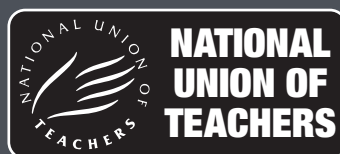


# Teaching about human rights and democracy – The Magna Carta as a reference point

## Magna Carta Workshop Report

A collaboration of the National Education Association,  
the National Union of Teachers and Lincoln Cathedral



This document represents the outcome of a collaboration between the National Education Association and the National Union of Teachers. Spellings throughout the document are in 'American' or 'British' English according to the usage of the original author of the different sections of the document. Spellings have been left unchanged on this basis as it is intended that the document should have an audience in both the United States and Great Britain.

# Table of Contents

In Memory	<b>6</b>
A Brief History of Our Recent Walk with the Magna Carta and Human Rights Education, Reg Weaver, President of the National Education Association	<b>7</b>
Teaching about Human Rights and Democracy – Magna Carta as a Reference Point National Educational Association and National Union of Teachers – A Project Profile	<b>8</b>
NUT Participants	<b>10</b>
NEA Participants	<b>15</b>
Open Letter to Magna Carta Project Participants Cynthia Swann, Director of Governance and Policy of the National Education Association	<b>21</b>
Imagining Britain, An Introduction for our NEA Guests by Robin Richardson	<b>25</b>
UK Citizenship Test: Questions and Answers	<b>28</b>
Magna Carta – An Icon For The Twenty First Century? Professor Mike West, Chancellor of Lincoln	<b>30</b>
Interpreting Magna Carta, Professor Mike West	<b>37</b>
Magna Carta: Frequently Asked Questions Lincoln Cathedral	<b>39</b>
Activities	<b>40</b>
Paper 1. Introductions	<b>40</b>
Paper 2. Four Activities	<b>41</b>
Paper 3. Classroom Investigations	<b>42</b>
Paper 4. Generalizations Across the Curriculum	<b>44</b>
Paper 5. Words and Days in the Story	<b>46</b>
Paper 6. Comments and Reflections	<b>48</b>

Paper 7. The Selection on Display	<b>50</b>
Materials for Children and Young People	<b>50</b>
Practical Teaching Ideas	<b>50</b>
Books about Human Rights Education	<b>52</b>
Background Reading on History and Identity (a miscellany)	<b>53</b>
Magna Carta	<b>53</b>
Using the Magna Carta to Teach Human Rights: Initial Abstracts and Lesson Plan Ideas	<b>54</b>
GROUP 1. An Awareness Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and the ABC's of Human Rights (Janis N. Gilchrist, Seema McArdle, Mickey Dunne-Laughland, Brian Freeman)	<b>54</b>
Abstract	<b>54</b>
Essential Questions	<b>54</b>
Objectives	<b>54</b>
Activity Lessons	<b>55</b>
Personal reflection: The Magna Carta and Me: Janis N. Gilchrist	<b>57</b>
ABCs of Human Rights	<b>58</b>
Websites and Books	<b>61</b>
GROUP 2. Using the Magna Carta as a Reference Point to Study Current Issues	<b>62</b>
Abstract	<b>62</b>
GROUP 3. PLANET X: How Can we Recreate the Conditions that led to Magna Carta and the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights? (an updated John Rawls activity)	<b>63</b>
Abstract	<b>63</b>
GROUP 4. Interrogating Our Rights?	<b>68</b>
Abstract	<b>68</b>
GROUP 5. Using Magna Carta Chapter 39 alongside Professor Mike West's Interpretation as a Stimulus for a Learner-led Critical Discussion	<b>69</b>
What Say the Reeds at Runnymede?	<b>71</b>
Notes	<b>72</b>



**From Left: Cynthia Swann, Brian Freeman, Alicia Bata, Robin Richardson, Rob Unwin, Robert Cotto, Mickey Dunne-Laughland, Lucy Nokes, David Sharples, Janis Gilchrist, Ruth Ann Falls, Samidha Garg, Annabelle Holmes, Seema McArdle, Sthen King, Pam Collins, Paul Hinchcliffe, Brooke Bishop, Chuch Hamaker-Teals, Robert Wilkinson, Stan West.**



**This report of the Magna Carta Workshop  
is dedicated to the memory and vision of Steve Sinnott**

“

I think there are those who are hopeful supporters and activists for justice, human rights and equality and there are the rest. Those who exude hope and optimism generate the energy and stimulate the progress that we in education and progressive trade unionism work for. I find it is such people who are as fascinated as I think I am by the liberating power of education in this country and across the world.

”

**– Steve Sinnott “a smashing fella” (1951 - 2008)  
General Secretary, National Union of Teachers**



## **A brief history of our recent walk with the Magna Carta and human rights education, Reg Weaver, President of the National Education Association**



Magna Carta. It's truly amazing how far we've come in a few short years. Just a few years ago the NEA Executive Committee agreed to support a proposal to bring Magna Carta to the Contemporary Art Center of Virginia Beach, in honor of the 400th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown. With support from the City of Virginia Beach, that exhibit opened in March of 2007.

Then, NEA, with the support from the Verizon Foundation, helped to bring Magna Carta to Philadelphia, in honor of NEA's Representative Assembly (RA) and celebration of its 150th Anniversary. On July 4, 2007, the exhibit opened at Philadelphia's National Constitution Center, where thousands saw the 1215 document.

This enterprise spurred continuing discussions between Lincoln Cathedral, Lincoln University, NUT, and NEA concerning the educational mission of learning about the long fight for liberty and human and civil rights.

This past April, ten NEA members and ten NUT members, all accomplished classroom teachers, were selected to participate in a workshop on Magna Carta and human rights education. These twenty, practising classroom teachers were selected out of a large pool of applicants and represent kindergarten to grade 12 teachers from across the US and Britain.

And, even as I write this, I am also preparing to travel to Lincoln University to receive an honorary Magna Carta Doctorate. The doctorate will be a homecoming of sorts as I return to the very place where I gave the remarks that are cited in the following section.

So, as one might surmise, Magna Carta and the system of rights that grew out of it are of seminal importance to the NEA and the NUT. For centuries, brave individuals and groups have struggled to ensure that rights were expanded beyond those first, landowning lords in Runnymede, and include all people regardless of birth, religion, race or creed. NUT and NEA have and will continue to participate in this important process as active members of civil society as well as professionals charged with educating our children.

# Teaching about human rights and democracy – Magna Carta as a reference point

National Education Association and National Union of Teachers

## A PROJECT PROFILE

### Aims

The aims of the project were to:

- develop knowledge and understanding of the Magna Carta
- analyse aspects of the Magna Carta related to human rights, freedom and democracy
- develop strategies and materials for teaching and learning about the Magna Carta.

### Structure

The project was organised jointly by the National Education Association (NEA) [www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org) in the United States and the National Union of Teachers (NUT) in England and Wales <http://www.teachers.org.uk/>

It started with a four-day visit to England by a delegation from the NEA, 14-18 April 2008. From the evening of Monday 14 April until the late afternoon of 16 April the NEA delegation were joined by a delegation from the NUT. Each delegation contained ten members, virtually all of whom were classroom teachers. Between them they taught throughout the K-12 age range or key stage 1-4, and a wide range of subjects.

For the first three of their four days the NEA delegation stayed at Stoke Rochford Hall, near Grantham in Lincolnshire, England. They then moved to London for their last day.

Participants will remain in email contact with each other and will contribute ideas, thoughts and teaching suggestions to a joint publication, to be finalised by the end of 2008.

### Outline programme, 14-18 April 2008

#### Sunday 13 April

NEA members arrived into London in the morning and early afternoon. NUT provided a bus to take everyone to Stoke Rochford. <http://www.stokerochfordhall.co.uk/aboutus.htm>

#### Monday 14 April

The programme for the first day incorporated a welcome to England and Wales on behalf of the NUT. The NEA delegation spent the first part of the day engaging in a number of group discussions and activities about their experiences in the US as educators. The afternoon was spent determining specific roles and responsibilities within the delegation such as but not limited to note taker, email blast/blogger, photographer, curriculum linking and standards, resources gatherer, etc.

Members of the NUT delegation arrived by 6 pm for a reception hosted by the NUT. The two delegations then went by bus for dinner in nearby Grantham.

#### Tuesday 15 April

The day started with an introductory two-hour workshop beginning at 9 am, facilitated by Robin Richardson. It involved much interaction between the two delegations and aimed to clarify the key themes and concepts with which the project as a whole is concerned.

After a mid-morning break there was a talk about citizenship education by Professor Audrey Osler, University of Leeds, UK. She drew on her knowledge of developments in a range of different countries in order to locate this project in an international and global context. Her talk was followed by a question-and-answer session.



Lunch was taken at Stoke Rochford. Both delegations went by bus to Lincoln, arriving by 2.30 pm, for a programme hosted and provided by Professor Mike West, representing Lincoln University and Lincoln Cathedral. It included a viewing of one of the four remaining copies of the original 1215 manuscript of the Magna Carta, and of the permanent exhibition within which the manuscript is displayed.

<http://www.lincolncathedral.com/> (view link at bottom on Lincoln and the Magna Carta)

### Wednesday 16 April

The day was facilitated by Robin Richardson. It started with a review of existing materials for teaching about democracy and human rights, and with further sharing of participants' professional experience. In this connection all participants were requested to bring with them at least one educational resource about human rights which they considered valuable and prepared, if they wished, a short (five minutes) presentation about aspects of their own work.

Participants then worked in small groups to plan specific projects and activities to be undertaken in their professional situations during the next two months. They acted as professional friends for each other in this planning and arranged to remain in contact with each other, within and between the United States and the United Kingdom, whilst the projects and activities are taking place during the summer.

### Thursday 17 April

The morning debriefing and planning ended at 12 pm. Members of the NEA delegation then travelled to London, and members of the NUT delegation returned to their homes. Upon arrival in London the NEA delegation checked-in to their rooms at the Premiere Inn in St. Pancras near Kings Cross. The rest of the afternoon was free for sightseeing.

### Friday 18 April

At 9:30 am the NEA delegation travelled to the headquarters of the Commonwealth Secretariat in Pall Mall for a short presentation on human rights education around the world and a tour of the grounds. Afterwards, participants were free to take advantage of their proximity to Trafalgar Square and the many museums and sights of London.

**Professor Audrey Osler** is founding director of the interdisciplinary Centre for Citizenship and Human Rights Education at the University of Leeds. In 2007, she was Visiting Scholar at the University of Washington in Seattle

**Robin Richardson** was formerly director of the Runnymede Trust, named in tribute to the Magna Carta, and has frequently worked with the NUT as a trainer and facilitator on issues of equality and multiculturalism

**The Revd Canon Professor Mike West** is chancellor of Lincoln Cathedral and Professor with responsibility for Magna Carta education and development

**Name:** Seema McArdle

**School name:** Gilbert Scott Primary School

**School description:** State School, with 50% Special Needs children

**Subject/s taught:** All Subjects

**Age of students:** 5-11

**Additional responsibilities:** Helping to organise Black History Week



## Teaching Philosophy/Ethos

**Why do you teach?** Because I feel the need to educate children, helping to create a better understanding between the adults of the future.

**Most rewarding aspect of your job?** Making children laugh and helping them to respect themselves and others around them. I also enjoy our frank discussions.

**Most challenging aspect of your job?** Dealing with ignorance and refusal to learn, especially in the staffroom. Adults who are negative and don't like change or self-reflection.

**Name:** Robert Wilkinson

**School name:** Waingels College

**School description:** 11-19 Local Authority Community Comprehensive

**Subject/s taught:** Sociology, Theory of Knowledge, Psychology, History, Business Studies, British Government and Politics

**Age of students:** 16-19

**Additional responsibilities:** Head of Year 12/13, International Baccalaureate Diploma Coordinator



## Teaching Philosophy/Ethos

**Why do you teach?** To give back the value that I received from my teachers. To contribute something back to society. To encourage students to question everything and take nothing for granted.

**Most rewarding aspect of your job?** To find a student coming out with arguments that have been affected by my contribution. To feel that they have investigated aspects of their life that they might not otherwise have considered.

**Most challenging aspect of your job?** The paperwork and bureaucracy and target setting. The closed minded nature of those whose lives are based on over consumption with little care for others or the consequences of their actions.

**Name:** Sthen King

**School name:** Sacred Heart High School

**School description:** Secondary Comprehensive

**Subject/s taught:** History and Critical Thinking

**Age of students:** 11-16

**Additional responsibilities:** Head of Department/Year 9 Tutor



### Teaching Philosophy/Ethos

**Why do you teach?** I have always wanted to be a teacher as was evident from childhood when I used to teach my younger sister and our teddy bears what I'd learnt that day. I am passionate about history, find the hopes and possibilities of young people inspiring and very much enjoy talking. Therefore I'm delighted to say this is an ideal job!

**Most rewarding aspect of your job?** Working with young people and being able to develop their ability to think independently and critically about the world around them.

**Most challenging aspect of your job?** Time.

**Name:** Val Archer

**School name (from Sep 2008):** Winsor Primary School

**Subject/s taught:** All subjects

**Age of students:** 9-10



### Teaching Philosophy/Ethos

**Why do you teach?** I enjoy the variety and buzz of working in a school. Teaching wasn't something I imagined I'd ever go into, but I started teaching English abroad and my passion developed from there. Teaching allows me to make a positive contribution and at the same time learn so much.

**Most rewarding aspect of your job?** Seeing children succeed.

**Most challenging aspect of your job?** On supply it's behaviour management! There are many challenges, but these are outweighed by the rewards and make it worthwhile.

**Name:** Lucy Nokes

**School name:** Tinshill Learning Centre

**School description:** PRU (Pupil Referral Unit)

**Subject/s taught:** Humanities and PHSCE

**Age of students:** 14-16

**Additional responsibilities:** Citizenship



### Teaching Philosophy/Ethos

**Why do you teach?** People person, love stories, history, art, world knowledge, circle time, learning.

**Most rewarding aspect of your job?** Understanding, achieving.

**Most challenging aspect of your job?** Behaviour.

**Name:** David Sharples

**School name:** Garforth Community College, Lidgett Lane, Garforth, Leeds, W. Yorks. LS25 1LJ

**School description:** Large Mixed Comprehensive School

**Subject/s taught:** English Language and Literature

**Age of students:** 11-19



### Teaching Philosophy/Ethos

**Why do you teach?** Because I couldn't imagine working in a job that didn't involve the daily challenges, rewards, innovations and drama of teaching. It's very humbling to be a part of the development of so many young people and vital to challenge them to develop all their skills and talents as they learn to participate in the global society.

**Most rewarding aspect of your job?** When something finally 'clicks' with the students and when you know you've just taught a special lesson.

**Most challenging aspect of your job?** Constantly looking for ways to keep ideas fresh and motivate young people to value education as a life-long privilege.

**Name:** Paul Hinchcliffe

**School name:** Sheringham Junior School

**School description:** Junior School with approx 350 pupils

**Subject/s taught:** All KS2 subjects across years 3-6

**Age of students:** 7-11

**Additional responsibilities:** Head of Year 6, ICT coordinator



### Teaching Philosophy/Ethos

**Why do you teach?** I find teaching a rewarding job, I believe teachers can have an incredible impact in the lives of students within the school.

