



The Founding: SS.7.CG.1.3
Influential Documents
VIDEO #1 SCRIPT



The Magna Carta (1215) & The English Bill of Rights (1689) Video #1

1. Two of the most important documents ever written were written by Americans: the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution. You've probably heard of these. The writers of these documents, though, were inspired by writing that came before, and in this video, we'll explore how that writing that came before early American views on government.
2. These documents are the Magna Carta, the English bill of Rights, the Mayflower Compact, and Common Sense. And in this video, we'll take a look at the Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights. So be sure to watch video 2 for the Mayflower Compact and *Common Sense*.
3. After watching the video, you will be able to
 - identify the important ideas contained in the Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights
4. So let's begin with the Magna Carta, written by English noblemen all the way back in 1215. Well before the Declaration of Independence was written! The Magna Carta was written to force King John of England to protect certain rights of the people and to limit the king's powers.
5. The document said that the king must follow the laws of the land, and it became a symbol of the idea that even a king is not above the law. This is known as rule of law; everyone has to follow it.
6. One important idea in the Magna Carta is that of limited monarchy. This is the idea the king must share power with Parliament, which is England's legislature. It also meant that the king must follow all of the laws passed by Parliament. Again, the king has to follow the laws!
7. Other ideas that are important to us today also come from the Magna Carta. For example, the writ of habeas corpus says that the government provide a cause or reason for holding a person in jail. We also have the idea of common law. Common law is a law based on customs and prior legal decisions. Both the concept of the writ of habeas corpus and common law heavily influenced our Founding Fathers and our idea about government today.

8. Let's check in. Try to answer the following in your own words.

9. Summarize the important ideas that are in the Magna Carta.

10. ANSWER TO QUESTION

11. Let's recap what we've learned so far. The Magna Carta was written by English noblemen in 1215, and it limited the powers of the king so that he was not above the law. Limited monarchy, the writ of habeas corpus, and common law all come from the Magna Carta and influence our government today.

12. So we've got a question on the screen. You don't have to answer it now, but it's an important one that we're going to answer in this portion of the video. How did the Magna Carta influence American views on government. There are three different ways, and we're going to explore them now.

13. First, the Magna Carta established the concept of limited monarchy and it inspired the idea of limited government in the United States. Our own Constitution sets up a government with limited powers.

14. Have you learned yet about those checks and balances? Remember under our Constitution, each branch of government has its own powers and can check or balances the other branches.

15. Second, the Magna Carta established the idea of what's called habeas corpus. This concept was included in the U.S. Constitution. In Article I, Section 9 it states that an authority has to prove to a court why it is holding someone in jail. This is a very important individual right. It is a big part of due process, and ensures the right to justice and a fair trial.

16. The final influence is in the idea of rule of law. In our Constitution, we have the Supremacy Clause, which basically says that the Constitution is supreme and everyone must follow it. Rule of law is everyone having to follow the law.

17. Let's check in. Try to answer the following in your own words.

18. Summarize the ways in which the Magna Carta influenced the ideas included in the United States Constitution.

19. ANSWER TO QUESTION

20. Alright, let's recap. Remember that the US Constitution was influenced by ideas in the Magna Carta. This includes the idea of limited government through checks and balances, the idea of habeas corpus, which means the government must explain why it is holding someone in jail, and the Supremacy Clause, which means that everyone must follow the Constitution.

21. Now, let's take a look at another important document, the English Bill of Rights. This was written in 1689, about 90 years before the Declaration. The English Bill of Rights states that every person has individual rights that must be protected. It also emphasizes that the consent of the people in government was necessary.

22. A couple of the rights in the English Bill of Rights might sound familiar, if you're familiar with our Bill of Rights. For example, the right to bear arms and the right to petition the king in order to address some problems. We have very similar rights in our own Bill of Rights.
23. We also have the right to a speedy and public trial, no excessive punishments, and no taxation without representation.
24. Another question on the screen. Now this isn't one you need to answer on your paper, but we're going to think about it. How did the English Bill of Rights influence American views on government? We see it in the Declaration of Independence and in our own Constitution's Bill of Rights. Let's explore and find an answer.
25. In the Declaration of Independence, the Founding Fathers stressed the importance of the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, as well as the consent of the governed. Both of these were elements stressed in the English Bill of Rights.
26. Where else do we see the influence? In the US Bill of Rights. Just like the English Bill of Rights, the US Bill of Rights, part of our Constitution, lists individual rights. And remember, individual rights and consent of the governed are extremely important to us, and both come from that English document.
27. You can learn more about the Bill of Rights in the topic area 'My Rights and Liberties' and more about the Declaration of Independence in our topic area 'The Founding' here on Civics360.
28. Let's check in. Try to answer the following in your own words.
29. Summarize the ways in which the English Bill of Rights influenced American views about government.
30. ANSWER TO QUESTION
31. Let's recap what we've learned so far. The Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights greatly influenced American ideas about government. The Magna Carta contained the ideas of limited government and common law, and it influenced constitutional ideas about limited government, habeas corpus, and the Supremacy Clause.
32. The English Bill of Rights contained the ideas of consent of the governed and individual rights. And it influenced ideas we find in the Declaration of Independence and the US Bill of Rights.
33. The Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights greatly influenced American ideas about government. But remember, these weren't the only ones. So be sure to view video 2 in this module to learn about two other documents that influenced colonial ideas about government: the Mayflower Compact and *Common Sense*.
34. You can learn more about the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights in these topic areas on Civics360. But remember to view video 2 in this module before you jump over there.