

Historiography is the study of how views of the past have changed over time.

**Tasks**

1. Colour code the cells according to their view of King John:

Positive       Negative       Mixed

<p><b><i>Homily Against Disobedience</i></b> Bishop John Jewel 1571</p> <p>‘What a disgrace and shame that the barons rebelled against King John and did not give him help in his lawful wars.’</p>	<p><b><i>King John</i></b> Wilfred Warren 1961</p> <p>‘John angered the barons because he tried to keep the power that previous kings had enjoyed. Anyone who tried to stop him ruling as his father had done was his enemy. Though he flinched in times of danger, he never gave up.’</p>	<p><b><i>Constitutional History of England</i></b> William Stubbs 1875</p> <p>‘John was the worst of all our kings. He was a faithless son and treacherous brother. Polluted with every crime he had no redeeming trait.’</p>
<p><b><i>A Short History of the English People</i></b> John Green 1874</p> <p>‘His punishments were cruel, his court was a brothel and he laughed at priests even during his coronation. Hell is spoiled by the fouler presence of John.’</p>	<p><b><i>Supplication of the Beggars</i></b> Simon Fish 1528</p> <p>‘John was a good and blessed king of great compassion who feared the shedding of the blood of his people more than the loss of crown and dignity.’</p>	<p><b><i>King John: New Interpretations</i></b> David Bates 1994</p> <p>‘In some areas John faced impossible difficulties. In others he came close to success. John’s failure deserves some sympathy.’</p>

2. Plot the six views above on a graph to show how views of King John have changed over time.

3. Match the eras in the first column of the table below to the descriptions given in the second. Draw lines to show you answers.

<b>Tudor</b>	During this period England became more democratic as many more men were given the right to vote. The people at this time thought the Magna Carta was very important. They saw it as the beginning of democracy. England also expanded her empire during this period. Therefore the people from this period admired kings who expanded the size of their kingdoms and who were great warriors.
<b>Victorian</b>	During this period professional historians began writing history from a more objective viewpoint. They argued that the accounts written by the medieval monks were biased against John and could not be relied upon. But they also pointed out that no-one wrote anything positive about him. During this period historians also discovered that there were more records from John's reign than previous kings. Some historians suggest this is because John worked hard but others say it was because he had so many problems to sort out!
<b>Modern</b>	During this period the English people expected their monarch to make the important decisions. They did not think the Magna Carta was an important document. The most famous writer of the period, William Shakespeare, did not even mention it in his play about King John. During this period the monarchs of England quarreled with the Pope, who at one point even supported a Spanish attempt to invade England.

4. Working in small groups, discuss why either Jewel, Fish, Warren, Green, Stubbs or Bates held their interpretations. Consider when they wrote when discussing your answer.
5. Which interpretation do you agree with: Tudor (positive), Victorian (negative) or modern (mixed)?