**Most rewarding aspect of your job?** Teaching is a job I really enjoy, to have a job that makes you feel happy while helping children achieve their goals is an incredible mix.

**Most challenging aspect of your job?** The test culture that tends to dominate school life can be a struggle, sometimes it can seem repetitive and restrictive.

**Name:** Annabelle Holmes

**School name:** David Lister School, Rustenburg Street, Hull, HU9 2PR, UK.

**School description:** A challenging inner city secondary school with approx 1200 students.

**Subject/s taught:** History and a little RE.

**Age of students:** 11-16

**Additional responsibilities:** Leader of Learning-History and Citizenship Coordinator



### Teaching Philosophy/Ethos

**Why do you teach?** I have had a passion for History ever since I was a child. I wanted a job, which would allow me to share this enthusiasm with others. History teaching seemed to be the best fit for me.

**Most rewarding aspect of your job?** Engaging students and getting them to be passionate about History. I particularly enjoy when they have gone away and done some additional research and want to share this with you. I love taking students on visits and watching them enjoy History.

**Most challenging aspect of your job?** Teaching students who have behavioural difficulties.

**Name:** Rob Unwin

**School name:** Development Education Centre (South Yorkshire)

**School description:** Centre for resources, support and curriculum development relating to the global dimension in education.

**Subject/s taught:** Citizenship, Personal & Social Education

**Additional responsibilities:** Centre Coordination



### Teaching Philosophy/Ethos

"Writing-As-Power/Writing-As-Therapy."

**Why do you teach?** I teach to help young people connect global issues to their own lives. I believe in approaches, which empower students and place them in the driving seat of the learning process.

**Most rewarding aspect of your job?** Seeing students really engaging with a stimulus and demonstrating a real understanding and concern for the issues being addressed.

**Most challenging aspect of your job?** Being in six places at once! (Keeping on top of a wide range of curriculum development projects).

**Name:** Stan West

**School name:** Columbia College Chicago

**School description:** America's largest art, media arts and communication college

**Subject/s taught:** TV "Culture, Race and Media, English "Professional Writing Seminar and Liberal Education "First-Year Seminar"

**Age of students:** 18-35

**Additional responsibilities:** columnist, talk show host for local media



## Teaching Philosophy/Ethos

"Writing-As-Power/Writing-As-Therapy."

**Why do you teach?** I teach to connect theory with practice. I hope students get power to communication critical ideas that they care about. I ask them to spend considerable time analyzing and connecting with audience. We try to connect local and international issues.

**Most rewarding aspect of your job?** Seeing students do service learning projects like when they rebuilt homes and shot a documentary in hurricane-ravaged New Orleans.

**Most challenging aspect of your job?** Convincing students and my peers that they need to find ways to connect local and international issues

**Name:** Cynthia Swann

**Organization name:** National Education Association (NEA)

**Organization description:** Education Trade Union-Professional Organization

**Responsibilities:** Counsel to the NEA President/CEO, Counsel to the NEA Executive Director, Director, Governance & Policy



## Teaching Philosophy/Ethos

**Why do you teach?** N/A

**Most rewarding aspect of your job?** Working with leaders of the largest, most progressive labour union and professional organization in the United States, and recognizing that our organization's commitment to the teaching and learning of children and students is a core value.

**Most challenging aspect of your job?** Coordinating many competing priorities.



**Name:** Brooke Bishop

**School name:** Sapulpa High School, Sapulpa Public Schools

**School description:** Public School, Grades 10-12

**Subject/s taught:** Special Education (U.S. History, World History & Government)

**Age of students:** 15-19 years old

**Additional responsibilities:** Enrolment and class scheduling, IEP caseload, sponsor of civic student organization



### Teaching Philosophy/Ethos

**Why do you teach?** I teach to make a difference in the lives of my students, not only as an academic instructor but as a role model and support system.

**Most rewarding aspect of your job?** Seeing my students get excited about learning and taking the initiative to extend their learning beyond the classroom.

**Most challenging aspect of your job?** Seeing the struggles my students face due to their disabilities.

**Name:** Chuck Hamaker-Teals

**School name:** Southridge High School

**School description:** Sub-Urban, 1500 students

**Subject/s taught:** World history , AP Government, Speech & Debate

**Age of students:** 14-16, 17-18

**Additional responsibilities:** Tennis Coach, Debate Coach, National Honour Society Coordinator



### Teaching Philosophy/Ethos

**Why do you teach?** I teach because I love to ask questions and I find that the answers instruct both who I am and who my students want to be.

**Most rewarding aspect of your job?** Laughing, smiling, and sharing in the joy of realizing new things.

**Most challenging aspect of your job?** Convincing others that if they stepped aside, changed rolls, or asked questions, learning would happen in a more rich environment than they could ever imagine.



**Name:** Brian 'The SCHOOL DADDY' Freeman

**School name:** Peterson Elementary School

**School description:** Rural, low economy, minority

**Subject/s taught:** Kindergarten

**Age of students:** 5 & 6

**Additional responsibilities:** Accreditation Coordinator



### Teaching Philosophy/Ethos

**Why do you teach?** To teach students to love learning as much as they love themselves.

**Most rewarding aspect of your job?** Teaching children to read because you have given them a gift they will use for a lifetime.

**Most challenging aspect of your job?** Parental Involvement

**Name:** Janis N. Gilchrist

**School name:** Factory Shoals Elementary School

**School description:** Kindergarten Teacher

**Subject/s taught:** Reading, writing, math, science, social studies, art, drama, phonics, and dance

**Age of students:** 5 and 6 year olds

**Additional responsibilities:** K-2 Science Facilitator



### Teaching Philosophy/Ethos

**Why do you teach?** I enjoy imparting my God given gifts into the lives of others. Life experiences along with requirements makes learning fun for all of my students ages 4 to 60. Music, dance, drama, drawing, and painting (which are a part of me) are included in the standard curriculum.

**Most rewarding aspect of your job?** When introducing various themes, I dress in native clothing to represent the holidays and customs of different cultures. Also, I share artefacts that are representative of the culture. Learning in my classroom is a yearlong celebration.

**Most challenging aspect of your job?** The most challenging aspect of my job is being an active researcher among people, who are insecure. When you have been called to the field of education, you recognize your role as a servant. To serve others is a daily chore that requires research, which is needed to keep your approach to teaching fresh and exciting for not only to students, but also colleagues and parents.

**Name:** Alicia Diana Bata

**School name:** Cavalier Public School

**School description:** K-12 School

**Subject/s taught:** Spanish

**Age of students:** 14-18

**Additional responsibilities:** Spanish club, NDEA and NEA board of directors member, member of Minority Affairs Commission



### Teaching Philosophy/Ethos

**Why do you teach?** I have always wanted to teach because I believe every child deserves the opportunity of equality in education. Teaching is a calling, a mission, not just a job.

**Most rewarding aspect of your job?** Seeing my children grow as they learn from me and I learn from them.

**Most challenging aspect of your job?** Teaching on interactive TV to four schools at a time.

**Name:** Ruth Ann Falls

**School name:** Olathe South High School

**School description:** 1400 students; grades 10-11

**Subject/s taught:** Ethics; facilitation of Professional Careers Academy

**Age of students:** 16-18

**Additional responsibilities:** Department Chair; International Studies facilitator; Entrepreneurship Studies facilitator



### Teaching Philosophy/Ethos

**Why do you teach?** I believe public education is the cornerstone of democracy. All students can learn and should be guaranteed an education that meets their needs.

**Most rewarding aspect of your job?** The students that return to tell you of their successes.

**Most challenging aspect of your job?** I do not have enough time in each day to do those things I want to do.

**Name:** Jeni Zapatka

**School name:** Central Kitsap School District

**Subject/s taught:** K-12 Social Studies; 7-12 Language Arts (ages 12-18)



### Teaching Philosophy/Ethos

Everyone can learn, everyone needs to learn, everyone deserves to learn!

**Why do you teach?** I teach to help people understand the World around them. I teach to empower students and place them to make a difference. I want to teach students to learn-so they can make a difference in the lives of others.

**Most rewarding aspect of your job?** When students come back and share about learning, making a difference.

**Most challenging aspect of your job?** The constant changes from the State level. Keeping staff motivated and engaged in student learning.

**Name:** (Susan) Mickey Dunne-Laughland

\*BA in (Secondary) French Education from University of Illinois/  
Urbana-Champaign

\*BS in Elementary Education from Winona State University

\*MA in Teaching and Learning from St. Mary's University

\*NBCT



### Teaching Philosophy/Ethos

**Why do you teach?** I see it as a mission, not just a profession. I love kids. There's always something new every day. I really believe that teachers can help effect a positive change in the future world as a result of their work with children.

**Most rewarding aspect of your job?** The kids. Kids who come/write back (to visit) with stories that I inspired them.

**Most challenging aspect of your job?** Keeping everything organized. Sometimes I have too many ideas and it's hard to keep things tidy.

**Name:** David Edwards

### Teaching Philosophy/Ethos

**Why do you teach?** Because it was the single most important thing I could do that I was good at, loved to do and felt passionately about. I teach/taught because I believe in the transformative nature of education to work at the individual and systemic level. I became a teacher because I love to learn and share. I miss it terribly.

**Most rewarding aspect of your job?** Working with teachers internationally.

**Most challenging aspect of your job?** Working with reductionalist bureaucrats internationally.



**Name:** Robert Cotto

**School name:** The Metropolitan Learning Center for Global and International Studies

**School description:** A public inter-district magnet middle and high school

**Subject/s taught:** Social Studies-Global studies and sociology

**Age of students:** 14-18

**Additional responsibilities:** Ninth grade team leader

### Teaching Philosophy/Ethos

**Why do you teach?** I enjoy working with students that grew up in the community where I came from. It is a philosophy of reciprocity that is characterized in the book, *A House on Mango Street*. In the book, one of the sisters explains this philosophy to Esperanza when she says, "When you leave you must remember to come back for the others. A circle, understand?"

**Most rewarding aspect of your job?** The most rewarding aspect is seeing kids improve and grow intellectually over their four years at our school.

**Most challenging aspect of your job?** The most challenging aspect is working with students that are under prepared for the high school level.



# Open letter to Magna Carta project participants, Cynthia Swann, Director of Governance and Policy of the National Education Association

From your essays, comments and emails I realize that you are all aware of the enormous significance of the Magna Carta, and how it has influenced the struggle for human freedom over the last eight centuries. But permit me to sketch out how I see its connection to those struggles and how that relates to why we're all gathered together. To do so I'm also going to draw (albeit heavily) on the remarks that President Weaver delivered in Lincoln Cathedral in 2006.

In the year 1215, the Magna Carta established a number of important principles that we take for granted today. First and foremost was the notion that the rights of all free men take precedence over the power of their so-called "rulers." The author or authors of this document made it clear that their rights were not dependent on the whims of the crown or the state. A few decades later, Saint Thomas Aquinas would expand on this concept of human rights and what he called "natural law." He wrote that the orderly rule of law could not merely flow from the will of rulers; it must rest solidly upon reason and the common good. According to him, laws made by man can only attain legitimacy when they derive from natural or eternal laws – and ultimately advance the common welfare. If a law does not advance the common welfare, Aquinas said, it is unjust.

"Laws of this sort," he wrote, "have more in common with violence than with legality."

The Magna Carta and the ideas of Thomas Aquinas didn't just fall out of the sky. They expanded on the ideas of Aristotle, the theologian Saint Augustine, and other ancient thinkers. In *On Free Will*, Saint Augustine had written, "A law which is not just cannot be called a law." This passage was cited by Thomas Aquinas, and we can be sure that the Archbishop Stephen Langton also read Saint Augustine before the Magna Carta was drafted. Aquinas

and the Magna Carta sprang from the same fertile soil of the Middle Ages. And the Magna Carta put in writing the notion that free men have basic rights that supersede the power of the state. It also spelled out some of those rights.

One was the right to come and go at will – to "leave and return to our kingdom unharmed."

Another right, enumerated in Clause 39, was the protection against imprisonment without cause – a concept we know today as habeas corpus.

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 other 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.

But Clause 39 is a cornerstone of our legal system today, and it has been essential to the expansion of freedom over the centuries.

The writ of habeas corpus was one of the weapons used in the campaigns against slavery in Britain and the United States. Habeas corpus was also an important tool in the civil rights movement in the United States during the 1960s. The Magna Carta also promised that if a man's property had been seized, it would be returned. And it guaranteed that the Church would be free, self-governing, and not controlled by the king.

The Magna Carta is significant because it was a contract between the governed and their governors ... an acknowledgement that rulers did not have the moral authority to simply impose their will. This articulated and advanced a tradition of political and legal rights that endures today in much of the world. The Magna Carta is also important because it speaks in the voice of freedom. At the time it was written, to be

sure, much of the Magna Carta was about the narrow preservation of selfish interests.

But to read it today, centuries after those interests have faded, what resonates most loudly is the voice of human beings demanding their rights. Once that sentiment was expressed, the Genie would never again be put back into the bottle – and the struggle for human rights would only gain momentum.

Today we still have not achieved the perfect ideal of freedom in many parts of the world. But we have come a long way in the right direction. Here in England, the ideas put forth in the Magna Carta have evolved into a Parliamentary form of government. And as English settlers carried those ideas to the New World, we developed our own traditions. Before the colonies broke away from England, there were various assemblies such as the one that was convened in Savannah Georgia in 1751. That year, a group of 16 landowners prepared a list of their colony's needs and grievances. They established a precedent and created an expectation that they would have some voice in how their colony was governed.

Twenty-five years later, Thomas Jefferson would write in the American Declaration of Independence that a legitimate government is one that derives its powers from the consent of the governed. After citing the "laws of Nature and Nature's God" in the first paragraph, Jefferson wrote:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

This remarkable document refined and expanded upon the ideas that had been put forth in the Magna Carta. It set a high standard – one that had never been realized in the history of the world.

And of course, the United States didn't live up to that standard, either. Thomas Jefferson owned slaves – and millions of black men, women and children lived in America as property, not citizens, before slavery was finally abolished. The abolition of slavery was the greatest milestone in the continuing struggle to expand human rights in the United States – and to live up to the lofty words in our Declaration of Independence.

Other important milestones were the battle for women's suffrage; the Civil Rights Movement; several amendments to the US Constitution; and key Supreme Court decisions, such as the 1954 ruling in Brown vs. the Board of Education. Of all these historic events, the one that affected me most directly was the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.

The Movement had many great leaders, but the greatest of all was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He was the son of a preacher who followed his father to the pulpit – and helped lead our nation closer to realizing the ideals of freedom that had been foreshadowed in the Magna Carta, and made explicit in our Declaration of Independence.

In April of 1963, Dr. King was arrested in Birmingham, Alabama, where he had been arrested after a peaceful protest against segregation.

