'The life and crimes of King John'

- Success
- Failure

1160: John is born
1170: John is sent to Ireland
1220: John is born
1. John is sent to Ireland.

2. John is forced to leave Ireland and return home.

3. John rebels against his father.

4. John plots against his brother.

5. John becomes King.

6. Arthur claims the throne.


8. Philip II invades John’s land in France.
John quarrels with the Pope.

The Pope excommunicates John.

John gives in to the Pope.

John’s army is defeated at the battle of Bouvines.

The barons rebel.

John is forced to sign Magna Carta.

John breaks his promises and starts a civil war.

John loses his crown jewels.
The hamburger paragraph: John was a bad king

In this paragraph I aim to prove that __________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
I believe this because John _______________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
Secondly he __________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
John also ____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
Finally ______________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
The evidence seems to show that __________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
I therefore believe that _________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
You can use the sentence starters already given to help you, or you can invent your own.
**The hamburger paragraph**

- **Opening statement**
- **Evidence that supports your argument**
- **Concluding statement**
**ACTIVITY**

Carry out interviews with parents and relatives and record your findings using the table below.

1. Ask the person you are interviewing to use five words to describe King John.
2. Read your hamburger paragraph to the person you are interviewing. Do they agree or disagree with your view of King John? Ask them why.
3. Ask the person you are interviewing if their view of John comes from:
   - their time at school
   - legends and stories about Robin Hood
   - films and cartoons about Robin Hood
   - history books.
4. When you have finished your interviews complete the sentences in the Summary box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee one</th>
<th>Interviewee two</th>
<th>Interviewee three</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What five words did they use to describe John?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did they agree or disagree with the view in your hamburger paragraph? Why?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where did their view of John come from?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

Most of the people I interviewed had a positive/negative view of John. The most common words used to describe John were _______________________.

This view of John mainly came from _______________________.
What does the evidence say about King John?

Activity

1. Look at the list of John’s faults in the table below. Have any been missed out? Compare this list to the list you made when you read ‘The Life and Crimes of King John’ on pages 4–6. In the space provided add anything which you think is important to the table.

2. Look at Sources 1–5 on pages 10–11. Does the evidence for these faults come from contemporary sources? Complete the table below to find out.

3. Do Sources 1–5 highlight any more faults that John had? Keep a record of the new things you have found out about John from reading these sources, in the box at the bottom of the page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fault</th>
<th>Which sources give evidence of this fault?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John was cruel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John was greedy for money</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John was not religious</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John was a poor war leader</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Findings

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
### Worksheet 6

**Testing the evidence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability rating</th>
<th>Reasons for rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source 1 – Matthew Paris</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source 2 – Gervase</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source 3 – Roger of Wendover</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source 4 – a monk from Barnwell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source 5 – Matthew Paris</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Activity**

1. Put Sources 1–5 through the four quality control checks. Place a ✓ in the box if the source passes the check, a ✗ if it fails. If you are unsure place a ? in the box.

2. Give each source a reliability rating out of 5.

3. Explain why you have given it this rating. Which quality control checks did the source pass and which did it fail?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does it aim to produce a fair and accurate account of the past?</td>
<td>Did the author know the person, or witness the event?</td>
<td>Is it based on fact?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source 1 – Matthew Paris</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source 2 – Gervase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source 3 – Roger of Wendover</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source 4 – a monk from Barnwell</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source 5 – Matthew Paris</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**The hamburger paragraph: how reliable are contemporary accounts of John?**

I aim to prove that contemporary accounts of John are ________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly ________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

For example, the writer of Source ________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

Another reason is ________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

For example ________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

Also ________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

Having examined the evidence it is clear that ________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

You can use the sentence starters already given to help you, or you can invent your own.
**Did John have the right personal qualities to be a successful king?**

**Activity**

Use this table to help you decide if John had the right qualities to be a successful monarch.

1. In the left-hand column, fill in the qualities that John needed in order to be successful. The first quality has already been filled in for you.
2. As you read Sources 1–3 place a ✓ next to the personal qualities that John had and a ✗ next to those that he didn’t have.
3. Now write down your opinion in the Summary box at the bottom of the page. Do you think John had the personal qualities needed to be a successful monarch?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal qualities needed to be a successful king</th>
<th>Did John have these qualities?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Source 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bravery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

Having examined the evidence I think that ___________________________________
What problems does a modern Prime Minister face?

