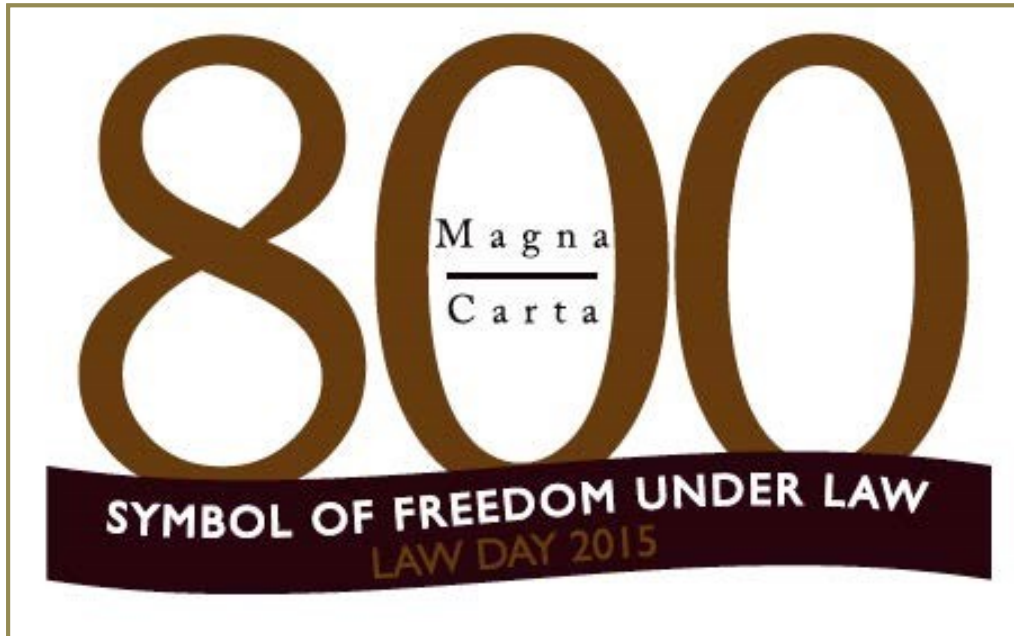


Resource Packet for Teachers

LAW DAY 2015

Magna Carta: Symbol of Freedom Under Law



What is Law Day?

In 1961, Congress passed a joint resolution designating May 1 as the national day set aside to celebrate the rule of law. Law Day underscores how law and the legal process contribute to the freedoms that all Americans share.

What is the 2015 theme?

“Magna Carta: Symbol of Freedom Under Law.” Perhaps more than any other document in human history, Magna Carta has come to embody a simple but enduring truth: No one, no matter how powerful, is above the law. In the eight centuries that have elapsed since 1215, it has taken root as an international symbol of the rule of law. For more information on the theme, see www.LawDay.org

Why is the theme important?

Magna Carta is considered an inspiration for many of the basic rights Americans hold dear today, including due process, habeas corpus, trial by jury, and the right to travel. On the 800th anniversary of this important document, use this resource packet to explore the legacy of Magna Carta and its relevance in today’s modern world.

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See www.JudicialLearningCenter.org/law-day-lesson-plans/ for a PDF version of this packet

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ATTACHMENTS:

PAGE : Coloring sheet – “King John issuing Magna Carta in 1215 at Runnymede”

PAGE : TEACHER HANDOUT –Playing by the Rules

Do you have questions or comments? Email them to [Rachel Marshall@ca8.uscourts.gov](mailto:Rachel.Marshall@ca8.uscourts.gov)

Thank you!

Activity for ELEMENTARY students

Grade Level: K-5

Suggested Time: 30-45 minutes

A. Theme: Magna Carta: Symbol of Freedom Under Law

B. Guiding Questions:

- How do we make sure everyone is treated fairly, for example when we play a game? (rules)
- Do we also have rules in society to be sure everyone is treated fairly? (yes, laws)
- Throughout history, what have people done when the ruler is not treating people fairly? (petition the government for changes in laws, make sure that even the ruler follows the laws, no one is above the law)

C. Activity Summary: Students will play a game about fairness and discuss. Then, students will compare what they might know about the fictional King John in the Robin Hood story with the real King John from medieval England. Students will learn about Magna Carta and discuss how it influences today's American government.