After the demonstration, eight white clergymen in Birmingham wrote a statement in which they agreed with the demonstrators that segregation was wrong, but urged them to wage their fight in the courts, not in the streets.

King's response was titled "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." It was the cover article for The New Leader magazine, and it became one of the most important documents of the Civil Rights Movement. In the letter, Dr. King quotes Saint Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. He explains that some laws are unjust, and that one has, quote, "a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws."



One day the South will know that when these disinherited children of God sat down at lunch counters, they were in reality standing up for what is best in the American dream and for the most sacred values in our Judeo-Christian heritage, thereby bringing our nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the founding fathers in their formulation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

Clearly, Dr. King's thinking was firmly rooted in the same tradition from which the Magna Carta sprang. And because that tradition is the foundation of freedom, his words resonated with the American people. Although he was arrested many times ... although his home was bombed ... and although he would die at the hands of an assassin almost forty years to the day ... his ideas could not be killed. The Civil Rights Movement struck a chord in the American soul. It permeated not only our politics but our culture. Almost eight centuries after King John put his seal on the Magna Carta, free men were still fighting for their freedom.

The story of America has been the struggle to achieve the lofty ideals of our Declaration of Independence. That document didn't just say that free men were entitled to life and liberty. It added something else – the pursuit of happiness. As we built our country, we came to realize that freedom must go hand in hand with the opportunity to realize one's dreams.

Today we have achieved equal freedom – but we are still fighting for equal opportunity. Nowhere is that more apparent than in our public education system. Until the 1840s, our school system was largely private and unorganized. Then, reformers like Horace Mann began to call for universal public education. By the beginning of the 20th Century the idea was well established – but it still applied mostly to primary education.

By 1918, every state required students to complete at least an elementary education. But secondary education remained the province of the elite. Finally, child labor laws and changing attitudes opened the doors of secondary schools to the children of working families. But the doctrine of "separate but equal" meant that we didn't really have universal education. It meant

we had one standard for white children, and another for black children. That doctrine was struck down by our Supreme Court 52 years ago. But no court ruling could wipe out the effects of generations of prejudice and poverty.

And so today, we are still battling the vestiges of inequality. African American students in the United States are significantly less likely than their white counterparts to go on to college and an achievement gap is growing into a chasm. Bridging this gap is one of the greatest challenges facing our nation today – the next step in our journey toward realizing the ideals of freedom and opportunity. How will we meet this challenge?

Where will we find the kind of socially minded activists and reflective practitioners that understand what is truly at stake?

A great teacher is not only a molder of young minds, but also a shepherd of young spirits and an inspiration to young hearts. Unfortunately, while teaching can be extremely rewarding, it is also challenging. And the compensation is often not enough to attract and keep our best and brightest young people.

The need for good teachers is critical. About one million teachers in the United States are approaching retirement age. And a lot of young teachers – as many as one-third – quit the profession after just a few years. I wish the children of our country could force our political leaders to agree to a "Great Charter" that guaranteed their rights – just as the English nobility forced King John to affix his seal on the Magna Carta in 1215.

But for this moment I would also be happy if teachers in our country had more opportunities to reflect on the long unfinished journey of democracy and the struggle for human rights. I hope this week provides that for you.

You were chosen from a large pool of applicants because you not only articulated why you thought participating in this project is important for you ...you proposed ways of expanding the conversations and learning that happens here so that others may take part and add their voices to the discussion. You wrote about the work you envisioned ahead.

Listen to some excerpts from your essays....

*I see this experience as a way of empowering and motivating students to take action resulting in positive effects in my local community.*

*Today, as educators examine the widespread human rights abuses in England, the US and other parts of the world, it seems the need to review the original intent of this famous historical document takes on a contemporary urgency.*

*I see this as a unique opportunity for me to help my disadvantaged students gain a greater appreciation of diversity, justice and humanity.*

*When the writ of habeas corpus is suspended, citizens are pawns to dictator whims. I can appreciate the importance of the Magna Carta and the right and freedoms it protects because I have seen firsthand how these freedoms have been withheld in other countries.*

*King John's seal on the Magna Carta in 1215 enshrined rules of law that protect the individual rights of over two billion people against State sponsored oppression. [I look] to bring the core ideas of human rights back to my students so that they may better understand that implicit in their freedom is the challenge to defend the liberty of the oppressed.*

It is not every day that I can drop what I am doing in the NEA and spend a week with ten of our most committed and inspirational members. But in my discussions with my colleagues in NEA and NUT it became apparent that we needed to do something out of the ordinary.

On both sides of the Atlantic, our curricula are narrowing; our social foundations classes are disappearing; and the civic purposes of education are disappearing. We are becoming less concerned about educating an informed and critical thinking citizenry and more about test scores. So I think you'll agree that this experience is timely and well, something out of the ordinary. But, in order for it to be

extraordinary it will require that each of you be open and authentic with each other.

You are all knowledgeable and phenomenal teacher professionals with portfolios considerably thicker than most high school history books. You know your students and you know your subject areas. You enjoy the respect of your peers and your students. You know that the Magna Carta is as much an artifact to be studied as it is a tool and touchstone for a larger discussion about democratic principles, human rights and civic duty.

I will not be able to tell you how this will speak back to standard x.3 of your state curricular standards. I won't be able to tell you how best to pitch an interdisciplinary unit to your colleagues. But, I feel confident that together, teachers together, we can help each other develop ideas, suggestions and build conceptual frameworks that will transcend what we could do alone. I believe that the work you begin here in Stoke Rochford almost 800 years after the Magna Carta, will be a significant contribution to a small but growing body of work and resources for teachers on both sides of the Atlantic that is rooted in the past, influencing the present and actively constructing the future. Thank you.



**NOTE:** Christine Blower, NUT Acting General Secretary, welcomed delegates to the NUT training centre, Stoke Rochford Hall. Christine went on to summarise the programme's objectives, which Steve Sinnott had passionately supported.

"The NUT," she stated, "would continue to support the programme and to ensure its success."

Christine participated in the mornings activities which included examples of classroom based activities related to human rights.



# Imagining Britain, an introduction for our NEA guests by Robin Richardson

Monday 14 April 2008

## Introduction

1. The Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, whose report was published in autumn 2000, had 23 members, many of them academics. Inevitably they spent quite a lot of time in the early days on semantics. What do these key words 'ethnic' and 'multi' mean, and what therefore does the term 'multi-ethnic' refer to? How long, exactly how long, is the future? Academics then wonder and worry, of course, about words such as 'the' and 'of'. It was some time before the Commission realised that the most problematic word in its terms of reference was 'Britain'.

2. 'The British,' said the editors of Political Quarterly in the first issue of their journal in the twenty-first century, 'have long been distinguished by having no clear idea of who they are, what they are or where they are. Most of them have routinely described England as Britain. Only business people talk about a United Kingdom ... It is all a terrible muddle.'

3. 'Stories,' the Nigerian-born British poet Ben Okri has said, 'are the secret reservoir of values: change the stories individuals and nations live by and tell themselves and you change the individuals and nations. Nations and peoples are largely the stories they feed themselves. If they tell themselves stories that are lies, they will suffer the future consequences of those lies. If they tell themselves stories that face their own truths, they will free their histories for future flowerings.'

## The name of a country

4. Muddles are disorienting, entrapping, depressing and scary. But also they can be challenging, intriguing, energising and exciting – they can be glorious as well as terrible, and

stories about them can free the future, in Okri's phrase, for future flowerings. Getting to grips with issues of democracy, human rights and justice involves getting to grips also with the muddle to which the name of a country refers.

5. The name of a country, the point is, refers not only to a geographical territory, and not only to a nation state with its own institutions, government and jurisdiction, but also a set of pictures, stories and sayings in people's imaginations. A country, it has been said, is an 'imagined community'. No one has visited every part of it and no one has met face-to-face all its citizens. But all have a mental picture of it and a sense of its history, and all have a sense of who really belongs, and of who essentially does not belong.

## A best-seller

6. In the 1990s, the best-selling non-fiction book in Britain was Notes from a Small Island by the American author Bill Bryson. He depicted Britain as an endearingly eccentric place some of the time, and as essentially welcoming, friendly and calm most of the time. He mentioned a handful of criticisms – urban planners insufficiently respectful of tradition, a bossy landlady who interfered with his freedom, a waitress who did not understand him, an inflexible official, someone with a passionate interest he did not himself share – but basically he found Britain wholly lovable. No wonder the book was a bestseller in Britain itself. This is how he summed it all up:

Suddenly, in the space of a moment, I realised what it was that I loved about Britain – which is to say, all of it. Every last bit of it, good and bad – Marmite, village fetes, country lanes, people saying 'mustn't grumble' and 'I'm terribly sorry but', people apologising to me when I conk them

with a careless elbow, milk in bottles, beans on toast, haymaking in June, stinging nettles, seaside piers, Ordnance Survey maps, crumpets, hot-water bottles as a necessity, drizzly Sundays – every bit of it ... What other nation in the world could have given us William Shakespeare, pork pies, Christopher Wren, Windsor Great Park, the Open University, Gardeners' Question Time, and the chocolate digestive biscuit? None, of course.

## Excluding

7. A beguiling list, but also remarkably limited and excluding. Consider who and what it leaves out. For a start, it omits Scotland and Wales – the author claims to be writing about Britain (the 'small island' of his title), but much of this list, as indeed most of the book itself, is limited to England. Further, the list is limited in effect to the rural southern counties. It leaves out the distinctive identities and needs of most of the English regions, as also the urban and institutional life which is the daily experience of the vast majority of British people. Also, it leaves out the third of the population who are, by the government's own figures, classified as living in poverty – most of these are unlikely to think of Gardeners' Question Time and Ordnance Survey maps as epitomising their country.

8. Equally Bryson leaves out all or most people in Britain who have close family or community links with Africa, Bangladesh, the Caribbean, China, India, Ireland or Pakistan. There is barely anything in the list which resonates with their experience and perception of the land where they live. The references to Windsor Great Park and Christopher Wren evoke a national story which excludes them, or which relegates them to subservient and marginal walk-on roles. Apart from the references to stinging nettles and careless elbows, Bryson leaves out all conflicts, difficulties and tensions, both in the present and in the past – his account is both apolitical and ahistorical.

## Grand narrative

9. The grand narrative underlying Bryson's picture has four salient aspects. First, British history goes back a long, long way. Second, it is a story of continuity, an unbroken chain over the

centuries in which tradition not transition has been the dominant motif. Third, it is in consequence a story of calmness, gentleness and peace. Fourth, all people in Britain feel much the same about living here, and always have done. These four points can be summarised with the belief that Britain has, and always has had, *unus rex, unus lex and unus grex* – one monarch (rex), one legal system (lex) and one sense of community (grex, meaning 'flock'). In point of fact it was not until 1801 that the United Kingdom, consisting of the four nations of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, had a single monarch; the legal system in Scotland is still, even today, different in significant respects from the system in other parts of the UK; and there is increasing, not decreasing, uncertainty about who belongs to the flock and who does not.

## A wall chart

10. The dominant narrative about Britain is present in *The United Kingdom: Ten Centuries in the Making*, a wall-chart published in the 1990s by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The chart contains a clear statement verbally that the United Kingdom did not come into existence until 1801, and that in its current form it dates only since 1922. But the unmistakable message visually, communicated through the colouring, imagery, design and composition, is of a thousand years of unbroken history, symbolised by a single royal family down the centuries.

11. The poster marks, if you look closely, the civil war of the mid-seventeenth century. But otherwise it implies that the only political changes during the last thousand years have been the transitions from Norman to Plantagenet, and then from Plantagenet to Tudor, and so on. There is not a single visual reference to Ireland, Scotland or Wales, and the only verbal references to these other countries on the main part of the chart are to Ireland in the sixteenth century and to Wales in the thirteenth. The high-profile references to the British Empire have a hollow ring when considered alongside how Britain is seen in many other countries.

## Tensions and uncertainties

12. We live in a space that does not have an unbroken long story and which is not all gentleness and peace. There have been and are tensions and disagreements relating to class, region, nation, gender, age and religion. Tensions and uncertainties can only become more significant in years to come, with the mutually reinforcing pressures of globalization, European integration, devolution from Westminster and Whitehall, migration, relationship with the United States, and increased social and moral pluralism.

13. In recent years uncertainties about British identity have been expressed through demands for a 'citizenship test' to be taken by all immigrants seeking full rights. The kind of question that is asked in relation to law and the constitution is shown in the next section. When the BBC put the questions to a class of nine-year-olds, the children scored between them 8 out of 10.

14. Their headteacher, however, answering on her own, scored only 4.

# UK Citizenship Test

**Questions** (As devised by BBC Radio 4, 21 January 2006, answers overleaf)

1. **Which king had his powers curbed by the Magna Carta?**  
a) Alfred the Great      b) Charles I      c) John
2. **Which year did all women over 21 get the vote in Britain?**  
a) 1945      b) 1900      c) 1928
3. **Which three branches of the authority need to agree to a law before it can come into force?**  
a) The House of Commons, Lord Chancellor and the Queen  
b) The House of Commons, the Lords and the Queen  
c) The Prime Minister, the Cabinet and the police
4. **Are you a**  
a) subject of the Crown      b) citizen of the Crown      c) defender of the Crown
5. **Why is the Union Jack made up of its particular colours?**  
a) It was chosen by Henry VIII  
b) It's made up of the flags of St George of England, St Patrick of Ireland and St Andrew of Scotland  
c) It's made up of the flags of England and the flags of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of Mercia and Wessex
6. **Is a man allowed to punish his wife physically as long as it's in his own home?**  
a) Yes, although, not with any recognised weapon  
b) Yes, though only under provocation  
c) No
7. **Which English monarch broke away from the Roman Catholic Church?**  
a) Charles      b) Elizabeth I      c) Henry VIII
8. **Who was the only politician in British history to abolish parliament?**  
a) Cromwell      b) Gladstone      c) Churchill
9. **What did Guy Fawkes famously fail to do?**  
a) Blow up Buckingham Palace  
b) Blow up the Houses of Parliament  
c) Blow up 10 Downing Street
10. **How long can a British government stay in office before a general election?**  
a) 4 years      b) 6 years      c) 5 years

**Background:** The BBC Today Programme invited a politician (Barry Sheerman MP), a historian (Andrew Roberts), a race equality specialist (Trevor Phillips), a Muslim journalist (Zara Joseph) and an economist (Madsen Pirie) to devise these questions, to test the knowledge of British law, history and constitution by potential UK citizens.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/today/reports/archive/politics/citizenship.shtml#>

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## Answers

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**1. Which king had his powers curbed by the Magna Carta?**

The answer is John. His name during his lifetime, incidentally, was Jean, not John, for he was French.

**2. Which year did all women over 21 get the vote in Britain?**

The answer is 1928. The decision to extend the franchise, however, was made in 1918. There were about six female MPs before women actually voted.

**3. Which three branches of the authority need to agree to a law before it can come into force?**

The answer is the House of Commons, the Lords and the Queen. The Lords frequently make amendments to proposed legislation, but when there is disagreement between Lords and Commons the view of the Commons prevails – in practice, though not constitutionally. The role of the monarch is purely symbolic and does not involve her or him personally.

