed to Magna Carta to win time to build up an army to fight the barons. He was determined to beat them. He even got the Pope's support after telling him that he had been forced to sign Magna Carta.



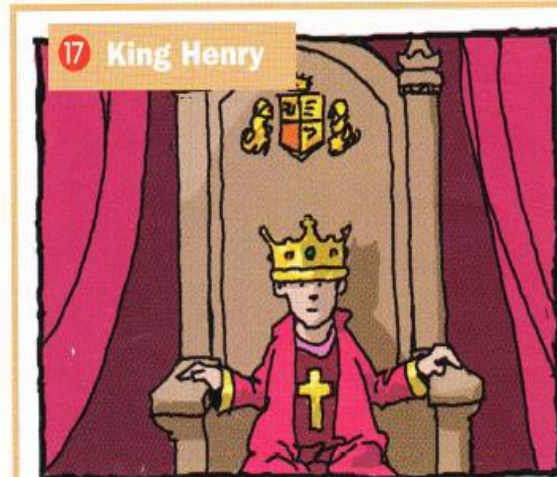
The rebel barons decided that it was time to have a new king. They invited Prince Louis of France to take over as king and captured London but John captured Rochester Castle. That was when he used the fat pigs as his secret weapon.



The civil war went on for months. John led his army on a long march through his enemies' lands, burning and destroying whatever he could. It was like the Harrying of the North after the Norman Conquest. Neither side risked fighting a battle in case they lost, but gradually the rebels captured more and more of John's castles.



While taking a shortcut, John lost some of the Crown jewels when his baggage train sank in the quicksand of The Wash. Shortly afterwards, John died from dysentery (fever with serious diarrhoea) after eating too many peaches and drinking too much beer!



Now John was dead, the civil war ended. The barons decided that there was more chance of peace if John's son, nine-year-old Henry, became king.

ACTIVITY 6

Discuss:

4. Why did Magna Carta not solve the problems between John and his barons?

5. Why do you think the barons fought a civil war with John in 1216, not in 1214, before Magna Carta?



Doing History: Causes and Consequences

Your enquiry - stage 3: Thinking about causes

You are investigating why the barons rebelled against King John in 1216.

Causes

Most events have a number of causes

Important events nearly always have a range of causes. There are seven cause cards below, but even that is not the whole story.

ACTIVITY 7

1. The cards show seven different causes. In pairs take one each and explain how it helped cause the rebellion. For example: "B. John murdering his nephew Arthur helped cause the rebellion because it made the barons distrust John from the start."
2. From your knowledge of John and the barons, add at least one more cause card.

A

John lost most of his **Empire** in France.

B

John **murdered** his nephew Arthur.

C

John only listened to advice from a few **favourite advisers**.

D

John quarrelled with the **Pope**.

E

John lost the Battle of **Bouvines** in 1214.

F

John ignored the rules in **Magna Carta**.

G

John's **father and brother** taxed the barons heavily.

H



Causes

Even if there are lots of causes there's still usually one that finally sets off an event – the trigger

3. Which of the cards shows the event that triggered the rebellion in 1216?

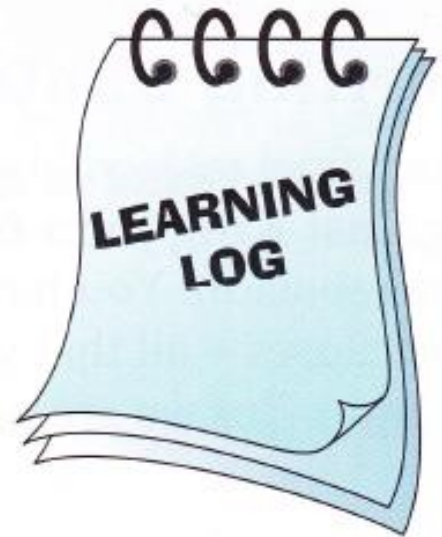
Causes

Causes are not equally important

4. Arrange the cause cards to make a pattern explaining why the barons rebelled against John in 1216.

- Put what you think is the most important cause at the top of your diagram, the least important at the bottom.
- You could copy one of the patterns below or make a pattern of your own.

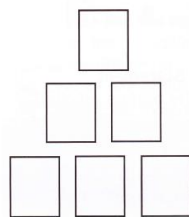
5. Which pattern - 1 or 2 - does each of the pictures below fit?



You will do more work on causes later in Year 8. How will you record these big ideas so you can remember them and use them next time?