D. Supply List:

- Erasers or other "passable" items to play the game
- Crayons or colored pencils

Attachments:

- Coloring sheet – " King John issuing Magna Carta in 1215 at Runnymede" found at this page http://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_education/initiatives_awards/lawday_2015/re_sources/law-day-coloring-pages.html
- TEACHER HANDOUT – " Playing by the Rules"

E. Step-by-Step Procedure:

- i. Begin by playing the game, described in the handout "Playing by the Rules."
- ii. Lead a brief follow up discussion using the suggested questions on the handout.
- iii. Ask – Do we also have rules in society to be sure everyone is treated fairly?
 - i. Discuss examples of laws such a traffic laws, laws requiring people to pay taxes, etc. Ask for volunteers to share.
 - ii. Ask students if they know whether or not the President, the Governor, the Mayor, etc. also have to follow the same laws?
 - iii. Ask students if they know what it might have been like many centuries ago, before this country even started, in England under a King's rule?
- iv. Give a short summary of the Robin Hood story. You might read a short section from a library book, show a video, read a poem or summary, etc. Ask students to talk about the character of King John in the story. What was so bad about him?
- v. Explain that the King John in the book was not real, but many believe the character is based on a real English King.
 - i. King John ruled in medieval England, 800 years ago.
 - ii. He treated people unfairly in many ways.
 - iii. At that time, Kings were not held to the law. They were above the law.
 - iv. King John was so hated that no other real King was ever named John again.
- vi. Pass out the coloring sheet and allow students time to color it in.
- vii. Explain that the scene on the coloring sheet was an important one in history. It happened in the year 1215 – 800 years ago! It shows King John entering in to an agreement with the people, Magna Carta. King John was agreeing to honor the rights of

people, treat people fairly, and follow the law. This was very important because it was the first time a King/ruler agreed to something like this in a written document.

- viii. Make summary points – Magna Carta was so important, the agreement between ruler and citizens because a regular part of English law. The colonists brought the idea with them when they came here. It inspired the Founding Fathers to declare independence and fight the King for it, and then to write our U.S. Constitution, which is still the law today.

F. RESOURCES FOR ELEMENTARY TEACHERS:

Law Day 2015

www.lawday.org

Magna Carta – Icon of Liberty

<http://iconofliberty.com/>

The U.S. Courts Law Day page

www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/get-inspired/annual-observances/law-day.aspx