**4. Are you a a) subject of the Crown, b) citizen of the Crown, c) defender of the Crown?**

The answer is that strictly speaking the British are subjects, not citizens.

**5. Why is the Union Jack made up of its particular colours?**

The answer is that it's made up of the flags of St George of England, St Patrick of Ireland and St Andrew of Scotland. It was created in 1801. Subsequently (1923) the country now known as Ireland (as distinct from Northern Ireland) left the United Kingdom.

**6. Is a man allowed to punish his wife physically as long as it's in his own home?**

The answer is No. It is arguably worrying, or indeed very worrying, that the experts who phrased this question thought it worth asking.

**7. Which English monarch broke away from the Roman Catholic Church?**

The answer is Henry VIII. The break occurred in the 1530s and the monarch's motivation was secular not religious. As individuals, not all English people converted. Within the Church of England to this day, there are individuals whose practice and beliefs are barely distinguishable from those of members of the Roman Catholic Church.

**8. Who was the only politician in British history to abolish parliament?**

The answer is Oliver Cromwell (mid 17th century).

**9. What did Guy Fawkes famously fail to do?**

The answer is that Guido Fawkes, known after his death as Guy, failed with his fellow-conspirators to blow up the Houses of Parliament. The year was 1605 and the day was 5 November. Nowadays, 'Guy Fawkes Day', as it is known, is widely celebrated by children with bonfires and (especially) fireworks. Fawkes and his fellow conspirators were Catholics and did not want a Protestant monarch (James I) on the English throne.

**10. How long can a British government stay in office before a general election?**

The answer is five years. Most governments, however, last rather less than this. Typically, the government of the day calls an election when it judges it has the best chance of winning – usually after about four years.

# Magna Carta – an icon for the twenty first century?

**Professor Mike West, Chancellor of Lincoln**

It is my profound belief that the Great Charter that emerged from the conflict between King John and the barons at Runnymede in 1215 changed the world. The seeds of freedom and democracy that were sown in England at that time were to bear fruit in the instruments of the French Revolution, the United States Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. It is my contention that Magna Carta has not lost its power as the centuries have passed and it stands today as an icon of freedom and a foundational document for the democratic process. It challenges our society to live up to the highest ideals in political, social and religious life and demands our attention as we address the challenges of the twenty first century.

I believe that Magna Carta has the power to challenge individuals, societies and world governments because of its iconic status. And that iconic status has emerged over the centuries. Now I am a theologian by trade and I do not use the word 'icon' lightly. I note that the dictionary definition of the word now includes 'a person regarded as a sex symbol' and, 'a pictorial representation of a facility available on a computer that can be implemented by a cursor'. However, my understanding of the word goes back to the early centuries of the Christian Church. In the Greek language, icon is one of the words that we would translate as image. Therefore in the Greek Bible man is made 'according to the icon (image) and likeness of God' in Genesis 1:26, and, in Colossians 1:15, Christ is 'the icon (image) of the invisible God'. Of course when we think of religious icons we bring to mind those painted images of Christ, the Saints or Mary, Mother of God that are one of the great legacies of Byzantine art. However, we should note that they were not just considered to be sacred art. They were deemed by the Church to express in visual form the central doctrines of the Christian faith. Byzantine art was constructed so that the lines of perspective drew the person

who gazed upon it into the scene it represented. So a religious icon was, and indeed still is, deemed to be an act of devotion that provides a window onto the divine. There is an intimate relationship between the image and the reality it represents, between the person who created it, the people who interpret it and the shared understanding that they have of its power to change lives.

I believe that icons, whether religious or not, exist only in relationship to the situation that gave them birth and to the contexts in which they are interpreted. This is true of texts in general of course. They can never be only the possession of those who created them. There is a wonderfully poetic moment in the fourth book of Rabelais's 'Gargantua and Pantagruel'. Pantagruel is far out to sea when he hears words spoken but cannot see the speaker. It transpires that these are words that have been frozen the previous winter and had not become audible until the coming of good weather. Texts need the warming influence of human interest and commitment before they can live and be heard. Indeed, texts like religious icons can only exist when there is a relationship between those who gave them birth and those who interpret them anew in each generation. Texts are not merely historical documents that can be interpreted only in the context in which they were written. Texts live for us when we bring our experience to bear upon them and upon the ways in which they have been interpreted by previous generations.

And this is true of Magna Carta. If the 1215 text is iconic it is because of the extra-ordinary events that helped to create it and the way that those events have been interpreted through the years. We know that the text of the Magna Carta of 1215 was not as unique as many people imagine. It owed much to a Charter of Liberties issued by Henry I in 1100 and was reissued three times in various forms in the reign of Henry III before



being confirmed by Edward I in 1297. The iconic power of Magna Carta lay not so much in the detail of the text as in the symbolic nature of the events at Runnymede. These had embedded themselves in the people's consciousness and in the way they have interpreted the text. Therefore when the parliamentarians found themselves in conflict with King Charles I in the seventeenth century, it was to the 1215 Magna Carta that they turned. This was because, as the conflict between King and Parliament came to a head, the parliamentarians imagined themselves confronting Charles I just as the barons had confronted King John at Runnymede. And they used the Magna Carta to argue, in their generation, for a parliamentary system of government that not only enshrined the rights that the barons won in 1215, but extended them to all male subjects of the crown.

Edward Coke was significant in the way he interpreted Magna Carta at this time and once asserted that 'Magna Carta is such a fellow that he will have no sovereign'. For Coke and his supporters, the 1215 Magna Carta represented the best way of claiming parliamentary supremacy over the authority of the crown. Indeed, it came to be seen not only as a way of confronting the authority of King Charles I, but as a document restoring ancient English rights, dating from a supposed 'Golden Age' before the Norman conquest of 1066.

It is undoubtedly true that the content of the Magna Carta was much less significant than the way that it came to be perceived in the popular mind. Although only three statutes remain in English law that can be traced back to Magna Carta, it is clear that its influence on the thinking of men like Coke meant that the Great Charter was critical in the way in which Britain's parliamentary democracy developed. It is also not surprising that, when the first English settlers made the hazardous journey across the Atlantic to colonize the New World, they took Coke's interpretation of Magna Carta with them.

It is therefore true to say that Magna Carta was actively present at the birth of two great democratic systems, that of Britain and the United States. It has also played its part in the

constitutional development of those countries that began life as British colonies or who were subject to British rule, like Canada, India, New Zealand and Australia. Indeed, in 1952 the Australian Government bought a copy of the 1297 Magna Carta issued by Edward I on the basis that it constituted an important part of Australia's constitutional and legal history.

Parliamentary democracy was born in Britain out of the conflict of the Civil War but was part of a process that had evolved over centuries. Even today the United Kingdom has no written constitution. Its laws are now proposed and enacted by the two houses of Parliament, the Commons and the Lords, where final executive power resides. Although the Monarch retains certain constitutional powers, including the right to dissolve parliament and the right to appoint Prime Ministers and Archbishops, these are not now exercised outside parliament's control. The American judge Justice Bradley, giving a judgment in Louisiana in 1873 noted that,

'England has no written constitution, it is true, but it has an unwritten one, resting on the acknowledged and frequently declared privileges of Parliament and the people, to violate which in any material respect would produce a revolution in an hour'.

In 1787 the new United States of America gave a model constitution to the developing world. It marked a settlement of conflict and inaugurated a new era of freedom under the law. In many ways the constitution was seen to be an act of completion, a final settlement in which political definitions, principles and processes were agreed. For many years both constitutional systems have been held up as exemplars of democratic government. They were of course of their time and it would be true to say that those who constructed the American Constitution failed to consider the wishes and needs of indigenous peoples, African Americans and women, deemed at the time to be represented by their men-folk. Also, in the United Kingdom women have fought long and hard for the vote and immigrants from the once extensive British Empire have suffered widespread discrimination. In both nations there is concern about the

increased power of the executive over those who have been democratically elected and about a decrease in the rights and freedom of the individual in the light of a real and perceived terrorist threat. There are also concerns about the status and voice of immigrant groups and migrant workers. Clearly democracy is an ongoing project and one that is facing fresh challenges today. Clearly also, that iconic document that was present at the birth of these two great democracies, the Great Charter of 1215, will be an important rallying cry in that cause.

In 1787 Alexander Hamilton wondered whether, 'societies are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection or choice or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident and force'. It remains an interesting issue. The British and American constitutions were born, partly at least, out of conflict and war, and the world today is full of nations in which peaceful debate about constitutional change is difficult and demanding. However, there are some examples of good practice. The South African Constitution of 1996 is widely regarded as a model constitutional text for the twenty first century. This is partly because the government was able to find ways in which it could give a voice to every section of its population before, during and after the new constitution was finalized. It also gave itself time to undertake the process thoroughly. The recent constitutional discussions in Canada have taken seriously the rights of women and indigenous peoples and examples of new and open processes in constitutional change can be found in Nicaragua, Brazil, Uganda, Eritrea and Rwanda. The constitutional review process in Kenya has as its stated goal 'a people driven review process whose final product will be a people owned constitution'.

Now it is clear that many of these processes will be fragile and many will not succeed in achieving their goals. However, the aspiration to create democratic constitutions through truly democratic process is an ideal that is supported by international law that encompasses social inclusion, personal security and freedom of speech. It is surely also in that line of thinking

which found birth in the Magna Carta of 1215. It also challenges the more mature democracies like America and the United Kingdom to rethink their own practice and to engage in a process of mutual learning that will enable the voices of all their people to be heard afresh in the development of their national lives. For many people in the United Kingdom and in America, Iraq serves as an unfortunate reminder that the spread of democracy lies uncomfortably with forced regime change, military occupation, a plausible exit strategy and therefore a restricted time frame for constitutional development, whatever the motives for good.

Clause 39 of Magna Carta declares, 'No free man shall be arrested, or imprisoned, or deprived of his property, or outlawed, or exiled or in any way destroyed, nor shall we go against him or send against him, unless by legal judgement of his peers, or by the law of the land'.

This clause is rightly seen as a declaration which, although written at a particular time for a particular context, resonates down the centuries and makes Magna Carta a powerful icon of freedom. Freedom of course has many contexts. The most enduring and the most direct legacy of Magna Carta is the right of Habeas Corpus, a right which arises from Clauses 36, 38, 39 and 40 of the 1215 Charter and states that a person should not be imprisoned or held in custody without a fair trial.

These rights find further expression in Article 3 of the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights' which states that, 'everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person'. One of the institutions that has put a lasting stain on the reputation of both the United Kingdom and the United States has been their involvement in the slave trade.

From about 1619 until 1865 people of African descent were legally enslaved within the present United States of America and merchants from the United Kingdom were heavily involved in the trade from the sixteenth century. In the United Kingdom the campaign to abolish the slave trade was led by Sir William Wilberforce. An evangelical Christian, he was motivated by a



strong sense that the slave trade was morally reprehensible and against natural justice. He campaigned for its abolition from the late eighteenth century but was not successful until the Slave Trade Act received royal assent on March 25 1807. The struggle to outlaw slavery would not finally come to fruition in the United States until Abraham Lincoln's Emancipatory Proclamation of January 1st 1863 made the abolition of slavery an aim of the American Civil War. The last slaves were not however finally freed in the South until the surrender of all Confederate troops in spring 1865.

It is likely that both Abraham Lincoln and William Wilberforce would be horrified by the extent to which slavery still exists in our world today. As a legally permitted labour system, traditional slavery has been abolished everywhere if not completely stamped out. However, today the word 'slavery' covers a variety of human rights issues that include the sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography, the exploitation of child labour, the use of children in armed conflict, debt bondage, sex trafficking and the exploitation of prostitution. Slavery-like practices are often clandestine but evidence compiled by the United Nations human rights bodies suggests that these practices are vast and widespread.

Child labour is in great demand. Many children between seven and ten years old are forced to work up to fourteen hours a day for a wage that is less than a third of the adult rate. Some are kidnapped, held in remote camps and chained at night to prevent their escape. They are put to work on road-building and quarrying. The forcible recruitment of children into military service has been reported in many parts of the world and many have died or left permanently disabled and badly traumatized.

Women are vulnerable to many forms of slavery and abuse in our society today. The recruitment, transport and exploitation of women as prostitutes in a number of countries is of particular concern. Women are often groomed for the growing sex markets in Japan, Europe or North America through the offer of waitressing, secretarial, packing or entertainment work and

find themselves in effective bondage to their masters. It is a business estimated to be worth about £12 billion globally and slave sales are being held in bars, basements, airport lounges and streets across Europe and North America.

The Magna Carta of 1215 promoted a concept of liberty that has resonated throughout history. Slavery takes many forms and the unlawful imprisonment and torture of individuals throughout our world is roundly condemned by all charters and proclamations that promote human rights. Those who gained freedom from slavery have found the road to full citizenship difficult and challenging. In recent generations those who fought for civil rights for black Americans and those who challenged apartheid in South Africa have sought to promote the truth that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. However, in both the United Kingdom and America questions have been asked in recent years about the imprisonment without trial of foreign nationals, terrorist suspects and asylum seekers.

Over the centuries Magna Carta has been a friend to those peoples who have been persecuted by the state and have had their rights curtailed by various kinds of abuse and have suffered various forms of slavery. Magna Carta challenges us today lest we perpetrate these abuses on those who we feel are not worthy of the dignity and rights due to them as individuals. And it also challenges us to be vigilant lest our own governments curtail our own freedom in the name of national security.

Clause 1 of the 1215 Magna Carta guarantees the independence of the English Church. From the time that Constantine had converted to Christianity and it had become the official religion of the Roman Empire in the fourth century there was tension between Church and State. In the Eastern Roman Empire, also known as the Byzantine Empire, the Emperor had supreme power over the church and controlled its highest representative, the Patriarch of Constantinople. Orthodoxy was the state religion. However, in the West the growth in the authority of the Papacy led to ongoing tensions between Church and State across Western Europe.

This was the context in which the independence of the Church was established in Magna Carta. It was to be independent of the authority of the King, but reliant on the authority of the Pope. Subsequent history was destined to challenge this. Following a dispute with the Pope over his divorce from Catherine of Aragon, King Henry VIII pronounced himself head of the Church in England in 1534. Henry was a convinced Catholic and was not influenced in his decision by protestant ideas that were entering England from Europe. However, in the years that followed, Protestants and Catholics vied for the heart and mind of the English Nation until Elizabeth I united the Church of England around an Act of Uniformity in 1559 that gave her supreme authority over the Church and forbade the use of any services not authorized by Archbishop Cranmer's newly constructed 'Book of Common Prayer'. From this time Catholics were unable to worship legally in England and were barred from public office. Following the Act of Uniformity in 1662 under Charles II, those unable to conform to this act (the non-conformists) found themselves in a similar position. These acts were not fully repealed until the nineteenth century.