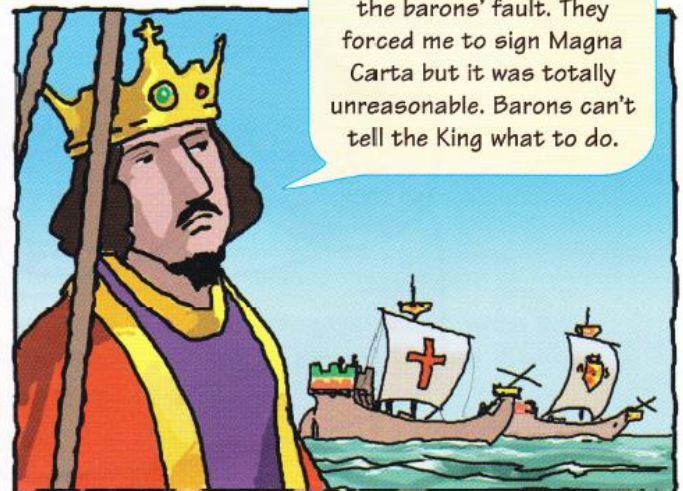
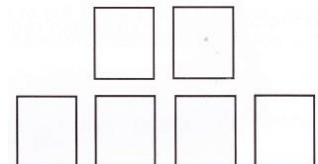
Pattern 1

This pattern is good if you think one cause is more important than all the other causes.



Pattern 2

This pattern is good if you think that two causes were equally important and the rest were less important but equal.

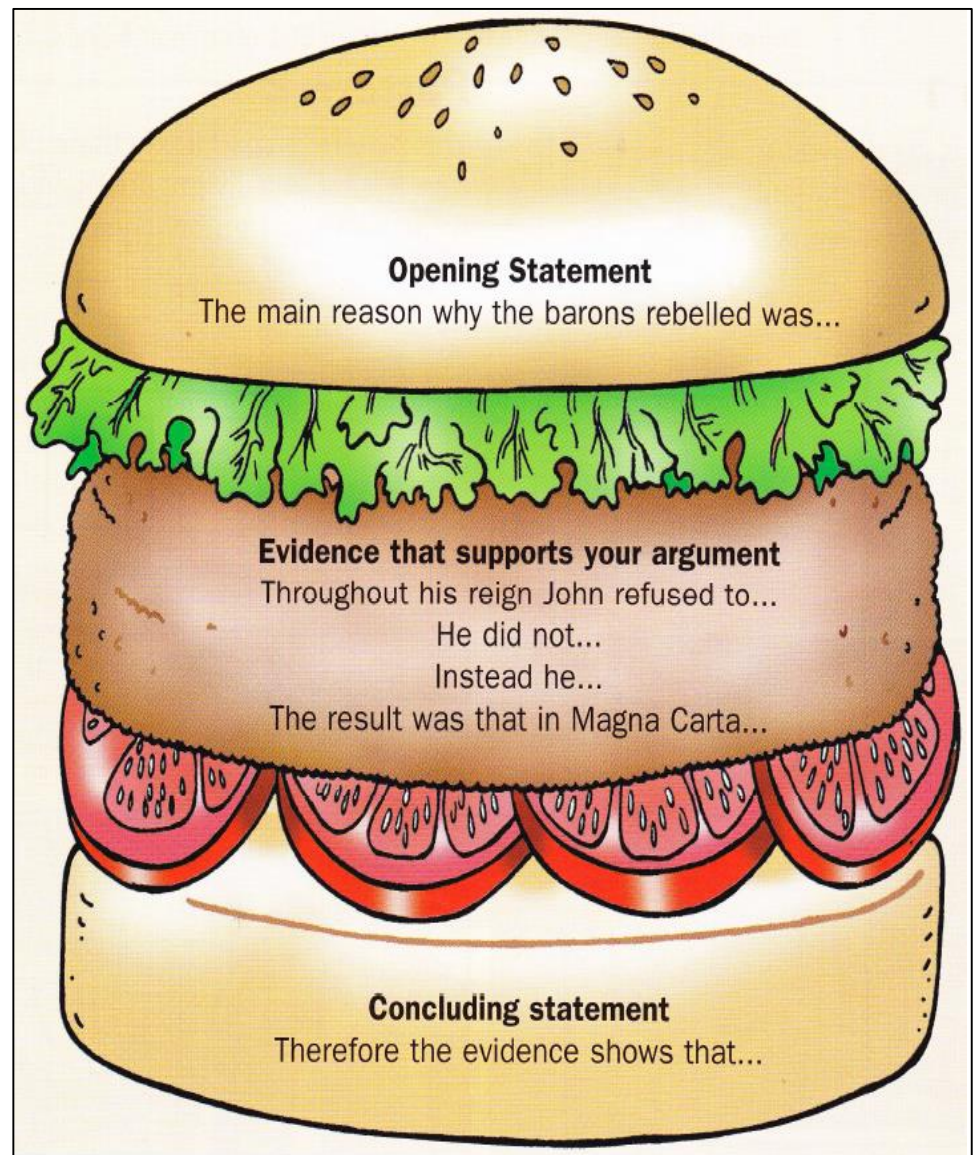


Your enquiry - stage 4: Writing about causes

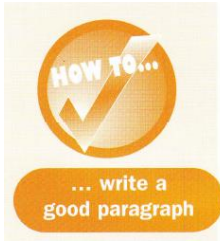
Your final task will be to write an essay **Why did the barons rebel against King John in 1216?** This is asking you to explain the causes of the rebellion. You have already done the hardest part - thinking about the causes - all that you have to do now is turn that thinking into some writing. But we are going to help you...

