

Focus Question:

In what ways did the Magna Carta become a powerful symbol of freedom?

Book Summary

Text Type: Nonfiction/Informational

Would you stand for a tyrant king who took your money and land as he pleased? Travel to medieval England and read about barons who organized for freedom. Read more about the Great Charter, a document that upholds the principle that no one is above the law. Vivid illustrations, timelines, and maps support the text as students learn about author's purpose and past-tense verbs.

The book and lesson are also available for levels Y and Z2.



Lesson Essentials

Instructional Focus

- ☐ Summarize to understand text
- ☐ Identify author's purpose
- ☐ Describe information provided by a table of contents
- ☐ Identify and use past-tense verbs
- ☐ Identify the suffix -ed

Materials

- ☐ Book—*The Great Charter* (copy for each student)
- ☐ Summarize, author's purpose, past-tense verbs, suffix -ed worksheets
- ☐ Discussion cards
- ☐ Book quiz
- ☐ Retelling rubric

Vocabulary

Boldface vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on VocabularyA-Z.com.

- **Story Critical:** *barons* (n.), *charter* (n.), *feudal* (adj.), *nullified* (v.), *oath* (n.), *pacifying* (v.)
- **Enrichment:** *abide* (v.), *affixed* (v.), *baptisms* (n.), *humbled* (v.), *imposed* (v.), *justification* (n.), *mercenary* (adj.), *scutage* (n.), *solemn* (adj.)
- **Academic vocabulary:** *approved* (v.), *document* (n.), *influenced* (v.), *obtain* (v.), *protect* (v.), *response* (n.)

Guiding the Reading

Before Reading

Build Background

- Ask students to think of and describe a good king to a partner. Next, have them describe a bad king.
- Have students discuss in groups what they would do if a king treated subjects unfairly, like taking all of their money and land as payment for taxes. Have the groups write down their ideas and share them with the whole class. Write some of the ideas discussed on the board.

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of *The Great Charter*. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name).
- Preview the table of contents on page 3. Remind students that the table of contents provides an overview of the book. Ask students what they expect to read about in the book, on the basis of what they see in the table of contents. (Accept all answers that students can justify.)

Introduce the Reading Strategy: Summarize

- Explain to students that one way to understand a text is to summarize information. Readers can write a summary, or brief overview, of the key points of each section to understand and remember a text. A summary will typically answer the questions *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why*.
- Create a chart on the board with the headings *Who*, *What*, *When*, *Where*, and *Why*. Encourage students to ask and answer these questions as they read, using the chart to guide them.
- Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [summarize worksheet](#) using evidence from the text. Have students discuss the information they noted with a partner.

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

Introduce the Comprehension Skill:

Author's purpose

- Explain to students that an author has a reason, or purpose, for writing a text. Authors write to inform, entertain, or persuade. Explain that to *inform* means to give information about a topic to someone, to *entertain* means to amuse the reader, and to *persuade* means to convince the reader.
- Have students turn to page 4 and read the first paragraph with a partner. Ask students what they think the author's purpose is on the basis of the introduction. Invite students to share their thoughts with the class.

Vocabulary

Have students turn to the "Words to Know" box on the tit copyright page. Discuss each word with students. Then, have students turn to the glossary on pages 19 and 20. Explain that the glossary provides definitions for the vocabulary words in the book. Point out the use of each content word and academic vocabulary word in the book, and then use each word in a different model sentence. Have students work in groups to create posters for these words. Have them include on each poster the word and its part of speech, the definition, the word in an example sentence, and a picture illustrating the meaning of the word.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about how the Magna Carta became a powerful symbol of freedom. Write the Focus Question on the board. Invite students to look for evidence in the book to support their answer.
- Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

During Reading

Text-Dependent Questions

As students read the book, monitor their understanding with the following questions. Encourage students to support their answers by citing evidence from the book.

- *How do King Richard I and King John compare?* (level 2) multiple pages
- *Why was King John detested by many people?* (level 2) multiple pages
- *Why did the barons refuse to pay scutage and create a list of demands?* (level 1) pages 11 and 12
- *Do you agree with the barons' final attempt to avoid war with King John? Why or why not?* (level 3) page 13

- *Did people have a right to be skeptical of King John's oath to uphold the Magna Carta?* (level 3) page 15
- *Why was the Great Charter reissued?* (level 3) page 16
- *How did the Great Charter influence England's legal system?* (level 1) page 18
- *Do you agree with the Magna Carta's principle? Why or why not?* (level 3) page 18

Text Features: Table of contents

Explain that a table of contents helps readers identify key topics in the text in the order they are presented. Have students read the table of contents on page 3. Ask students if they can find information about Runnymede before or after the section about barons organizing? Encourage students to use the table of contents to identify sections to summarize.

Skill Review

- Guide students to an understanding that the author's purpose is to inform. Write *author's purpose is to inform* on the board. Ask students to think of reasons from the text that support this idea.
- Model identifying details that determine the author's purpose.

Think-aloud: *I know the author's purpose is to inform the reader. The author introduces the reader to two terrible kings of England from the 1100s and 1200s on pages 4 through 8. These are historical facts and describe cruel kings who took whatever they wanted from subjects, despite its being unfair. On page 9, the author informs the reader of barons who organized against the king to stand up for their rights. This cry for freedom turned into a list of demands. The author informs the reader that the Great Charter, or Magna Carta, protected subjects from unruly kings on page 13. The text continues to provide information, rather than amuse or persuade the reader.*

- Have students reread page 15. Point out that the section includes information about the Great Charter. Ask students if they can find any details that are persuasive or entertaining.
- Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [author's purpose worksheet](#) using evidence from the text. Have students discuss the details they noted with a partner.

After Reading

Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

Skill Review

Graphic Organizer: **Author's purpose**

Review the author's purpose worksheet that students completed. Have students share their work with the class. List ideas on the board.

Comprehension Extension

Discussion cards covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided for extension activities.

Response to Focus Question

Have students cite specific evidence from the book to answer the Focus Question. (Answers may vary. Sample answer: *The Magna Carta influenced many ideas in key documents such as the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights.*)

Comprehension Checks

- **Book quiz**
- **Retelling rubric**

Book Extension Activities

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: **Past-tense verbs**

- Turn to page 7 of the book. Ask a volunteer to read the page aloud. Ask students whether the text takes place in the past, present, or future. Have students discuss how they know with a group. Have students underline all of the verbs on the page. Review or explain that adding the suffix **-ed** to a regular verb makes it past tense.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the present-tense verbs *obtain*, *influence*, *protect*, and *respond* on the board. Have students work with a partner to create past- and present-tense sentences using the verbs. Have students share their sentences with the whole class.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **past-tense-verbs worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers.

Word Work: **Suffix -ed**

- Write the word *listened* on the board. Ask students to identify the root word. Write *listen* underneath *listened*. Explain that *listen* is a verb.
- Write the following sentence on the board: *Listen to the text*. Read it aloud with students. Point out that the sentence is present tense. Write the following sentence on the board: *Everyone listened to the text*. Point out that the sentence is now past tense. Ask students what changed in the verb.
- Explain to students that adding the suffix **-ed** to a regular verb will make it past tense.

- **Check for understanding:** Have students work in pairs to find and circle all examples of words with the suffix **-ed** in the book.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **suffix -ed worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers.

Connections

- See the back of the book for cross-curricular extension ideas.