**ACTIVITY**

1. In the space below list the problems that a modern Prime Minister might face.
2. Circle or highlight the five most serious problems and explain your choice.
3. Write the five problems you have chosen in the gate boxes that the Prime Minister has to pass under during the ski slalom.
4. Compare the ski slalom to the medieval hunting picture on page 16:
   a) What are the differences between the problems faced by a modern Prime Minister and the problems faced by a medieval monarch?
   b) Are there any similarities?
   Write your answers in the space below.

---

**Problems faced by a modern Prime Minister**

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

**The ski slalom**

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

**Similarities**

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

**Differences**

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5.
Your Majesty,

Thank you for asking me to write such an important report for you. It is a great honour to work for the King of England. I hope that this report gives you all the information that you need. My aim is to


Being king is not easy. You have many important responsibilities. People will expect you to


I think that your most important responsibility is


This is because


You have many of the personal qualities needed to be a successful king. For example


However, it is my duty to make you aware of a few character weaknesses that could make things difficult for you. One example is


This could cause problems because


Secondly


As king you will also face many difficult problems. Your biggest problem is


This is very significant because __________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
A very dangerous opponent is __________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
He could cause you problems because _____________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
Another difficult problem is __________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
This is significant because _____________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
Someone you need to watch out for is _____________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
This is because _____________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
The third important problem you face is _______________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
This is because _____________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
Keep an eye out for _________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
He is a real threat to you because ________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
To conclude, I think that you face a difficult/very difficult/almost impossible task. This is
because __________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
What would John have had nightmares about?

Henry I’s nightmare

Henry I ruled from 1100 until 1135. When Henry was King of England he had a nightmare that three groups of people would cause him problems. He told his doctor about the nightmare. The doctor told his friend, a monk named John of Worcester, who drew pictures of the nightmare. These pictures are a very useful source of information. They tell us what medieval monarchs were worried about and how they thought they could be destroyed. They help us see inside the mind of a medieval king.

Activity

1. The wrong captions have been placed with each picture. Draw lines to match the correct caption with the correct picture.
2. All three groups of people in Henry I’s nightmare caused medieval monarchs problems.
   a) Which group do you think was the most dangerous?
   b) Which group do you think was the least dangerous?

Henry is attacked by violent barons
The barons were the most powerful and wealthy people in the country. In order to be successful, monarchs had to get on well with their barons. If a king was unpopular, or angered the barons, they could refuse to obey him. Sometimes they rebelled and fought against the king. The barons were a real threat to the king. They had their own castles and their own armies.

Henry is attacked by the peasants
The majority of the population were peasants. They farmed the land. They had no say in how the country was run. They were very poor and if the harvest failed they often suffered starvation. The peasants were a danger to the king. They were a large group of people and they sometimes turned violent and rebellious when they were unhappy. For example, the Peasants’ Revolt of 1381 caused serious problems for Richard II.

Henry is attacked by members of the Church
The Church was very important. It owned a lot of land. Bishops had a great deal of power. They ruled over areas called dioceses and all the priests and monasteries within them. They could collect taxes from their dioceses. This made many bishops very rich.

Many kings argued with the Church. Disputes broke out over who was the most important. Medieval monarchs expected to be obeyed. This could lead to arguments with powerful bishops, who did not like being ordered about by anyone except the Pope.
King John’s nightmare

Like Henry I, King John would have worried about the threat of attack from his barons, the Church and the peasants. However, medieval monarchs did not just face the dangers that Henry I had nightmares about. They also faced many other problems. What do you think John’s nightmares would have looked like?

**Activity**

In the spaces below, draw and explain what you think John’s nightmare would have looked like.