Although people from many different Christian denominations settled in the New World, perhaps the most influential group were the Puritans. They were members of the Church of England who travelled to the new colonies in order to gain the freedom of worship that they believed was denied them in their home country. They were by and large patriotic Englishmen who shared a common religious heritage with the Church of England. However, they energetically opposed its retention of the (Catholic) ministry of bishops and priests declaring that there should be no intermediaries between God and man. There is no doubt that the Puritans were pioneers of religious freedom, and many flocked to the New World in order to be free to follow their own version of the Christian faith. The Plymouth Colony was therefore founded by Separatists, the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations was founded by Baptists and the Province of Pennsylvania by Quakers. The Province of Maryland was initially founded by Irish Catholics

and Catholics were tolerated in East and West Florida when it was ceded to Great Britain by Spain in 1763.

The founding fathers of the United States of America were persuaded that the only way to maintain this religious freedom was to make a clear separation between Church and State. Thomas Jefferson was clear that the new constitution had effectively built a wall between Church and State by which both could flourish more effectively and in an 1811 letter to the Baptist Churches, James Madison declared that the, 'practical distinction between Religion and Civil Government is essential to the purity of both'. The state would sponsor no particular religious tradition and every citizen would be free to exercise their chosen faith.

Today, many Western democratic nations place a high importance on the separation of the institutions of Church and State. Some nations, such as the United States, Australia and Canada have specific clauses in their constitutions which are widely interpreted as forbidding the government from favouring one religion over another. Other democracies such as England have a constitutionally established state religion which is now inclusive of all Christian denominations.

In our global age the establishment of open and creative relationships between Religious Faith and Civil Government is more critical than ever. Today, all forms of religious life are subject to radicalization by fundamentalist teaching and militaristic fervour. Christians are subject to persecution in Islamic states and Muslims are subject to persecution in Western societies whose democracies were formed within the Christian tradition. The persecution of Jews through the centuries was to reach its awful climax in the Nazi death camps in the Second World War and the holocaust has left an indelible scar on the consciousness of the whole of humanity. However, anti-Semitism is still rife in many countries of the world and the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine in 1948 is still the root cause of many international disputes today as Jews, Muslims and Christians confront each other across the Holy Land.

Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares that everybody has the right to 'freedom of thought, conscience and religion'. This declaration stands in a line of charters and declarations that began with the Magna Carta in 1215. In our world today there are questions about the way in which religious faith can or should support responsible citizenship and the ways in which it can or should be able to influence government policy. The right of each individual to freely embrace a religious faith is balanced by a responsibility to support the democratic right of others to express their own faith in a different way and to join together in the establishment of appropriate forms of citizenship that are mutually rewarding.

To gaze on Magna Carta is to encounter a document that has changed the world. Rather like the religious icons within the Byzantine tradition to stand before Magna Carta is to be drawn into that community of people who have used it to promote their understanding of the world and the values which support it. As an icon of democracy and a foundation document for freedom it underpins the written and unwritten constitutions of the world's great democracies. It stands at the beginning of a journey that has taken humanity from the confrontation between King John and his Barons in the beginning of the thirteenth century to the global issues facing the world at the beginning of the twenty first century.

As the Chancellor of Lincoln Cathedral it is my privilege to be one of those people charged with the care of one of the four remaining copies of Magna Carta. Lincoln Cathedral has been the home of Magna Carta since it was sent to Bishop Hugh in 1215. For most of that time it has been housed in the magnificent Cathedral Library. I still live in the Chancery in the close at Lincoln where Chancellors have lived continuously since 1340. In the very early days the books and documents owned by the Cathedral Library were kept in great wooden chests in my house and Magna Carta might well have been among those documents in my predecessors' direct care.

In truth we can't be certain exactly where Magna Carta has spent much of its time in our care although we do know that it spent some time during the last century framed and hung up on the Chapter Clerk's wall. Indeed, elderly members of the Cathedral congregation remember being shown Magna Carta and actually holding it in their hands.

Today Magna Carta lives in its high tech environmentally controlled secure display case in Lincoln Castle when it is not on tour but the visually stunning Mediaeval and Wren libraries remain a treasure house containing 270 other mediaeval manuscripts and an impressive collection of rare printed books that attract visitors and scholars from all over the world.

The Cathedral believes that it has a sacred responsibility to make its collections available to a wide public. By taking the Magna Carta to different venues throughout the world we are committed to stimulating a wide ranging debate on the future of freedom and democracy among people of all ages and nationalities. As you know Magna Carta is currently in the Constitution Centre here in Philadelphia. We are hoping that it will then visit other centres in the United States and we are seeking individuals and institutions that are prepared to journey with us in this challenging task of interpreting Magna Carta for today's generation. It is my hope, as Chancellor of Lincoln and the person charged with the educational outreach work of the Cathedral, to find individuals and institutions committed to working with us in this task. I would like to see schools from the United Kingdom and the United States joining together to learn about issues of citizenship that confront both our nations. I would like to see student exchanges, conferences, scholarships, student placements, joint exhibitions, academic research. And indeed we have been able to organise an international conference in Lincoln next June with the title, 'Walking with Magna Carta: The Future of Freedom and Democracy in the Twenty First Century'. We are hoping that individuals and delegates from many different groups in the USA and in the UK will join us for this exciting event which is being planned for both adults and young people.

Magna Carta is but one of Lincoln's treasures and we are prepared to put all its resources at the disposal of this important project. We are used to thinking of the United Kingdom and the United States as being in a special relationship. We say with humour that we are two peoples, divided by a common language, but we would be wise to recognise our common heritage and to find ways in which we can strengthen this at this present time. Many of the first settlers came from Lincolnshire and would have been used to gazing on the great Cathedral that stands proudly on the only hill in the county.

Magna Carta will soon be 800 years old but it has not lost its power as the centuries have passed. Many groups have claimed its allegiance but none can ever own it. It does not belong to any political party or religious group. It does not belong to Republicans, Democrats, Socialists, Conservatives or Liberal Democrats. It will walk with you only as long as you tread the path of freedom and democracy and it will challenge you when you fail to live up to those lofty standards. Indeed, as I said at the beginning of this lecture, it is needed more than ever today to challenge our society to live up to the very highest ideals in political, social and religious life. That is why it is truly iconic and why it is more important today than it ever has been.

I will leave you with the words of Judge Learned Hand, spoken in 1944:

"I often wonder whether we do not rest our hopes too much upon constitutions, upon laws, upon courts. These are false hopes. Believe me those are false hopes. Liberty lives in the hearts of men and women; when it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it."

This is the real, iconic power of Magna Carta. Although its virtues are enshrined in both our legal and political systems, it lives first and foremost, as it has always done, in the hearts and minds of free people everywhere. It is our job to make sure that this remains the case in the twenty first century.

# Interpreting Magna Carta

## Professor Mike West

### An icon for freedom and democracy

Magna Carta is a powerful icon of freedom and democracy in our world today. It is a document that was created to resolve a dispute between King John and the Barons at Runnymede in Southern England in 1215 and, following three further reissues in the reign of Henry III, was incorporated into English law in 1297 by Edward I. However, the Great Charter was to sow seeds of freedom and justice under the law that would flower in later generations.

### Present at the birth of two great democracies

Under the influence of Sir Edward Coke and his companions, Magna Carta became a key way for Parliamentarians to confront the authority of Charles I in the fight for the development of parliamentary democracy in England in the seventeenth century.

Magna Carta then travelled to the New World in the hearts and minds of the first British settlers and became a rallying cry for the American colonists in their fight for independence from the British crown. It was later incorporated into many of the early colonial charters and was woven into the American Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

### Jus cogens

Magna Carta has rightly been described as jus cogens, part of a body of higher or compelling law of overriding significance to the international community. Certainly, a line that runs from Magna Carta can be traced through the instruments of the French Revolution and the United States Constitution to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

### The Magna Carta today – icon or idol?

Magna Carta is used by the UK and the USA governments to support citizenship and promote the British and American ways of life and systems of government. However, Magna Carta also challenges those same governments to act in the highest traditions of us jus cogens, compelling international law. Magna Carta can be used in both the UK and the USA as an icon of freedom and an idol of Government.

### The rule of law

Chapter 39 of Magna Carta has grown to embody fundamental principles of law that include Habeas Corpus, trial by jury, the primacy of the rule of law and the prohibition of torture. Today it challenges all governments when they move to curtail human rights by detaining citizens without trial, condone torture or curtail the individual's rights or freedoms.

### Democracy

The Great Charter has been used in Britain and America to promote and support democratic systems of government and is still heralded as a foundational document for freedom and democracy. Today it challenges all governments to look critically at their own democratic processes and at the ways in which they encourage democratic development in others.

## **Freedom from slavery**

Magna Carta has been used by abolitionists to combat slavery in both Britain and America and continues to be an icon of hope for groups that are oppressed in our world today. Today it challenges societies all over the world to identify and address issues of slavery wherever they are found.

## **Deforestation**

Together with the Charter of the Forest (1217), Magna Carta preserved the rights of commoners (an indigenous people) to use the forests and therefore the common lands of England for subsistence. This often neglected aspect of Magna Carta speaks to indigenous peoples today who have lost their ancestral land or are in the process of doing so.

## **Freedom of religion**

Chapter 1 of Magna Carta established the freedom of the English church from state interference and this has grown to enshrine the rights of each individual to enjoy religious freedom. Today it challenges faith communities to examine the part they might play in the development of a liberal democracy and to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem in international relations.

# Magna Carta: frequently asked questions

## Lincoln Cathedral

1. **Is this the original Magna Carta?** There was no single original. This is one of a number of simultaneous sealed originals.
2. **How many 'originals' were there?** At least 41; one for each county and the cinque ports.
3. **How many other originals survive?** Three: one in Salisbury Cathedral and two in the British Library.
4. **Do they all say the same thing?** Yes, except for superficial drafting errors.
5. **Were they all written by the same person?** No, each is in an obviously different script.
6. **What material is Magna Carta written on?** Vellum i.e. calf skin
7. **What is the ink made of?** Probably lamp black, oak gall and gum Arabic
8. **How many words are on it?** About 3,500 words
9. **What language is it written in?** Short hand Medieval Latin
10. **Where is King John's signature?** It was never signed. It was authenticated by the King's seal, now lost.
11. **Where was the seal fixed?** It was fixed through the three holes at the bottom of the document on a braided lace.
12. **What was the seal made of?** Beeswax blended with resin
13. **How long was Magna Carta in force?** For about nine weeks until it was 'annulled' by the Pope on 24 August 1215.
14. **Was it ever re-issued?** Yes, in 1216, 1217 and 1225. It was eventually confirmed as English law in 1297.
15. **Were all the re-issues the same?** No, each was amended to suit the needs of the time.
16. **Is any part of Magna Carta still law?** Yes, chapters 1, 13, 39 and 40.
17. **When and how did Magna Carta reach Lincoln?** It probably reached Lincoln by 30 June 1215 with Bishop Hugh who had been at Runnymede.
18. **How do we know this is the original?** It has 'Lincolnia' written on the back in the same hand as the Charter, and there are also continuous records of it in Lincoln since 1215.
19. **Where has this Magna Carta been kept until now?** It remained in a cathedral office until 1939. It spent the war years in Fort Knox, USA, and has since been on display in the cathedral except for tours to the USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. It has been on display in Lincoln Castle since 1993.



# Teaching about human rights and democracy – Magna Carta as a reference point

## Activities

**Note:** The following activities may be done in groups of four who then break-off into larger groups and report back or they may be done in succession. It depends on the number of people and time allotted.

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### Paper 1: Introductions

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Please jot a few notes as a private aide-memoire.

#### The sights and sounds of home ...

Images and happenings in my mind's eye from the first six or so years of my life.

#### Going away

Treks, visits, travels or moves I have made.

#### Where I'm going back to

The professional situation(s) in which I hope to implement ideas from this week's seminar.



# Teaching about human rights and democracy – Magna Carta as a reference point

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## Paper 2: Four activities

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### A. (Paper 3) Some classroom investigations

You have descriptions of possible classroom activities using Magna Carta as a reference point. Give two descriptions at random to each member of the group.

Each person reads the two descriptions and then talks about at least one of them. How valuable does the activity sound? Might you do it yourself with your students? If so, how would you adapt and improve it?

Each selects a postcard from a collection to be provided, to help illustrate their report when they go back to the base group.

### B. (Paper 4) Generalizations across the curriculum

It's customary in curriculum planning to distinguish between facts, concepts and generalizations. You have six statements that are generalizations and that can be taught in all subjects K-12. They are relevant to teaching about Magna Carta, but do not mention it.

If you were giving a talk to colleagues on the theme of human rights and democracy, in what order would you mention these six generalizations? And how would you alter and improve them? How would you illustrate each, using postcards from a collection to be provided?

Each selects a postcard, to help illustrate their report when they go back to the base group.

### C. (Paper 5) Words and days in the story

Certain days in the story of human rights are well-known – 4 July 1776, most famously, and perhaps 10 December 1948. What about other days? You have three envelopes, containing between them 12 dates, 12 names of legal documents and 12 quotations. Lay them out in a tabulation. Then (but only then) look at Paper 5.

What are your reflections?

Each selects a postcard, to help illustrate their report when they go back to the base group.

### D. (Paper 6) Comments and reflections

You have a set of quotations from various sources. Read them aloud one at a time and comment on their relevance to our concerns this week.

Can you summarise some of your reflections in a maxim or pithy statement?

Each selects a postcard, to help illustrate their report when they go back to the base group.

# Teaching about human rights and democracy – Magna Carta as a reference point

## Paper 3: Classroom investigations

### A merry tale

Students watch *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, starring Errol Flynn and Olivia de Havilland and/or *Robin Hood – Prince of Thieves* starring Kevin Costner. Also they read extracts from *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood* by Howard Pyle (1883), plus more recent re-tellings of the legend. They then form two research teams, the one investigating what really happened in King John's reign and the other the mythical figure known as Robin Hood. With drama, fiction or video they present the story of Magna Carta, showing it's every bit as exciting as the legends of Robin Hood.

### Examining the text

Students are given about 12 extracts from the Magna Carta. These could be in a free modern translation; or from a literal translation; or from what Robert Lowell called an 'imitation' (a substantial re-writing of something, to capture its meaning in an entirely different context.) They sort them according to their subject-matter; rank them in importance for the modern age; write similar statements to guide the organisation of their own school or class; and create a set of posters or postcards. Other possible activities with text include cloze procedure, sequencing and dictogloss.

### Coming to terms

Students are given extracts from the Magna Carta in the original medieval Latin and the same six in literal translations into modern English. Their first task is to match the translations to the originals. They then identify Latin words which provide root syllables in modern English, and draw up lists of modern words derived from Latin. What other words came into English from Latin via Norman influence in England from 1066 onwards? And they compile a list of words coined in America since about 1900 that are now part of world English and create a timeline showing the arrival of various new words in English over the centuries.

### Comprehension and research

Students read Meeting at Runnymede: The Story of King John and the Barons at the website of the Constitutional Rights Foundation ([http://www.crf-usa.org/Foundation\\_docs/Foundation\\_lesson\\_magna.html](http://www.crf-usa.org/Foundation_docs/Foundation_lesson_magna.html)). In small groups they then answer the multiple choice questions by which it is accompanied, giving their reasons in each instance. They then engage in webquests to find corroboration (or otherwise) for each answer they have chosen.

