

Millthorpe School History Department
Year 7 revision guide

1. Your exam will be split into 4 questions.

- A. One on comprehension (extracting information from the source)
(3 marks)
- B. An inference question (what the source hints at)
(4 marks)
- C. How accurate is a source? (6 marks)
- D. An essay question (10 marks)

The content of the exam will be all about King John. You need to revise all the information on this sheet to help you in the exam.

Background

1. John was born in 1167, youngest son of Henry II.
2. John was nick named 'Lackland' because his father gave land to his older sons, and had none left to give John. He was to inherit money instead.
3. In 1186 John's father sent him to rule Ireland. He upset the Irish Barons (by giggling at their long beards?). They rebelled against him and he was forced to return to England without gaining any land.
4. John's brother was crowned King of England, but he spent most of his reign fighting crusades. Richard increased taxes to pay for the war. John plotted against Richard to take his throne away. He had help from the King Philip of France. This plot failed and when Richard returned, John did not dare fight him.
5. John finally became King in 1199, but his throne was challenged by his nephew Arthur. In 1202 John captured Arthur and people believe that he had him murdered or that King John murdered him with his own hands & threw his body into the River Seine in France.
6. When he became King, John divorced his first wife and married Isabella, however she had been promised in marriage to a French baron. The baron complained to King Philip of France who used this as an excuse to attack John's land in France. Instead of leading his army in

France, John stayed at home. As a result his armies lost and by 1204 he had very little land left in France. His lack of fighting skills gained him the new nick name: 'Soft-sword'.

Relationship with his Barons & raising money

1. John tried to raise an army to win back his lands in France, but some of the barons refused to help him because he made important decisions without consulting them.
2. This meant that John had to raise taxes and fines to pay for his army. He increased court fines, charged rich widows £3000 to be allowed to stay unmarried after their husbands died, increased inheritance tax and massively increased taxes on the barons who refused to provide soldiers to help him. One baron was he imprisoned until he paid up.
3. By 1213, he had almost half of all the coins in England stored in his castles.

John and the law courts

1. John The Judge: he worked hard as king of England. He sat as a judge in the Royal Court. Some said he used the courts to help his friends and punish his enemies and that he was biased.
2. John travelled around the country to check that the barons were keeping his laws. Barons resented his interest.
3. John didn't trust the English Barons. He took advice from foreign mercenaries (men paid to fight for him).

John's appearance

1. King John had a bath every 3 weeks, compared to monks who were expected to bathe 3 times a year.
2. John was very well dressed; he had exotic coats made of sable and polar bear fur.

Quarrels with the Pope

1. In 1205 John quarrelled with the Pope over who should be the new Archbishop of Canterbury. It had always been the Kings right to choose the new Archbishop & the barons agreed with him over this.

2. The Pope punished John by passing an interdict over John's lands. This meant all church services stopped; no marriages, christenings or burials could take place. Many normal people were unhappy about this.
3. John took away all church property in retaliation.
4. 1209 the Pope excommunicated John so he'd go to hell when he died.
5. The Pope threatened to excommunicate all of John's soldiers.
6. In 1213 John gave in to the Pope.

Disaster in France

1. John's biggest problem was his empire. He wanted to regain the land that he had lost in France.
2. In 1214, John and the Emperor of Germany agreed to attack France. He did this without asking his barons for their advice and they refused to help him.
3. John raised an army of mercenaries and invaded Southern France. He left the German Emperor to fight the King of France and he lost. His hopes of regaining lost French lands were over & he had wasted all those taxes on the war.

Rebellion

1. In January 1215 the Barons forced John to sign the Magna Carta. This demanded that he change the way that he ruled.
2. Some people believe that he never intended to keep to the terms & he particularly hated clause 61 that said 25 barons would watch him & take action if he broke the terms.
3. Rebel barons invited Prince Louis of France to become King of England & a civil war began.
4. At Rochester Castle the King undermined the castle to defeat it.
5. John burnt and destroyed the land of his enemies, but gradually John's enemies captured more of John's castles.
6. John finally died in 1216 of dysentery (diarrhoea) from eating too many peaches and drinking too much beer!