Do not include the barons, the Church or the peasants in your nightmare. Try to think of extra problems that John faced that are not included in Henry I’s nightmare.
**Was John to blame for the loss of his land in France?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>John made an excellent start to his reign by defeating Arthur of Brittany, his main rival for the throne.</th>
<th>Rumours that John had murdered Arthur caused a rebellion in Brittany and other parts of John’s land in France. Powerful French barons deserted John and began to support Philip.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John gave Philip an excuse to invade his lands in France when he married Isabelle of Angoulême. Hugh de Lusignan claimed that John had stolen his bride and asked Philip to help him get revenge.</td>
<td>John could not trust his English barons. They showed little enthusiasm for fighting in France.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip could afford a large army and he organised his troops very carefully.</td>
<td>At the battle of Bouvines it looked as if John’s allies would win. Philip was knocked off his horse but he was saved at the last minute by his bodyguards. Philip recovered and won the battle, destroying John’s plans to win back his land in France.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Complaints and clauses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clause 1</th>
<th>The English Church shall be free. The king must not interfere with the Church.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clause 2</td>
<td>When a baron inherits land he should not have to pay more than £100 to the king.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clause 3</td>
<td>The king will return all hostages given to him by barons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clause 8</td>
<td>No widow shall be forced to marry as long as she wishes to live without a husband.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clause 49</td>
<td>The king will entirely remove the relations of Gerard d’Athee from their jobs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clause 12</td>
<td>The king must not demand scutage payments or other taxes without the agreement of the bishops and the barons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clause 50</td>
<td>The king will entirely remove the relations of Gerard d’Athee from their jobs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clause 21</td>
<td>Barons should only be fined after a proper trial. The fine should match the crime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clause 51</td>
<td>As soon as peace is restored, all foreign mercenaries should leave the country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clause 61</td>
<td>The barons shall choose 25 barons to make certain that the king keeps this charter. If the king or any of his servants breaks this charter, the 25 barons can take action to make him keep the charter. This includes seizing the king’s castles and lands but they cannot attack the king himself, his queen or his children.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
John keeps demanding the scutage tax from us. In the past we paid this 'shield money' instead of sending knights to join the king's army in wartime. But John makes us pay scutage even when he is not going to war – and he is demanding twice what we paid Richard.

I know we have to pay the king when we inherit family land, but John demanded over £6000 from me. I only make £550 a year from the land. £100 would be a fairer price.

John is also squeezing money out of elderly women. When my father died, my mother had to pay John over £3000 so that he wouldn’t force her to marry again. She really did not want to remarry so she had no choice but to pay the fine.

John uses the law to punish his enemies and help his friends. If John is against you he will not allow your case to be heard in court. I owed him money when I was Sheriff of Lincolnshire and I couldn’t keep up the repayments. John imprisoned me in Rochester Castle. He said I would stay there until I paid every last penny I owed.

I do not trust John. I want a say in how our country is run, but he never asks us for advice. He spends all his time with his favourites. John will only work with people like Gerard d’Athee from France. John has put him in charge of the castles at Gloucester, Bristol and Hereford. John lets him punish anyone who steps out of line.

John is far too hard on us. He takes our land if we do not obey his commands. He even takes our sons as hostages, in case we rebel against him. Look at what happened to the sons of those Welsh barons in 1211. John took 28 as hostages and they were all executed, on John’s orders, because he thought their fathers had plotted against him.

Why should we fight in France? My lands in the north of England are a long way from France. I will not gain anything from a war against France. The king wastes money on these pointless wars – which he always loses.

John insults the Church, and he punished churchmen because of his quarrel with the Pope. The king should treat the Church fairly.

If John agrees to what we ask, how can we make him keep his word? Can we force him to keep his word when he has all these foreign mercenaries to use against us?
**How does Magna Carta provide evidence of the ways that John had upset the barons?**

**Activity**

1. Read the clauses from Magna Carta very carefully. Which of the characters on pages 26–27 would have supported each clause?

2. How does each clause provide evidence that John had angered the barons?

3. Use the table below to record your answers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clauses from Magna Carta</th>
<th>The characters who would have supported this clause</th>
<th>How the clause provides evidence that John had angered the barons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
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<td>39</td>
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<td>49</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The double hamburger paragraph

Opening statement

Evidence that supports your argument

Evidence that destroys the opposition’s argument

Concluding statement
The double hamburger paragraph

My aim is ________________________________

There is a great deal of evidence to suggest John was a bad/good king. Firstly, he was very cruel and unfair/ worked hard to be a kind and fair king. For example, John ________________________________

He also ________________________________

Secondly, John made many mistakes/was a successful king who made intelligent decisions. For example, he ________________________________

John also ________________________________

Finally, John created many of his own problems/was very unlucky. For example ________________________________

Another example is ________________________________

The opposition will attempt to prove that John was a bad/good king. However, their argument has weaknesses.