### With all thy faults I love thee still, my country

Students read *On the Pulse of Morning* by Maya Angelou and/or *I Sing America* by Langston Hughes and/or the poems in *We Are Britain* by Benjamin Zephaniah. They compose similar poems themselves, perhaps working in groups rather than as individuals. Their poems include self-portraits, but also writings imagined to be written by fellow citizens very different from themselves, and by people living in England in 1215, or in America in the 1770s. What is 'national identity'? They create collages, postcard collections, posters or snatches of video to show their answers.

## What say the reeds at Runnymede?

Students juxtapose lines from Kipling's poem with images and headlines from today's newspapers, websites or blogs. They then make such juxtapositions with extracts from the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* or the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, perhaps in age-appropriate language. In the light of their juxtapositions, they work in groups to draft and re-draft letters or messages to the papers or blogs from which they have quoted, and send copies or versions of these to elected representatives at local, regional, state or national levels. In due course they compare and contrast the replies that politicians send them.

## The sights and sounds of everyday life

Students read extracts from *1215: The Year of the Magna Carta* by Danny Danziger and John Gillingham (if necessary these extracts have been modified into age-appropriate language.) They then make two lists: (a) similarities and (b) differences between everyday life in medieval England and everyday life in the United States 800 years later. They are then given categories in which to cluster these – food, clothing, health, shelter, work, possessions, technology, pastimes, travel and transport, gender relations, class relations, position of children. They construct charts and tabulations showing such similarities and differences. Finally they use a resource such as *For Every Child* by Caroline Castle, or exercises in the *Commonwealth Record of Achievement in Human Rights Education* to evaluate critically the two periods.

## The best words in the best order

Students role-play the drafting sub-committee which (it is imagined) produced the final version to which King John agreed on 15 June 1215. The basis for their deliberations is a draft created by two of their members. This could be a literal translation (<http://www.constitution.org/eng/magnacar.htm>), or else in age-appropriate modern English. The committee is chaired by Archbishop Stephen Langton and the two members defending their draft are Peter Fitz Herbert and Hubert De Burgh. Also present are Jocelyn of Bath and Glastonbury, who is a devout Christian; Hugh of Lincoln, a socialist; Alan of Galloway, a nit-picking pedant; and Philip d'Aubigny, bitterly opposed to political correctness.

## Principal from hell

Students imagine their school gets a new principal, and he or she is capricious, unreasonable, unpredictable, insensitive and rude, and very, very cruel. Senior staff leave or are fired and replaced by staff similar to the new principal. Students describe the features of the school under its new management, and give accounts of things that have happened. Some of these, perhaps, are drawn from reading about King John, or a prison diary such as *Enemy Combatant: the terrifying true story of a Briton in Guantanamo* by Moazzam Begg, 2006; or Part 8 of Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*, 1994. In groups, they draft a charter of rights they want the principal to sign. In connection with it they design a publicity campaign, complete with logos, straplines, slogans, posters, lapel badges, posters, etc.

Source: some of the ideas here are derived from and inspired by an article by Marilyn Shea on the website of Reading Revolutions, 2006 ([http://hua.umf.maine.edu/Reading\\_Revolutions/magnacarta.html](http://hua.umf.maine.edu/Reading_Revolutions/magnacarta.html))

# Teaching about human rights and democracy – Magna Carta as a reference point

## Paper 4: Generalizations across the curriculum

### Introductory notes

‘What’s the big idea?’ This is a key question in curriculum planning – what are the essential generalisations we intend to present and to communicate, the key concepts we want learners to understand and make their own? In this paper there are notes on six sets of big ideas, as listed below. The ideas are connected to each other and overlap but can be separated and given names, for the sake of convenience. They are as follows:

- **shared humanity**
- **identity, belonging and difference**
- **globalization and the global village**
- **learning from other places and times**
- **conflict resolution and justice**
- **challenging prejudice.**

### Shared humanity

Human beings belong to a single race, the human race. At all times in history and in all cultural traditions, they have certain basic tasks, problems, aspirations and needs in common – there is a shared humanity. Because all have the same underlying humanity, all should be treated fairly and all should have the same basic human rights.

Art, drama, history, music, novels, poetry, religion and stories all explore humankind’s basic humanity. In science, pupils learn about aspects of human biology that are universal, about universals in the inorganic world and about science as a universal human activity. Universals in biology are also encountered in health education and PE. In geography, pupils learn about recurring patterns in relationships between human beings and their physical environment.

### Identity, belonging and difference

To be human is to be rooted in a particular time and place and therefore to be different from most other people. The principal differences are to do with gender, culture, class, nation, religion, ethnicity, language and status and are expressed through different perceptions, narratives, interests, standpoints and customs. Every individual belongs to a range of different groups, and therefore has a range of different belongings. Also, and partly in consequence, all individuals change and develop, as do all cultures, groups and communities.

In all subjects, the texts, visual material and electronic resources can reflect the reality that there are many different ways of being human and that cultural identities are continually developing. Similarly the tasks, problems and assignments that are set can reflect these aspects of the real world. In many subjects, in addition, there are direct opportunities for teaching and learning about cultural differences, and differences of perception, interpretation, interest and narrative.

## **Globalization and the global village**

Countries, cultures and communities are not cut off from each other. On the contrary, there has been much borrowing, mingling and mutual influence over the centuries between different countries and cultural traditions. Events and trends in one place in the modern world are frequently affected by events and trends elsewhere. You cannot understand your own local world without seeing it as part of a global system. The global system has a range of interacting sub-systems: ecological, cultural, economic and political. There are benefits, but also dangers and disadvantages.

Economic interdependence is an essential concept in geography. Ecological interdependence is fundamental in biology, chemistry and physics. Political interdependence is central in all studies of causation in history. Cultural interdependence, involving fusion, cross-over and mutual influences and borrowing, is a recurring feature in art, design, drama, literature, music and technology.

## **Learning from other places and times**

Examples of high achievement are to be found in a wide range cultures, societies and traditions, not in 'the west' or in modern times only. They are the work of both women and men and of disabled people as well as non-disabled. They are to be found in all areas of human endeavor – the arts and sciences, law and ethics, personal and family life, religion and spirituality, moral and physical courage, invention, politics, imagination.

In every subject, examples of achievement, invention, creativity, insight and heroism can be taken from a wide range of cultures, both in the present and in the past.

## **Conflict resolution and justice**

In all societies and situations – including families, schools, villages, nations, the world – there are disagreements and conflicts of interest. In consequence there is a never-ending need to construct, and to keep in good repair, rules, laws, customs and systems that all people accept as reasonable and fair.

It is particularly in history, PSHEE and citizenship education that social and political concepts to do with conflict resolution and justice are taught and developed directly. Indirectly, they can be a dimension in all subjects, particularly literature and stories and the creative and performing arts.

## **Challenging and reducing prejudice**

All advances of knowledge and substantial achievements require a readiness to review and examine assumptions, expectations and perceptions that may be false or distorted. Such assumptions may be about the inherent superiority of one's own country, culture or ethnicity; about the inherent superiority of either women or men; about people of one's own generation; or about the period of history in which one happens to live. The avoidance of stereotypes and unexamined beliefs, accompanied by keeping one's mind open to new information, evidence and points of view, is a constant struggle.

It is particularly in history, PSHEE and citizenship education that social and political concepts to do with prejudice and open-mindedness are taught and developed directly. Indirectly, they can be a dimension in all subjects, particularly literature and stories and the creative and performing arts. In science, technology and mathematics there can be constant emphasis on attention to hard evidence and on the rigorous testing of hypotheses.

# Teaching about human rights and democracy – Magna Carta as a reference point

## Paper 5: Words and days in the story

### We shall not go against him

No free man shall be arrested or imprisoned, or deprived of his property, or outlawd or exiled, or in any way destroyed... we not shall go against him, unless by legal judgement of his peers, or by the law of the land.

*Magna Carta, clause 39, 15 June 1215*

### Can conduct his pigs through our demesne

Every free man shall agist his wood in the forest as he wishes and have his pannage. We grant also that every free man can conduct his pigs through our demesne wood freely and without impediment to agist them in his own woods or anywhere else he wishes. And if the pigs of any free man shall spend one night in our forest he shall not on that account be so prosecuted that he loses anything of his own.

*The Charter of the Forest, clause 9, 6 November 1217*

### A civil body politick

We whose names are underwritten ..., doe by these presents solemnly & mutually in ye presence of God, and one of another, covenant & combine our selves together into a civill body politick, for our better ordering & preservation & furtherance of ye ends aforesaid..

*The Mayflower Compact, 11 November 1620*

### Detained by your Majesty's special command

Nevertheless ... divers of your subjects have of late been imprisoned without any cause showed; and when for their deliverance they were brought before your justices ... and their keepers commanded to certify the causes of their detainer, no cause was certified, but that they were detained by your Majesty's special command ... and were returned back to several prisons, without being charged with anything to which they might make answer according to the law.

*Petition of Right, drafted by Sir Edward Coke, agreed by King Charles I on 7 June 1628*

### Parliaments held frequently

... That the pretended power of suspending the laws or the execution of laws by regal authority without consent of Parliament is illegal ... That levying money for or to the use of the Crown by pretence of prerogative, without grant of Parliament ... is or shall be granted, is illegal...And that for redress of all grievances, and for the amending, strengthening and preserving of the laws, Parliaments ought to be held frequently.

*Bill of Rights Act (England) 16 December 1689*

## Indefeasible right to reform, alter or abolish

[G]overnment is, or ought to be, instituted for the common benefit, protection, and security of the people, nation or community and ... whenever any government shall be found inadequate or contrary to these purposes, a majority of the community hath an indubitable, unalienable, and indefeasible right to reform, alter or abolish it, in such manner as shall be judged most conducive to the public weal.

*Virginia Declaration of Rights, 12 June 1776*

## The consent of the governed

...[t]hat all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed...

*Declaration of Independence, United States, 4 July 1776*

## Freedom of speech

Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

*First Amendment to the US Constitution, 15 December 1791*

## Endowed with reason

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

*Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 10 December 1948*

## Denies equal protection

Segregation of white and Negro children in the public schools of a State solely on the basis of race, pursuant to state laws permitting or requiring such segregation, denies to Negro children the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment—even though the physical facilities and other “tangible” factors of white and Negro schools may be equal.

*Supreme Court of the United States, Brown v. Board of Education, 17 May 1954*

## United in our diversity

We ... recognise the injustices of our past; honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land; respect those who have worked to build and develop our country; and believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.

*Preamble to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 4 December 1996*

## Equality of opportunity

A public authority shall in carrying out its functions have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation; between men and women generally; between persons with a disability and persons without; and between persons with dependants and persons without.

*Final report of the Northern Ireland Bill of Rights Forum, 31 March 2008*



# Teaching about human rights and democracy – Magna Carta as a reference point

## Paper 6: Comments and reflections

### All cultures of all lands

I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows stifled. I want all cultures of all lands to blow about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any.

*Mohandas K Gandhi*

### The time will come

The time will come when we'll be people again and not just Jews.

*Anne Frank, 11 April 1944*

### Enlarged not threatened

I see in the rising crescendo of ethnic tensions, civilizational clashes and the use of religious justification for acts of terror, a clear and present danger to humanity. For too long, the pages of history have been stained by blood shed in the name of God. Allied to weapons of mass destruction, extremist religious attitudes threaten the very security of life on earth. In our interconnected world, we must learn to feel enlarged, not threatened, by difference.

*Jonathan Sacks, The Dignity of Difference, 2002*

### Body and soul

Do not take care of your own body and another person's soul. Rather, take care of your own soul and another person's body.

*Rabbi Mendel of Kotsk*

### Fretful discussion

In the wake of 9/11, there has been a lot of fretful discussion of the divide between 'us' and 'them'. What's often taken for granted is a picture of a world in which conflicts arise, ultimately, from conflicts of values. This is what we take to be good; that is what they take to be good. That picture of the world has deep philosophical roots; it is thoughtful, well worked out, plausible. And, I think, wrong.

*Kwame Anthony Appiah, Cosmopolitanism, 2006*

### Perfect

The person who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign place.

*Hugo of St Victor, 12 century of the common era, cited by Edward Said in Culture and Imperialism, 1993*

## Where begin?

Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighbourhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere.

*Eleanor Roosevelt*

## All children

My hope is that whatever you do to make a good life for yourself—whether you become a teacher, or social worker, or business person, or lawyer, or poet, or scientist—you will devote part of your life to making this a better world for your children, for all children. My hope is that your generation will demand an end to war, that your generation will do something that has not yet been done in history and wipe out the national boundaries that separate us from other human beings on this earth.

*Howard Zinn, Against Discouragement, speech on graduation day at Spelman College 15 May 2005*

## Future flowerings

Stories are the secret reservoir of values: change the stories individuals and nations live by and tell themselves and you change the individuals and nations. Nations and peoples are largely the stories they feed themselves. If they tell themselves stories that are lies, they will suffer the future consequences of those lies. If they tell themselves stories that face their own truths, they will free their histories for future flowerings.

