

Curriculum subject: Citizenship

Key Stage: 3

Theme: Legacy

Topic: Significant people: the struggle for rights, liberty and democracy

Rationale

In this activity, pupils explore Magna Carta and its legacy through people who have struggled for our rights and freedoms. Pupils should focus on a range of people from different periods.

Pupils prepare for a discussion carousel activity by researching and taking on the role of a particular historical or contemporary person. They explore the concept of significance when thinking through criteria for evaluating who made the most important contribution. Pupils will use and develop their advocacy skills to make a persuasive case for why the person they represent has made the most important contribution in the ongoing struggle for rights, liberty and democracy. The activity ends with a class debrief to reflect critically on which they think was the most compelling case.

Content

Historical sources:

- [Portrait of King John from Matthew Paris's Historia Anglorum \(13th century\)](#)
- [Portrait of Sir Edward Coke by an unknown artist \(17th century\)](#)
- [Universal Declaration of Human Rights \(1948\)](#)
- ['Nelson Mandela's speech 'I am prepared to die' at the Rivonia trial \(1964\)](#)

Recommended reading (short articles):

[Why Magna Carta still matters today](#) by Justin Fisher

Films:

- [The relevance of Magna Carta in 2015](#)

Key questions

- What is the legacy of Magna Carta?

- Who has made important contributions to the development of rights, liberty and representative democracy in the UK and globally?

Activities

- 1) Pupils research people who have contributed to the development of rights, liberty and representative democracy over time and in the present day. Ensure there is a mixture of historical and contemporary people and some who they may not yet have come across in their work on Magna Carta. The activity is useful in building a timeline and chronology for the struggle for rights, liberty and representative democracy. If you are using this activity with younger pupils you can prepare 'people cards' which contain key information about the person they are going to represent. Pupils will need to know:
 - The name, role and period of the person
 - How they are remembered or known
 - What they did to contribute to the development of rights, liberty and representative democracy.
- 2) Pupils will need to develop some criteria against which they judge the importance and significance of a person's contribution for the final discussion debrief at the end of the activity. When considering the concept of significance pupils will need to understand that:
 - Significance can be contested and there are different viewpoints on what makes an event or person significant
 - Significance is often considered in terms of the extent to which an event or person had impact on the way we live today
 - Significance can be attributed to someone or something at the time and at a later date.
- 3) Pupils will need some preparation time to understand the person they are going to advocate for. Some can be controversial choices, for example King John or Bob Crow. You can differentiate this activity in the way people are allocated to pupils as some are more straightforward to understand and some have made or are making a more complex contribution. You will need to decide whether contributors should be from the UK only or across the world. Examples of important, sometimes controversial, contributors include:

Historical figures	Contemporary figures
King John (1167-1216): Monarch who eventually accepted the barons' demands	Nelson Mandela (1918-2013): ANC activist and first black President of South

and gave his seal to Magna Carta.	Africa who was held in prison for 27 years. Champion of social justice and equality.
Sir Edward Coke (1552-1634): lawyer, MP, Speaker of the Commons and Attorney General who challenged the King, created the 'Petition of Right' regarded as a guarantee of a subject's freedom and re-stated what Magna Carta stood for, and creator of common law.	Shami Chakarabati (1969-): Former barrister, current Director of Liberty and advocate for human rights as an essential framework for democracy.
John Locke (1632-1704): the philosopher who believed moral laws applied to everyone including rulers and wrote about the ways in which government should serve the people.	Dr Mo Mowlam MP (1949-2005): Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for her contribution to greater democracy in NI and the Good Friday Agreement.
Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928): Women's rights activist who was imprisoned because of her political activities and went on hunger strike. She died just after women were given the same voting rights as men.	Bob Crow (1961-2014): Trade Union leader from 2002, seen by some as one of the most effective of all time in his fight to protect the rights and conditions of workers.
Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1965): First Lady of the USA. An advocate of civil rights and women's rights who helped to draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.	

International examples include:

Rosa Parks (1913-2005): American Civil Rights activist who refused to comply with a bus driver's instruction to give up her seat for a white person, an act that became symbolic in the Civil Rights Movement in the fight to resist racial segregation.	Aung San Suu Kyi (1945-): Leader of the National League for Democracy in Burma who was detained under house arrest just before national elections in 1989 and was released in 2010. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 for 'her non-violent struggle for democracy and human rights'.
Martin Luther King (1929.-1968) came to prominence as a civil rights campaigner after leading the boycott of buses following Rosa Parks's action in Montgomery. King's 'I have a dream speech' at the March for Jobs and Freedom in Washington in 1963 predicted	Malala Yousafzai (1997-): Young woman shot in 2012 by the Taliban on her way to school and the youngest winner of the Nobel Peace Prize for her work as an activist promoting the right to education and children's rights.

a day when freedom and equality for all would come to America. King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964.	
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- 4) Divide the class into two groups with an inner circle and an outer circle facing one another. Ask each pair to introduce themselves 'in role' and discuss who they are and what they did. After a few minutes of discussion, ask the pupils on the outer circle to move round one place in a clockwise direction, whilst those on the inner circle stay where they are. Repeat the activity until pupils have spoken with a wide range of people. After the first few, you can encourage pupils to include in their discussion something about the other people they have met. You need to have enough personalities to ensure pupils are introduced to at least five or six different historical and contemporary people.
- 5) At the end of the discussion, ask pupils to create their own timeline for the people they met and briefly record key information about them, including what they did, what they struggled for and what they believed in. Debrief in a class discussion to explore: did they meet any 'people' they had not heard of before? Did they learn anything surprising? Which person did they find the most compelling and why? Has their view of the legacy of Magna Carta changed? What would they like to do to improve rights and democracy?