The Judicial Learning Center in St. Louis

www.JudicialLearningCenter.org

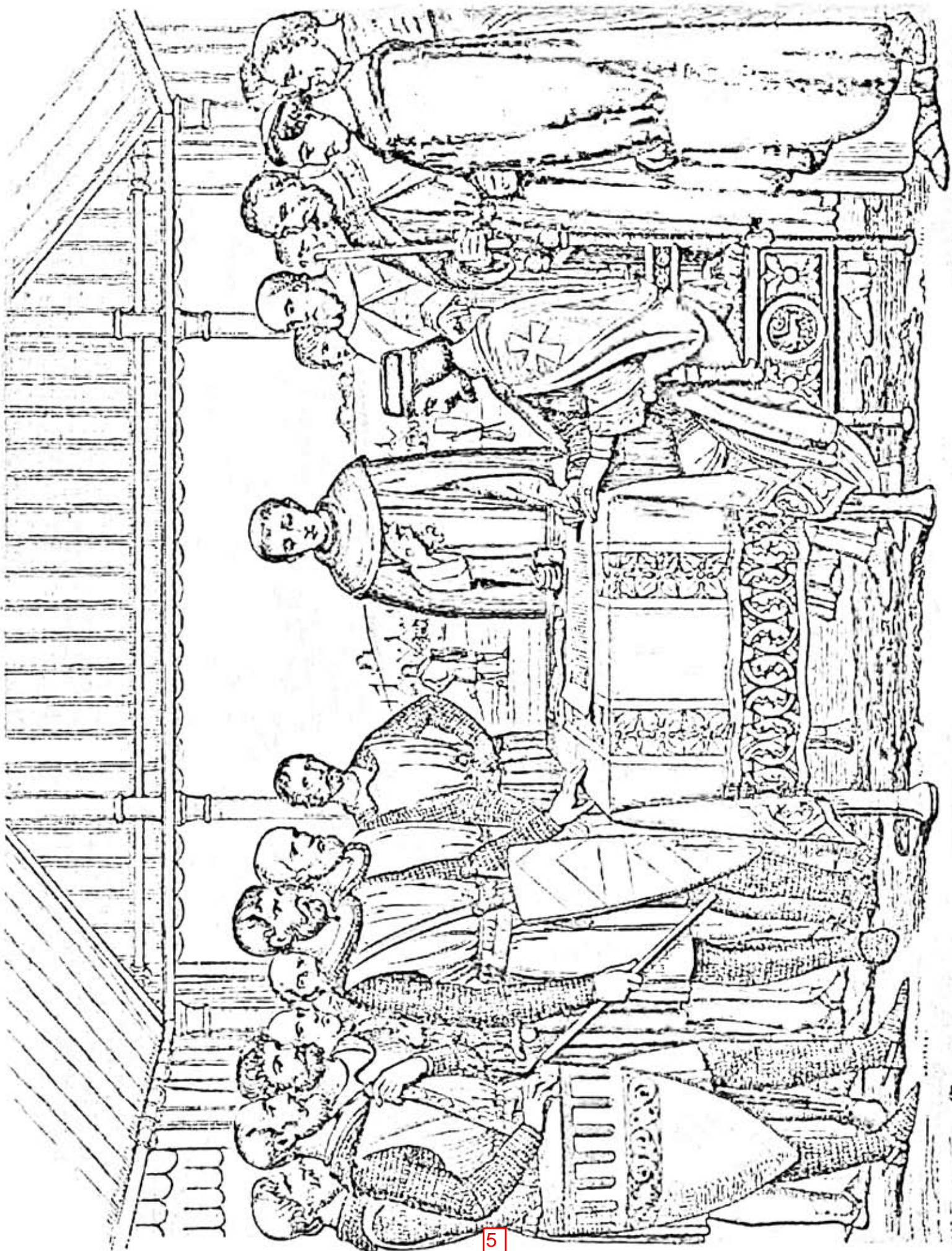
Magna Carta 800th

<http://magnacarta800th.com/>

Magna Carta for Kids – BBC

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/british_history/magna_carta/

KING JOHN ISSUING MAGNA CARTA IN 1215 AT RUNNYMEDE



Lesson Plans

Elementary School

Playing by the Rules

Grades: K–5

Time: 30 minutes

Materials Needed: “Passable” object (e.g., eraser, ball, stuffed animal, beanbag) to allow students to pass back and forth during the game

This is a modern adaptation of a classic law-related education game known as the “Eraser Game.” This game allows students to actively think about the importance of rules in the classroom or in a community setting and what makes rules fair and legitimate. Students reflect on their ability to shape rules and then apply these concepts to laws in society.

Procedure

1. Tell students that they will play a game. Do not say anything else, and do not give them any rules. Ask them to form two lines. *Note: The students will probably look confused and ask you, “How do you play it?” or “What are we supposed to do?”*
2. Tell the first person in each line to begin the game. Explain that the rule for playing is that the person at the front of each line should pass the object to the person behind him or her, and each person behind him or her should do the same.
3. After the object has been passed to a couple of students, interrupt the game and declare, “Oh wait, you are supposed to pass with your eyes closed. Let’s start the game over and follow these new directions.”
4. After a minute or so, interrupt again and explain, “Actually, you are supposed to pass the eraser with your left hand.” Once again, start the game from the beginning. Continue to periodically interrupt the game with new “rules,” making the game start over with each new direction.
5. Continue the pattern of changing directions and restarting the game until students begin to seem annoyed, exasperated, or ask for clarification of the rules. Once students begin to express dissatisfaction with the process of the game, end the game.

Debriefing the Game

6. Once the game has stopped, review the problems with the students. Ask them if they had any difficulties with the game. Ask them to explain what problems they experienced. *Help them understand that they had difficulties because of the way that the rules were given. Lack of agreement about the rules and constant changes of direction lead to confusion.*
7. Brainstorm with the students to develop a clear set of rules for the game. List the students’ suggestions for rules of the game. Ask the entire class to take an oath: “I agree to follow the posted rules of the game, as we have agreed upon this day.”
8. Ask students to discuss their experiences and the list of rules:
 - Do you think it is important that we all understand what the rules are for the game? Why?
 - Why do you think we wrote the rules? Was this helpful?
 - What do you think it meant when you took an oath to follow the rules? When everyone took an oath?
 - Do you think that it was fair for you to ask for the rules? Do you think you deserved to know the rules? Why?
9. Wrap up the activity by asking students to discuss other times when knowing the rules was important, or when they asked for clarification of rules. Encourage students to think about knowing rules in society—laws—and why it is important that everyone understand and follow laws.

Extension Activity

Students could discuss or examine other lists of “rules” that govern society, including school codes, city regulations, state laws, the U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. They might also identify rights contained in the Bill of Rights.