*Ben Okri*

# Teaching about human rights and democracy – Magna Carta as a reference point

## Paper 7: The selection on display

These resources are all on display at Stoke Rochford Hall this week. In the listings below, they are grouped under five headings:

### Materials for children and young people

#### Practical teaching ideas

#### Books about human rights education

#### Background reading on history and identity (a miscellany)

#### Magna Carta

### Materials for children and young people

Azhar, Shazia (2007) *The Adventures of Ottobah Cugoano*, Primary Colours, Huddersfield

Beake, Lesley and Littlewood, Karin (2006) *Home Now*, Frances Lincoln

Castle, Caroline (2000) *For Every Child: the rights of the child in words and pictures*, Red Fox in association with Unicef

Cave, Kathryn and Riddell, Chris (1995) *Something Else*, Puffin

Ellesmere Port District (2006) *An Alphabet for All*, Cheshire Development Education Centre

Gifford, Clive (2003) *Racism*, Chrysalis Children's Books

Hooks, Bell (2004) *Skin Again*, Hyperion Books for Children, New York

Phakama-Robben Island Project (2002) *Voices of Young People on Robben Island*, Robben Island Museum

Hoffman, Mary and Karin Littlewood (2002) *The Colour of Home*, Frances Lincoln

Lester, Julius (2005) *Let's Talk about Race*, HarperCollins

Mash Production/DECSY (2007) *Who Am I?*, (DVD), Development Education Centre (South Yorkshire)

Sanders, Bruce (2003) *Talking about Racism*, Franklin Watts

Sanders Pete and Steve Myers (2004) *Dealing with Racism*, Aladdin Watts

Smith, David and Shelagh Armstrong (2003) *If the World Were a Village*, A & C Black

Thomas, Pat (2003) *The Skin I'm In – a first look at racism*, Hodder Wayland

Zephaniah, Benjamin and Das, Prodeepta (2003) *We Are Britain!*, Frances Lincoln

### Practical teaching ideas

Adams, Maurianne and Lee Anne Bell and Pat Griffin eds (1997) *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: a sourcebook*, Routledge New York

Amnesty International (2006) *Me, You, Everyone: rights and responsibilities*, Amnesty International Irish Section

Amnesty International (2005) *Learning about Human Rights through Citizenship*, Amnesty International UK

- Ballin, Ben (2002) *Rehearsing Our Roles: drama in citizenship education*, Birmingham Development Education Centre
- British Council (2006) *The 'Unboxed': case study and peer-facilitation training guide*, British Council South Africa
- Burke, John et al (2001) *Building New Citizenship: learning from change in Derry/Londonderry*, Birmingham Development Education Centre
- Callaghan, Chrissy (2003) *The Journey Learning Resource: teacher's handbook*, Primary Colours Huddersfield
- Carianopol, Miruna et al (2003) *Rights in Deed: human rights education*, British Council Rumania
- Carter, Charlotte et al (2003) *Towards Ubuntu: critical teacher education for democratic citizenship in South Africa and England*, Birmingham Development Education Centre
- Children's Commissioner (2006) *Journeys: children and young people talking about bullying*, Office of the Children's Commissioner, London
- Clark, Roland (2002) *Start with a Story: supporting young children's exploration of issues*, Birmingham Development Education Centre
- Commonwealth Teachers Group (2008) *Commonwealth Record of Achievement in Human Rights Education*, draft disseminated by National Union of Teachers
- European Network Against Racism (n.d.) *Tools for Your Rights: toolkit for empowerment training of minorities, Paths for Empowerment for EU Residents*, European Commission
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office (2006) *We All Came from Somewhere: diversity, identities and citizenship*, Learning and Skills Network
- Garlake, Teresa (2001) *My World, Your World photopack*, Oxfam UK
- Gluck, Angela (2007) *What Do We Tell the Children? – confusion, conflict and complexity*, Trentham Books
- Harrow, Marietta (2005) *Global Communities: learning about refugee issues*, Department for International Development
- Imran, Muhammad and Elaine Miskell (2003) *Citizenship and Muslim Perspectives: teachers sharing ideas*, Islamic Relief and Birmingham Development Education Centre
- McCarthy, Owen (2005) *Our World, Our Future: a teaching resource on development for senior primary geography*, Irish Aid Dublin
- Persona Doll Training (2005) *Citizenship for All: respect, rights, responsibilities, video and support book*, Persona Doll Training
- Price, Joanna (2003) *Get Global! – A skills based approach to active global citizenship (KS3 & 4)*, ActionAid
- Richardson, Robin (2004) *Here, There and Everywhere: belonging, identity and equality in schools*, Trentham Books
- Ruane, Brian ed (2003) *Lift Off: introducing human rights education within the primary curriculum*, Cross Border Primary Human Rights Education Initiative, Ireland
- Alession ed (2005) *Travelling Cultural Diversity*, Salto-Youth Cultural Diversity Resource Centre, British Council
- Tide Centre (2002) *Citizenship in Common? – introducing key ideas about the relationship between Europe and Africa*, Birmingham Development Education Centre
- Unwin, Rob ed (2004) *Moving Here: the refugee experience, a teaching activity book for citizenship*,

*PSHE and English at KS2-4*, South Yorkshire Development Education Centre and Sheffield Ethnic Minority Achievement Service

Unicef (2000) *Wants and Needs* cards, UNICEF UK

Unwin, Rob and Sheila Harding (2002) *Auditing Citizenship: a citizenship and PSHE curriculum audit for key stages 3 and 4*, South Yorkshire Development Education Centre

(complements the KS 1 & 2 version)

Unwin, Rob and Sheila Harding (2002) *Auditing Citizenship: a citizenship and PSHE curriculum audit for key stages 1 and 2*, South Yorkshire Development Education Centre

Video Art Postcards (2008) *Slavery, Racism and Resistance: lesson plans for citizenship, key stages 3 and 4*, Manifesta and Runnymede Trust, dvd and teacher's guide

## **Books about human rights education**

Adams, Caroline, Harrow, Marietta and Jones, Dan (2001) *Freedom – Human Rights Education Pack*, Amnesty International/ Hodder and Stoughton

Amnesty International (2005) *Our Rights, Our Future: principles, policies and practice*, Amnesty International Irish Section and the International Human Rights Network, Dublin

Carrim, Nazir (2006) *Exploring Human Rights Education: framework, approaches and techniques*, British Council South Africa

Claire, Hilary and Holden, Cathie eds (2007) *The Challenge of Teaching Controversial Issues*, Trentham

Dadzie, Stella (2000) *Toolkit for Tackling Racism in Schools*, Trentham

Deem, Rosemary et al (1995) *Active Citizenship and the Governing of Schools*, Open University Press

Garlake, Teresa and Pocock, Marian (2000) *Partners in Rights – creative activities exploring rights and citizenship for 7-11 year olds*, Save the Children Fund

Gearon, Liam (2003) *The Human Rights Handbook: a global perspective for education*, Trentham Books

Hand, Pam (2003) *First Steps to Rights – Activities for Children aged 3-7 years*, UNICEF UK/Hampshire DEC

Harding, Sheila and Unwin, Rob (2004) *Developing Rights – teaching rights and responsibilities for ages 11-14*, Oxfam GB

Harrison, Don (2008) *Regardless of Frontiers: children's rights and global learning*, Trentham

King, Edith (2006) *Meeting the Challenges of Teaching in a World of Terrorism*, Thomson

Leach, Fiona and Mitchell, Claudia (2006) *Combating Gender Violence In and Around Schools*, Trentham

Myers, Kate and Taylor, Hazel (2007) *Genderwatch: still watching*, Trentham

Osler, Audrey ed (2005) *Teachers, Human Rights and Diversity: educating citizens in multicultural societies*, Trentham

Osler, Audrey and Starkey, Hugh (2005) *Changing Citizenship: democracy and inclusion in education*, Maidenhead: Open University Press

Osler, Audrey and Starkey, Hugh (2005) *Citizenship and Language Learning: international perspectives*, Trentham

Osler, Audrey ed (2000) *Citizenship and Democracy in Schools: diversity, identity, equality*, Trentham

Osler, Audrey and Starkey, Hugh (1996) *Teacher Education and Human Rights*, David Fulton Publishers

Slater, Sara and Brown, Margot (2002) *Human Rights in the Curriculum – History*, Amnesty International UK

Womankind Worldwide (2007) *Challenging Violence, Changing Lives: gender on the UK education agenda*, Womankind Worldwide

Unicef (2000) *Wants and Needs cards*, UNICEF UK

Unwin, Rob and Harding, Sheila (2002) *Auditing Citizenship: a citizenship and PSHE curriculum audit for key stages 3 and 4*, South Yorkshire Development Education Centre (complements the KS 1 & 2 version)

## Background reading on history and identity (a miscellany)

Angelou, Maya (1993) *On the Pulse of Morning*, Virago

Appiah, Kwame Anthony (2006) *Cosmopolitanism*, Allen Lane

Barbican Theatre (2008) Yael Farber's *Malora* based on the *Oresteia* trilogy, theatre programme

Begg, Moazzam (2006) *Enemy Combatant: the terrifying true story of a Briton in Guantanamo*, Hodder & Stoughton

Bragg, Melvyn (2003) *The Adventure of English: the biography of a language*, Hodder & Stoughton

Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain (2000) *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain: the Parekh report*, Profile Books

Edgar, David (2008) *Testing the Echo*, Nick Hern Books

Kymlicka, Will (1995) *Multicultural Citizenship*, Oxford University Press

Mandela, Nelson (1994) *Long Walk to Freedom*, Little, Brown and Company

Modood, Tariq (2005) *Multicultural Politics: racism, ethnicity and Muslims in Britain*, Edinburgh University Press

Morsink, Johannes (1999) *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: origins, drafting and intent*, University of Pennsylvania Press

Parekh, Bhikhu (2000) *Defining British National Identity*, *The Political Quarterly* vol 71, no 1

Parekh, Bhikhu (2000) *Rethinking Multiculturalism: cultural diversity and political theory*, Macmillan

Paxman, Jeremy (1998) *The English: a portrait of a people*, Penguin

Phillips, Caryl (1997) *Extravagant Strangers: a literature of belonging*, Faber and Faber

Sacks, Jonathan (2002) *The Dignity of Difference: how to avoid the clash of civilizations*, Continuum

Sajid, Abduljalil (2004) *Why Terror: is there no alternative?* Caux Books, Switzerland

Seddon, Mohammed Siddique and Hussein, Dilwar and Malik, Nadeem (2004) *British Muslims between Assimilation and Segregation: historical, legal and social realities*, The Islamic Foundation

## Magna Carta

Bennett, Nicholas and Carol Bennett, Wayne Valis and Michael West (2007) *The Lincoln Magna Carta: an icon of freedom for the twenty first century*, Lincoln Cathedral Publications

Breay, Claire (2002) *Magna Carta: manuscripts and myths*, The British Library

Danziger, Danny and Gillingham, John (2003) *1215: the year of the Magna Carta*, Hodder & Stoughton

Linebaugh, Peter (2008) *The Magna Carta Manifesto: liberties and commons for all*, University of California Press

# Using the Magna Carta to Teach Human Rights: Initial Abstracts and Lesson Plan Ideas

**GROUP 1. An Awareness Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and the ABC's of Human Rights (Janis N. Gilchrist, Seema McArdle, Mickey Dunne-Laughland, Brian Freeman)**

## Abstract

The Magna Carta is an iconic symbol of the establishment of human rights. Even today, its most famous clause—that no man shall be imprisoned without judgment of his peers or by the law of the land – is cited in debates about new antiterrorist laws or the detention camps at Guantanamo Bay (Bennett, Bennett, Valis, & West, 2007). Although it is an image of yesterday and forgotten by some, it is still held in high regards by others. The intent of freedom with insistency to emphasize freedom for future heirs led to today's change agents. There are advocates for human rights who use the Magna Carta as a foundation to bring about awareness of inequality that is structural and cultural. The need to eliminate injustice would ensure not only education for all, but also safety and other guaranteed freedoms. In America, we emphasize and advocate for civil rights. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. believed that since we were all created equally, we should all be treated equally. It was said that Malcolm X believed you do not have civil rights until you recognize human rights. It is hoped that this curriculum guide be used to teach human rights and help students to set goals from their learning. They too can be agents of change with guidance.

## Essential Questions

- How does the Magna Carta relate to my life? (comprehension)
- Can you make changes to solve problems? (synthesis)
- Can you propose an alternative behavior for abuse or mistreatment of people?
- How can you improve your awareness of human rights? (synthesis)
- How can you improve others' awareness of human rights? (synthesis)
- Why was it better that the Magna Carta was developed? (evaluation)
- How can you compare the Magna Carta to the United States Declaration of Independence? (comprehension)
- How can you contrast the Magna Carta to the United States Declaration of Independence? (comprehension)

## Objectives

Students will be able to...

- Answer the essential questions.
- Locate England, United States, and other places on a map and globe.
- Define and illustrate vocabulary associated with the Magna Carta and Human Rights.



- Read and discuss the Magna Carta.
- Discuss, illustrate and write stories about the Magna Carta and Human Rights.
- Tell their favorite part of the Magna Carta Story.
- Read and interpret a poem about the Magna Carta.
- Dramatize and discuss scenarios about right and wrong behaviors.
- Compare and contrast rules/laws to the Magna Carta.
- Create a class charter.
- Write about their feelings in relation to the Magna Carta.
- Create a final visual project (video, play, PowerPoint, story book, to demonstrate their understanding of the significance of the Magna Carta in society.
- Write a prediction about how views on the Magna Carta may or may not effect change in time or place.
- Read the Magna Carta and rewrite it in age appropriate language for younger readers.
- Create a timeline or flowchart to show events from the Magna Carta story.
- Set goals from learning.

## Activity Lessons

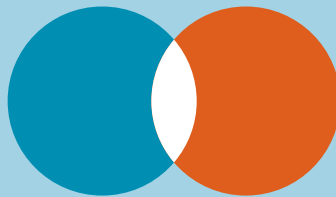
### Introduction

- Share the essential questions, which are:
  - How does the Magna Carta relate to my life? (comprehension)
  - Can you make changes to solve problems? (synthesis)
  - Can you propose an alternative behavior for abuse or mistreatment of people?
  - How can you improve your awareness of human rights? (synthesis)
  - How can you improve others' awareness of human rights? (synthesis)
  - Why was it better that the Magna Carta was developed? (evaluation)
  - How can you compare the Magna Carta to the United States Declaration of Independence? (comprehension)
  - How can you contrast the Magna Carta to the United States Declaration of Independence? (comprehension)
- Share the story of the Magna Carta.
- Locate the following places on a map and globe: the following England, United States, Runnymede, London, and Lincolnshire.
- Share the poem titled *The Magna Carta and Me* by Janis N. Gilchrist. Discuss and interpret the last stanza of the poem. Make either a list or web of the students' responses.

### In Depth Study

- Tell the students about the project they are expected to produce at the end of the study.
- Display the list of vocabulary words titled *The ABCs of Human Rights*. Use the graphic organizer called the Frayer Model to define and illustrate all of the vocabulary words. For younger students, they must write the word of study in the middle and proceed to complete the “I think” square. Afterwards, the class will define and complete the other squares. For older students, they must write the word in the middle and complete all of the squares.
- Read and discuss the Magna Carta.
- Students can illustrate and write about their favorite part of the story. Tell why it is your favorite part of the story.
- Create a class charter.
- Compare and contrast the Magna Carta to the class rules (laws).

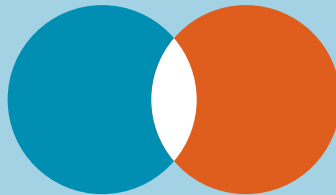
*Magna Carta*



*Class Rules*

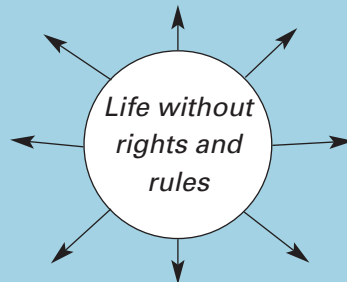
- Compare the Magna Carta to what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. believed.

*Magna Carta*



*Dr. Martin Luther  
King, Jr.*

- Writing: With a partner, discuss and write about what life would be like without rights, rules/laws.



- Dramatization: The students will be given scenarios about right or wrong behaviors. If the scenario depicts actions that are wrong, students will tell what he/she thinks should happen instead.

### Close of the unit study

- Answer the essential questions through projects, discussions, and dramatizations.
- Sequence the events in the Magna Carta story to create a timeline, cartoon, or flowchart.
- Create a talk show. The topic of the show should be “Express your feelings in relation to the effect the Magna Carta has on today.”
- Create a visual project to demonstrate an understanding of the Magna Carta and its significance. The project can be a PowerPoint, movie, storybook, dramatization, or talk show.
- Use what you learned to set goals.