For example ________________________________

Also, a great deal of their evidence is unreliable. For example ________________________________

An examination of the evidence proves that ________________________________

This is because ________________________________
What happened after Magna Carta?

Activity

Magna Carta was not the end of John’s troubles. The last year of his reign was packed with drama and action.

1. Do you think that John was to blame for the troubles that occurred after Magna Carta?
2. How well did John deal with these troubles?

Civil War

John had no real intention of following Magna Carta. He only agreed to it to buy himself time. It was not long before John was breaking the terms of the charter. This caused civil war. The rebel barons asked Philip II’s son Louis to help them. At first the war went well for John. At the start of 1216 he took control of much of East Anglia and the south and west of England. However, London was still controlled by the rebels.

The loss of the crown jewels

In October 1216, John was travelling from Wisbech, in Norfolk, to Lincolnshire. While his baggage train was crossing the river Wellstream, which flows into the Wash, disaster struck. Roger of Wendover writes: ‘He lost, by an unexpected accident, all the wagons, carts and pack-horses which carried his treasures and crown jewels. The ground was opened in the midst of the waves, and bottomless whirlpools engulfed everything, men and horses. The king, however, just managed to escape with his army and spent the following night at Swineshead Abbey.’

Louis arrives

In May 1216, John and his army moved into Kent and he placed his navy off the coast of Dover to stop Louis landing in England. Unfortunately a bad storm wrecked many of his ships just days before Louis arrived. On 21 May Louis was able to land safely in England, meeting no opposition. John was now forced back and some of his supporters deserted him. Despite this, John continued to fight with some success throughout the summer.

John’s death

In October 1216, John was taken seriously ill after eating and drinking too much at a feast in Lynn. On 19 October he died at the Bishop of Lincoln’s castle in Newark. The writer of the Barnwell chronicle tells us: ‘Most of John’s army was made up of mercenaries or foreigners. They quickly gathered at Newark and carried his body as far as Worcester. This was not because he had asked to be buried there. Worcester just seemed like a safe place where the king’s supporters could meet and decide what to do next. Although John was buried at Worcester Cathedral, his intestines, since he was rather fat, were buried at Croxton Abbey.’
**Activity**

1. Place crosses on the graph to show how John was viewed during the Tudor period, the Victorian period, the 1950s and 1960s, and by modern historians.

2. Write a short explanation of why John was viewed in this way. How John was viewed in the Middle Ages has been done for you.

Nearly all the accounts of John from the medieval period were written by monks. John was seen as a villain by most monks because of his argument with the Pope.
**MATCH THE WRITER TO THE QUOTE**

**ACTIVITY**

1. The writers and their quotations have become muddled up.
   a) Use the information on pages 32–33 to work out the time period in which each source was written.
   b) Link the correct writer with each quotation.
   c) Explain how you came to each decision.
   Remember that what people wrote about John can tell us a lot about when they were living.

2. Which source do you think offers the most accurate description of King John? Explain your answer.

**SOURCE A** What marks John out from the long list of our kings and queens, good and bad, is that there is nothing in him that for a moment we can admire or pity.

**SOURCE B** This noble King John, as a faithful Moses withstood proud Pharaoh [the Pope], for his poor Israel [England] meaning to bring it out of the land of darkness. But the Egyptians [barons] did against him rebel and his poor people did still in the desert dwell.

**SOURCE C** John had potential for success. He had intelligence, administrative ability and he was good at planning military campaigns. However, too many personality flaws held him back.

**SOURCE D** The picture of a monster, put forward by Roger of Wendover and Matthew Paris, must be rejected for ever. John had the administrative ability of a great ruler but, from the moment he began to rule, rivals and traitors tried to cheat him out of his inheritance. As he wrestled with one problem, more enemies sprang upon his back.

**SOURCE E** John was a tyrant. He was a wicked ruler who did not behave like a king. He was greedy and took as much money as he could from his people. Hell is too good for a horrible person like him.