- A good paragraph starts with an **opening statement** that summarises the **argument** of the paragraph and links the paragraph to the question.

- The opening statement is followed by **evidence**. It is very important that you provide evidence to support your **argument**. Why should people believe your argument if you do not have any evidence to back it up? The more evidence you use the stronger your argument becomes.



- If finishes with a **concluding statement**. This statement gives your **answer** to the **question** you have been asked and it links the evidence to the question. If you include evidence but do not use a concluding statement to link the evidence to the question then the evidence is pointless.



A good paragraph is like a good hamburger. The opening and concluding statements are the buns which hold the burger together. The evidence is the meat which comes between the buns. Just as all parts of a hamburger are important for a balanced meal, all parts of the paragraph are important too:

- If you forget the meat (the evidence) or there is not much of it, the meal is tasteless.
- If you forget the bottom bun (the concluding statement) the meat/evidence falls out.

ACTIVITY 8

Now try writing your own hamburger paragraph, which will be part of your essay **Why did the barons rebel against King John in 1216?** Choose whichever of these three options best suits you.

Option 1 - check our paragraph

a) Here is a paragraph that someone else has written. Check it against the hamburger guidance. On your own copy underline in different colours:

- The opening statement
- The supporting evidence
- The concluding statement

One of the big disagreements between John and the barons was taxes. John increased the taxes paid by the barons in order to pay for his wars. He collected so many taxes that half of all the coins in England were in his treasury. In Magna Carta the barons made John reduce taxes such as the tax when a baron inherited land so that proves taxes must have been a big issue for the barons. So the evidence suggests that John's taxes were a cause of the rebellion.

b) Discuss: how could you improve this paragraph?

Option 2 - use the ingredients to write your own paragraph

Here are the ingredients for a paragraph about John's 'advisors'. Use these ingredients to construct your own hamburger paragraph.

- Choose one of the sentences to put in the top bun of the hamburger.
- Choose two more sentences as your evidence, and provide details from the story to support it.
- Now decide what goes in the bottom bun. You could use our sentence starter or write your own. It is up to you. Write a short sentence to sum up the main point of the paragraph.
- Re-read your paragraph. Do you want to make any changes?

For example when the barons refused to provide an army for John he...

One very important reason the barons rebelled against King John was because he did not ask their advice.

The evidence suggests that John seemed to think he could...

To make matters worse he did ask advice from...

Option 3 - do it yourself

If you don't need any help, use the hamburger to write a paragraph about one of the causes you put in the top of your diagram on page 14.

How to write a good essay

Essay Plan for:

A good essay has a strong sense of direction and a clear argument. It is also written in clear paragraphs which are packed full of evidence to make it really strong.



1 A clear introduction!

The introduction announces your arrival and gets you moving in the right direction. It impresses your reader that you know what you are doing. For example:

In this essay I will explain why I think the barons rebelled against King John in 1216. Some of the causes go right back to the beginning of John's reign and had been building up for years, but there were other causes which actually triggered the rebellion. I will investigate both and explain why I think that (...you insert) was the most important causes of the rebellion.

2 What was a king expected to do?

This can be based on the work you did on pages 3-6. Don't just list all the jobs - instead focus on the jobs that you think were the most important and why these were so important.

3 Long-term causes: Why were the barons dissatisfied with John?

This is the main part of the essay. These paragraphs explain the causes that built up over time as the barons became more and more dissatisfied with how John was running the country. You have much more evidence from pages 7-14 than you can fit in one essay so you need to select just the causes that you think are most important in making the barons dissatisfied with the King. The diagram you made on page 14 will help you.

Write as many paragraphs as you need, but make sure each one makes a new point. You could write paragraphs about:

- Taxes
- Wars and loss of lands
- Advisors and trust
- The Church

You can recycle your practice hamburger paragraphs from the previous page. Remember the advice!

Why did the barons rebel against King John in 1216?

4 An option - John's defence

John did not get everything wrong and he inherited problems from his father and brother, so you could write a paragraph defending King John.

5 Short-term causes: What finally triggered the rebellion?

All these problems might have made a rebellion possible or even likely but it was Magna Carta and John's response to it that finally led to rebellion and civil war.

So this paragraph explains how and why that happened. How did tension and mistrust turn into outright rebellion?

6 Conclusion

An essay needs a conclusion.

- Recap the most important reason for the rebellion.
- Recap your most important piece of evidence to support it.

Think about this: if you did not put a trigger event at the top of your diagram on page 14 and yet this was what actually caused the rebellion, what does this tell you about causes?

6 Check your work

Do not miss out this stage. Check your essay carefully.

- Do you think the writing is interesting?
- Have you made your viewpoint clear?
- Have you supported it with evidence?
- Is it neatly presented, and is the spelling and punctuation accurate?