● Parental Involvement (homework)

Discuss the following essential questions:

- How can you improve your awareness of human rights? (synthesis)
- How can you improve others' awareness of human rights? (synthesis)

## Personal reflection: The Magna Carta and Me

By Janis N. Gilchrist

The Magna Carta is a guarantee  
That all men shall be free.  
After all, it is the promise  
Of life and liberty.

What does 1215 have to do with me today?  
The history; the tales of yesterday  
Gave me and others the right to life  
And live in peace and not strife,  
To work, be merry, and to play.

The charter gave us a charge to keep  
That as we are free  
So should our heirs be.

As the very words were written  
I should not make my brother or sister a slave  
This is not the way we are to behave.

To sell them for money  
Instead of selling milk and honey  
Is an injustice.  
It's like bullying. It's not fair.  
Could this happen to us?

Yes, it can. No it can't. No it shouldn't.  
To trade peace for sorrow.  
To be enslaved from my hopes of tomorrow  
Is a violation of the Magna Carta.

For the charter is to be observed  
With use of my character  
And not let the chance  
Of an evil disposition deter  
Any opportunity for me to do what is humanly right.

## ABCs of Human Rights

**A**partheid

**B**eliefs

**C**ulture/customs

**D**arfur/differences

**E**quality/education

**F**reedom/fair trade/forgiveness

**G**lobalization

**H**unger

**I**ndividual/imprisoned

**J**ustice

**K**indness

**L**ove/learning to love/liberty

**M**agna Carta

**N**o hatred

**O**ppression

**P**eace/poverty

**Q**uality

**R**esponsibility/respect

**S**chool/safety

**T**rust

**U**nderstanding

**V**ision/values

**W**ell-being/water

**X** out poverty

**Y**ou can make a difference!

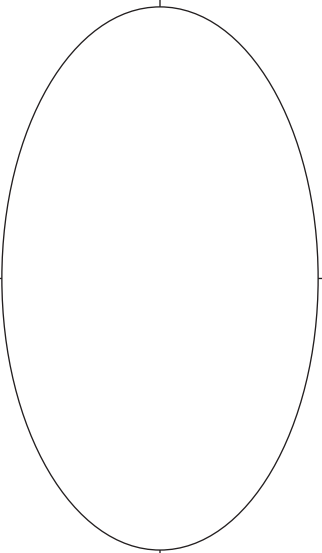
**Z**ip it!

**Definition**

**Sentence**

**I think...**

**Draw**



**Characteristics**

**Definition**

**Non-examples**

**Examples**

## Websites and Books

Note to educators: Please review all websites and books before sharing with students.

<http://www.bl.uk/treasures/magnacarta/index.html#>

British Library: **LAUNCH THE MAGNA CARTA TIMELINE VIEWER**

<http://www.bl.uk/treasures/magnacarta/index.html#>

British Library: **WATCH VIRTUAL CURATOR VIDEOS**

<http://www.bl.uk/treasures/magnacarta/index.html#>

British Library: **READ A TRANSLATION**

[http://www.bl.uk/treasures/magnacarta/shockwave/magna\\_carta\\_broadband.htm](http://www.bl.uk/treasures/magnacarta/shockwave/magna_carta_broadband.htm)

British Library: **VIEW THE MAGNA CARTA THAT IS HOUSED AT THE BRITISH LIBRARY**

<http://www.lincolncathedral.com/>

Lincoln Cathedral's Archives

<http://tour.lincolncathedral.com/>

Tour of Lincoln Cathedral

[http://www.awesomestories.com/history/stories/magna\\_carta/magna\\_carta\\_ch1.htm](http://www.awesomestories.com/history/stories/magna_carta/magna_carta_ch1.htm)

### Civil Rights

Shore, D.Z. & Alexander, J. (2006). *This is the dream*. China: HarperCollins Publishers.

### References:

Bennett, N., Bennett, C., Valis, W., & West, M. (2007). *The Lincoln Magna Carta: An Icon of Freedom for the Twenty First Century*. Lincoln: Lincoln Cathedral Publications.



## **GROUP 2. Using the Magna Carta as a Reference Point to Study Current Issues**

**Submitted by: Ruth Ann Falls, NEA; Robert Cotto, NEA; Annabelle Holmes, NUT**

### **Abstract**

Through a collaborative effort we plan to develop a unit of study which focuses on how the concepts of the Magna Carta relate to current issues today. We will design and implement a series of lessons and activities which focus on Clause 39 of the Magna Carta in addition to the Charter of the Forest. Through an examination of current events, the students will choose a topic of interest to research. The product will be a submitted essay which will be exchanged between our three classrooms. Students will learn theory, but perhaps most importantly, new perspectives from the collaboration which will enhance their understanding and analysis of the significance of human rights. We believe there is a need and a power in bringing representatives of our classrooms together for a critical conversation on what we have learned and how we can make a difference in delivering these important concepts beyond our classrooms. We will continue to work on a plan to make that happen through the use of videoconferencing capabilities and other technologies.

**GROUP 3. PLANET X: How can we recreate the conditions that led to Magna Carta and the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights? (an updated John Rawls activity) Jeni Zapatka, David Sharples, Rob Unwin**

**Abstract**

A colony is to be established on Planet X, an 'Earth-like' planet in the Gamma quadrant. You are lucky to have been chosen for this exciting new life! Your colony has the initial task of drawing up a code of rights for everyone on the planet. This will be done in several stages over several days.

**Stage 1: The journey through space**

The exhibition team is the way to Planet X and you are currently in hyper-isolation.

**On your own**, write down a personal list of ten essential things needed for your new life (These can be practical items or ideas about how life on the new planet is to be organised). Write your list of needs in the left hand column below under the heading stage 1.

<b>Stage 1: Your own, personal list of needs and wants on the new planet</b>	<b>Stage 2: Joint list, agreed with a fellow colonist</b>

### Stage 2: In planetary orbit

Circling Planet X you leave hyper-isolation and meet up with a fellow colonist.

Using your own list (stage 1 above) as a starting point, develop a mutual list of ten essential needs and wants. Write them in the right hand column above.

As an early explorer be thinking about why certain things were left out.

### Stage 3: On Landing

You and the other explorers have landed on the new planet. You and your partner should join together with another pair of explorers and, looking at both lists from stage 2 create a new, agreed on, common list of ten needs/rights. Record this in the left hand column below.

Stage 3: List agreed by four travelers	Stage 4: Whole colony list

#### Stage 4: First colony meeting

The first need is for the whole group of colonists to join together and agree on ONE common list of ten needs/rights. Everyone must be happy before final decisions are made. Record the list in the right hand column above. Have a scribe make a large copy of the final list which everyone can refer to. It is now the responsibility of the whole colony to make sure that these needs/rights are maintained.

Discuss why certain things were left out.

#### Stage 5: Takeover

Sometime after the first colony meeting one of the colony members with supporters and weapons announces that they have taken control. He or she is capricious, unreasonable, unpredictable, insensitive and rude, and very, very cruel. (One student could take on the role of this new leader.)

Look again at the colony list of items and ideas and decide what needs to be changed to take into account of the new situation. Think how you might get the new self appointed leader to rule and lead the colonists with the list.

Item/Idea

## Stage 6: Lessons from history

One of the colony members finds a forgotten box of treasures from Earth in the hold of the spaceship. In amongst the priceless artefacts and pictures is a copy of an ancient document written in Latin. There is an English translation of two of the clauses which read as follows:

39. **No freeman shall be taken, or imprisoned, or disseized, or outlawed, or exiled, or in any way harmed – nor will we go upon or send upon him – save by the lawful judgment of his peers or by the law of the land.**
40. **To none will we sell, to none deny or delay, right or justice.**

*Two translated clauses from the Magna Carta, the great charter of English liberty granted by King John at Runnymede on June 15, 1215.*

There is also a poem *What Say the Reeds at Runnymede?* By Rudyard Kipling

One of the colony members says ‘This is our common law – we are entitled to these rights.’

How will you use this information?

## Stage 7: Encountering other cultures (Part A, B & C)

As a colony, working together, you successfully manage to get the self-appointed leader to agree to your demands.

Your colony on Planet X has now received news from Earth that three other groups are going to come and settle. This should not cause a problem, as there is plenty of room on Planet X.

Each group on Earth has sent their agreed list of rights for colonists to compare with their own and comment on. They have also supplied some information about their backgrounds on Earth. The groups come from Ethiopia, South Africa, and Lebanon.

**Part A:** Below brainstorm a list of what you think colonists from one of the arriving countries will have on their rights lists.

**Part B:** Once you have brainstormed what you THINK will be on the list, look at the actual list of rights arriving from Earth with the second wave of colonists.

How do these compare with what you were expecting? What are the similarities to and differences from your own lists? Discuss this with a partner. Together, come up with a set of agreed comments on the lists which can be relayed back to the Earth groups. Seek to encourage a tolerance of differences—there is no ‘best’ list of rights.

**Part C:** Your task is to individually write a one or two paragraph summary explaining:

- Your inferences about the differences and why.
- Why you think these differences have occurred?
- How the two groups can compromise and live together on Planet X.

Country: _____ What would you expect to be on a list by young people from this country?	Actual list

### Stage 8: A Global Charter of Rights

The comments you made on the lists of rights have been received on Earth. Planet X has now received a Global Charter of Rights which has been drawn up by many people on Earth. The Earth groups believe that these rights should be available to everyone on Earth. They would like to receive your comments on whether the rights would also be suitable for everyone living on Planet X.

(This list could be from a recognized charter or Bill of Rights with which the teacher wishes the students to become familiar)

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## GROUP 4. Interrogating our rights?

Group: Chuck Hamaker-Teals, Robert Wilkinson, Alicia Bata, Stan West

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### Abstract

#### Central burning questions:

- What rights do we have?
- Who defines rights?
- What does society owe citizens?
- What do citizens owe society?
- What responsibilities do you have if you accept those rights?
- What rights ought one have?

#### Discussion:

Students work to brainstorm and place ideas on a “chalk talk” or a white board.

#### Link:

In what way do these questions link back to foundational documents? Possible documents might include: Clauses of the Magna Carta, Bill of Rights in US Constitution, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The Rights of the Child, etc.

How might quotations from Roosevelt’s 4 Fears Speech, or the notions of JFK’s speech on citizen obligations compare or contrast to the foundational documents reviewed above?

#### Implications:

In what way can students use current events to connect with rights or obligations generated from the discussion?

Students are to review these topics in multiple media sources. Possible web sites, articles, TV programs might be included in this research.

In what way does government action today compromise the rights established in the discussion above? What are the obligations of citizens in a democratic society?

Citizenship lessons from Amnesty International such as *The Island*.

Service learning lessons from other documents will assist taking the theoretical lessons into practical applications. Assessment tools will be discussed in future documents. Service learning is woven into the curriculum fabric to help students show empathy, civic mindedness and illustrate “cosmopolitan citizenship.”

Resource: Torney-Purta, Judith. *Human Rights: Descriptions of Classroom*

Activities. *Teaching for International Understanding, Peace and Human Rights*. Paris: UNESCO 1982.



## **GROUP 5. Using Magna Carta Chapter 39 alongside Professor Mike West's interpretation as a stimulus for a learner-led critical discussion**

### **Lesson 1: Method**

5 mins – set up lesson / explain how lesson will work

5 mins – learner given Magna Carta interpretation piece as a stimulus to read and consider in silence

5 mins – learner writes any questions or comments that come to mind as an immediate response to the stimulus

10 mins – learners now work in small groups of 2-4 and discuss ideas and questions they created. Together they work towards formulating a question that they consider most interesting and relevant to the stimulus.

5 mins – learners write down their chosen question on a large sheet of paper. This is then placed in the centre of the room and learners stand in a circle.

10 mins – learners read each group's questions and try to identify links and connections between each. These can be demonstrated by the individual learners by selecting questions on the floor that are linked and placing them together.

5 mins – learners individually select the question they find most fascinating and then sit down in a circle. Using secret voting (i.e. learners' eyes shut and you read out each question. Learners raise their hand to vote for their preference)

5 mins – reveal chosen question and allow learners to think.

### **Lesson 2: Process**

5 mins – review chosen question

5 mins – group that developed this question feeds back to group how they reached this question

30 mins – learners make contributions using turn taking skills to contribute their thoughts to the question. All comments need to be controlled. (i.e. 'I disagree with the idea of'.... not 'I disagree with'.... /'in my opinion'/'an example to support... point might be....')

10 mins – final comments, summary statements from learners

### **Homework**

What did you learn from these classes? How did it make you think differently?

NB: These lessons do not necessarily need to be taught in succession.

### **Link between NUT and NEA**

### **Lesson 3. Citizenship: rights and responsibilities**

**Aim:** to encourage learners to review ideas of 'Britishness' and 'patriotism'

#### **In Britain:**

Learners sing National Anthem, salute flag and the Queen. Then follow same programme as previous P4C lesson. Discussion to be video recorded.

A copy of this recording to be sent to US learners.

#### **In America:**

US learners view the video and comment on the discussion.

What do they find surprising about English learners' attitudes to Britishness? What similarities do they share themselves? Why is it good to have a sense of national identity? What are the dangers of extremism? What does it mean to be an American today?

### **Lesson 4:**

This discussion is also recorded and the results sent back to the UK to promote further discussion in the UK.

## What Say the Reeds at Runnymede?

At Runnymede, at Runnymede,  
What say the reeds at Runnymede?  
The lissom reeds that give and take,  
That bend so far, but never break,  
They keep the sleepy Thames awake  
With tales of John at Runnymede.

At Runnymede, at Runnymede,  
Oh, hear the reeds at Runnymede:  
‘You musn’t sell, delay, deny,  
A freeman’s right or liberty.  
It wakes the stubborn Englishry,  
We saw ‘em roused at Runnymede!

When through our ranks the Barons came,  
With little thought of praise or blame,  
But resolute to play the game,  
They lumbered up to Runnymede;  
And there they launched in solid line  
The first attack on Right Divine,  
The curt uncompromising “Sign!”  
They settled John at Runnymede.

At Runnymede, at Runnymede,  
Your rights were won at Runnymede!  
No freeman shall be fined or bound,  
Or dispossessed of freehold ground,  
Except by lawful judgment found  
And passed upon him by his peers.  
Forget not, after all these years,  
The Charter signed at Runnymede.

And still when mob or Monarch lays  
Too rude a hand on English ways,  
The whisper wakes, the shudder plays,  
Across the reeds at Runnymede.  
And Thames, that knows the moods of kings,  
And crowds and priests and suchlike things,  
Rolls deep and dreadful as he brings  
Their warning down from Runnymede!

*Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)*

## Notes

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## Notes

[illegible]

## Notes

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, typical of notebook or legal stationery. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.



This report is an historical record of the week-long workshop in Grantham, England in April of 2008 that brought together ten NEA classroom teachers with ten NUT classroom teachers to learn about the Magna Carta and ways that it can be applied in classrooms in Britain and the US. In addition to being a compilation of presentations and activities it also contains a section that samples some of the participants' initial ideas for developing classroom resources.

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