---

From *King John*, written by W.L. Warren in 1961.

Written by William Stubbs in 1873. Stubbs based his opinion on sources written by monks such as Roger of Wendover.

From a thirteenth century chronicle, written by Matthew Paris.


Was John really a bad king?

King John is one of the most well-known figures in history because... Many people think that John was... However, some people disagree with this view of John. They argue that... My view is... Medieval monks argued that John was a cruel king. For example, Roger of Wendover... They also claimed that... For example...

When we examine the evidence that shows John as a bad king we have to be careful because... For example... This is unreliable because...

John inherited many problems when he became king. The main problem was... This was a major problem because... A second problem was... This meant that...

There is a lot of evidence to suggest that John was a bad king. For example... However, John can also be seen as an unlucky ruler. For example... There is also evidence that John was a good ruler. For example...

Interpretations of John have changed a great deal since the Middle Ages. In Tudor times...
This was because...
In contrast, the Victorians thought that...

Having examined all the evidence, I conclude that John was/was not a bad king. This is because...
The History Grand Prix

Stage 1: PRE-RACE CHECK
1. Are you clear on the question?
2. Have you completed your research?
3. Are you sure of your argument?
4. Do you have enough evidence to support this argument?

Stage 2: THE INTRODUCTION BEND
Writing the introduction:
• Give a brief answer to the question so that the reader knows what your argument is.
• Make your reader want to read on.

Stage 3: THE BAD KING STRAIGHT
a) Explain why many people think that John was a bad king.
b) Give examples of the bad things John is supposed to have done.

Stage 4: THE EVIDENCE CHICANE
Highlight the problems with the evidence that suggests John was a bad king:
a) Explain why the evidence might be unreliable.
b) Provide examples of unreliable evidence.

Stage 5: THE INHERITANCE STRAIGHT
a) Explain the problems that John inherited.
b) Explain how difficult these problems were.

Stage 6: JOHN'S REIGN CHICANE
Examine the key events. Was John:
a) a bad king
b) an unlucky king
c) a good king?

Stage 7: THE HIGH SPEED HISTORIOGRAPHY HAIRPIN
Examine how and why interpretations of John have changed since the Middle Ages.

Stage 8: CONCLUSION CORNER
Writing the conclusion:
It is time to give your opinion. You are now an expert; have the confidence to say what you think.

Stage 9: THE FINISHING STRAIGHT
Revising and editing:
Check your work carefully. Use the ten top tips on page 37 to improve areas that you are not happy with.
How is Britain governed today?

I have to agree to the plans put forward by the Prime Minister and the House of Commons. I don’t have any real power. I basically do as I am told.
How is Britain governed today?

I make all the important decisions. I am the leader of the political party that has the most MPs. My cabinet (the people who help me run the country) and I suggest new laws or taxes and ask the House of Commons to agree to them. If most MPs support our plan it becomes law. I am far more powerful than the king or queen.

We are called MPs (Members of Parliament). Men and women can become MPs. We are voted into power at elections, by people around the country. We do not have to be rich. We are very important, because we decide whether or not new laws and taxes are passed. We meet regularly throughout the year.

We discuss new laws and taxes that the Prime Minister wants to introduce. We can suggest changes, but we cannot stop the House of Commons getting what they want. We have little real power. We are given the right to sit in the House of Lords by the Prime Minister or the monarch.

I have to agree to the plans put forward by the Prime Minister and the House of Commons. I don’t have any real power. I basically do as I am told.

We have a say in how the country is run. At an election, which is normally held every four to five years, every person over the age of eighteen can vote for an MP. It does not matter how much money you have. If we don’t think that the Prime Minister or our MP is doing a very good job, we can vote to have someone else instead.
**ASSIGNMENT**

King John thinks that the barons became more and more powerful after Magna Carta. He believes that they set up Parliament, which began governing the country and took away the monarch’s power. You need to carry out an investigation to see if he is right. As you examine the evidence on pages 48–49 fill in your detective’s report.

**Reporting Officer**

During the reign of Henry III, the barons opposed the king because

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

In 1264, after the battle of Lewes, Simon de Montfort took over the running of the country. He called a parliament. This was different from earlier meetings because

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

This new type of parliament did/did not go on to meet regularly. The reason for this was

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

Edward I set up the Model Parliament because

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

The Model Parliament did/did not continue to meet regularly. The reason for this was

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

The king/the barons was/were in charge of the Model Parliament. For example

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

Having examined the evidence, it is clear that King John’s theory is correct/incorrect. Parliament was set up because

__________________________________________________________________________________________________
Why did the power of the monarchy stay so high?

Activity
Look at the picture on page 52. It shows five reasons why the power of the king stayed so high during the Middle Ages.

1. Choose the three most important reasons and draw a line to indicate where you think they should go on the podium.
2. Explain your thinking behind each choice in the space provided.
**Which king was the most successful soldier?**

**Activity**

Use the table below to record a brief description of what happened to your king at each stage of his reign and the points he scored.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>King’s name:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What happened during his reign?</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total score**
**The battle of Agincourt: how was Henry V turned into a hero?**

**Activity**

1. **a)** Read the priest’s account of the battle of Agincourt.
   **b)** As soon as you finish reading, write down five words to describe Henry V, based on this evidence.

2. **a)** Read lines 1–11. Underline words or passages which describe the condition of the English army before the battle.
   **b)** Read lines 6–35. In a different colour, underline words or passages that describe the French army.
   **c)** Imagine that you are reading the source for the first time and that you have reached line 35. Who would you expect to win the battle and why?

3. Read lines 36–57, then look at the statements below. Which of these reasons does the priest give for the English victory?
   **a)** Henry V used very clever tactics.
   **b)** The English army was lucky.
   **c)** The English army fought with great skill and bravery.
   **d)** God was on the side of the English army.

4. **a)** Study the whole account carefully. Circle words or passages which are used to describe Henry V’s actions.
   **b)** Read lines 23–27. What do these lines tell us about Henry V? Why do you think the priest included this story in his account?

5. **a)** Using your findings from Questions 2, 3 and 4, list the ways in which the priest presents Henry V as a heroic figure.
   **b)** Which of these ways has the biggest impact on the reader?

6. Choose one other battle or military campaign where an English king won from the board game on pages 54–55.
   **a)** Research the battle or campaign and design a timeline which summarises the key events.
   **b)** Using your timeline, write an account of the battle or campaign in the same style as the priest who wrote The Deeds of King Henry V. Your aim is to make the king who won the battle sound as heroic as Henry V.

The following account of the battle of Agincourt was written by a priest who travelled with Henry V's army. He wrote down his account in a book called The Deeds of King Henry V.

1. The King decided to march through Normandy to Calais, a hundred miles distant even though dysentery had killed far more of our men than had the sword. We had but 900 knights and 5000 archers fit to fight. Commanding the army to take stores for eight days, he fearlessly began the march on Tuesday 8 October.

5. On the Sunday we came to the town of Abbeville, where we hoped to cross the River Somme. There our scouts told us that the bridges had been broken. Dejected, we moved on, only to find more bridges broken and a great French army in battle formation on the far side of the river. Faint with hunger we expected to be overwhelmed by this huge enemy. I, who am writing this, and many others looked in bitterness to Heaven, calling on St George to ask God to help us.

10. Without any other hope, we hurried on, searching for a way across the river so that we could reach Calais.

   Suddenly, by God's will, the King was told of a ford across the river. Immediately, King Henry sent a force of knights and archers across the river to protect the rest of the army while it crossed. We started our crossing at about one o'clock and it was only an hour short of nightfall before we were all across. We spent a cheerful night, hoping that the French army would not follow us any further.
Next day, we found the roads quite remarkably churned up by a French army, many thousands strong. Fearing battle, we raised our hearts and eyes to Heaven, crying out for God to have pity on us and save us from death.

We moved onwards. On 24 October we saw, about half a mile away, the grim-looking ranks of the French army. They filled the fields like a countless swarm of locusts. Our King, very calmly and quite heedless of danger, encouraged his army and drew them up for immediate action. Then every man confessed his sins to God. One knight, Sir Walter Hungerford, said to the King that he wished he had an extra 10,000 of the best archers in England. ‘That is a foolish way to talk’, said the King, ‘I would not have a single man more than I do. These I have with me are God’s people. Don’t you believe that God will be able to overcome the French?’

The enemy watched us. As darkness fell, we could hear the French calling out to their friends and servants. It is said they were so sure of victory that they threw dice for our King and his nobles.

On the morrow, Friday 25 October, the Feast of Saints Crispin and Crispinian, the French stood in their battle lines across our road to Calais, in the field of Agincourt. The number of them was truly terrifying. They placed squadrons of cavalry, hundreds strong, on each flank, to break down our archers. Their vanguard consisted of dismounted knights, the pick of their forces, with a forest of spears and gleaming helmets, with more cavalry on their flanks. They had thirty times more than all our men put together.

Our King, after praising God, made ready for the battle. He drew up a single battle line of knights and placed wedges of archers among the knights. The archers drove sharpened stakes into the ground in front of them to stop the French cavalry charge. I and the other priests prayed to God. I was sitting on a horse among the baggage at the rear of the battle. The French cavalry charged against our archers but they were forced back under the stinging hail of arrows. Many were also stopped by the stakes in the ground. Then the French nobility advanced on foot, but, afraid of our arrows which pierced their visors and helmets, they broke into three columns and attacked our line in three places. They hurled themselves against our men and threw them back almost a spear’s length.

Then the battle raged at its fiercest. Our archers notched their arrows and loosed them into the enemy’s flanks and, when all their arrows had been fired, they seized axes, swords and spears and struck and stabbed at the enemy. God increased our men’s strength, which had been weakened by lack of food and illness. Fear and trembling seized the French. There was such a great pile of the dead that our men climbed up onto the heaps and butchered their enemies down below. After two or three hours, the French were put to flight.

In that great French army died three dukes, five counts, more than 90 barons, over 1500 knights and 4–5000 others. Out of our little band there were found dead on the field no more than nine or ten persons, as well as the duke of York and the earl of Suffolk and two new knights. No prince ever commanded his people on the march with more bravery and consideration or performed greater feats of strength in battle. No king ever achieved so much in so short a time or returned home with so great and glorious a triumph. To God alone be the honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.
Is John’s account of what happened after his death accurate?

Activity

1. Read John’s account of what happened after his death very carefully.
   a) Mark all the statements that you think are accurate or fair in blue.
   b) Mark all the statements that you think are inaccurate or unfair in red.

2. Briefly explain why each of the statements in red is inaccurate or unfair.

3. Which of the following statements do you agree with?
   a) John is mainly telling lies about what happened after his death.
   b) Most of what John says is fair and accurate, but he does exaggerate a few points.
   c) John is being very selective. He has only chosen information that makes himself look good.

   Explain your answer.


A brief history of the Middle Ages by John I

Clearly, the king was the master in the Middle Ages. Parliament had been created but it didn’t take away any royal power. Kings were still firmly in control in 1500. The barons tried to destroy royal power … but they failed.

I must say I’m disappointed that no one conquered the rest of Britain after my death. It should have been an easy task. After all, I’d done all the hard work. The kings that followed me must have been poor soldiers or very lazy. No one repeated my successes in Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

Later monarchs also struggled to reconquer France. A few kings won the odd battle here and there, but no one came close to regaining the land that Philip II of France stole from me. I may have failed in France (because of all that bad luck), but so did every other English king. Not that I am very surprised. If I couldn’t control France, who
**WORKSHEET 30**

**The Knowledge Files**

**ACTIVITY**

Look at the picture below.

a) Highlight the questions that you can answer after working through this book.

b) Which questions remain unanswered?
**The History Skills Wall**

**Activity**

1. Look carefully at the History Skills Wall.
   
a) Which new skills have you learned through studying this book? Highlight them in red.
   
b) Which skills have you improved? Highlight them in blue.
   
c) Which skills do you need to develop further? Highlight them in green.

2. Before you begin your next history topic, design an action plan for yourself. Set yourself three targets to improve your work in history and list the skills that you will need to practise to reach these targets.

3. The skills that you have developed will help you become better at history. However you will also be able to use them in other subjects. Circle those skills which are useful in other subjects.

**Action Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>During the next unit of work in history I aim to reach the following targets</th>
<th>I will need to practise the following skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
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