

### What does "civil rights" mean?

Civil rights are basic rights that every citizen has under the laws of the government. In the United States the civil rights of each individual citizen are protected by the Constitution. Civil rights for every person means that regardless of gender, skin color, religion, nationality, age, disability, or religion, a person should not be discriminated against. Civil rights include the right to free speech, privacy, religion, assembly, a fair trial, and freedom of thought. The term "civil rights" comes from the Latin term "ius civis", which means "rights of a citizen." Anyone who is considered a citizen of a country should be treated equally under the law. Civil Rights Movements Throughout history there have been different civil rights movements. Each movement fought for the rights of a given section of the population that was being discriminated against. For example, the women's suffrage movement fought for the right for women to vote. You can learn more about some of these movements by clicking the links below. African-American Civil Rights Movement Apartheid Disability Rights Native American Rights Slavery and Abolitionism Women's Suffrage Civil Rights Leaders During each civil rights movement there have been men and women who have led the fight for their own rights as well as those of others. In many cases these leaders have put their lives in danger by standing up for what they believe to be right. Some of these leaders are listed below: Susan B. Anthony Ruby Bridges Cesar Chavez Frederick Douglass Mohandas Gandhi Helen Keller Martin Luther King, Jr. Nelson Mandela Thurgood Marshall Rosa Parks Jackie Robinson Elizabeth Cady Stanton Mother Teresa Sojourner Truth Harriet Tubman Booker T. Washington Ida B. Wells Malcolm X Events and Other Information Below you can find other information on the history of civil rights including events, timelines, and a glossary of terms. Jim Crow Laws Montgomery Bus Boycott Little Rock Nine Birmingham Campaign March on Washington Civil Rights Act of 1964 Civil Rights Timeline African-American Civil Rights Timeline Magna Carta Bill of Rights Emancipation Proclamation Glossary and Terms Why are civil rights important? Maintaining and protecting civil rights can be one of the most important functions of the government. Civil rights protect every one of us, not just some of us. They insure that each citizen is protected from discrimination under the law. Civil rights laws in the United States make sure that all citizens can enjoy "life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness" that are promised in the Declaration of Independence.

1. Explain civil rights in your own words:

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2. Do you think everyone should be treated equally or should everyone be treated equally fair, why:

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3. How do you think that America could do to make sure that civil rights are extended to all fairly?

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## **The Importance of the Magna Carta on the Civil Rights Movement**

In 1215, King John of England was forced to sign the Magna Carta stating that the king was not above the law of the land and protecting the rights of the people. Today, the Magna Carta is considered one of the most important documents in the history of democracy.

### **Background**

John became king in 1199 when his brother, Richard the Lionheart, died without any children. John had a bad temper and could be very cruel. He was not liked by the English Barons. John also had to deal with a lot of issues while he was king. He was constantly at war with France. To fight this war he placed heavy taxes on the Barons of England. He also angered the Pope and was excommunicated from the church.

### **The Barons Rebel**

By 1215, the barons of northern England had had enough of John's high taxes. They decided to rebel. Led by Baron Robert Fitzwalter, they marched on London calling themselves the "army of God". After taking London, John agreed to negotiate with them.

### **Signing the Magna Carta**

King John met the barons on June 15, 1215 at Runnymede, a neutral site just west of London. Here the barons demanded that King John sign a document called the Magna Carta guaranteeing them certain rights. By signing the document, King John agreed to do his duty as King of England, upholding the law and running a fair government. In return, the barons agreed to stand down and surrender London.

### **Civil War**

It turns out that neither side had any intention of following the agreement. Not long after signing, King John attempted to nullify the agreement. He even had the Pope declare the document "illegal and unjust". At the same time, the barons didn't surrender London. Soon the country of England was facing civil war. The barons, led by Robert Fitzwalter, were supported by French troops. For a year the barons fought King John in what is called the First Barons' War. However, King John died in 1216, putting a quick end to the war.

### **Details of the Magna Carta**

The Magna Carta was not a short document. There were actually 63 clauses in the document outlining various laws that the barons wanted the King to enforce. Some of the rights these clauses promised included: Protection of church rights Access to swift justice No new taxes without the Barons' agreement Limitations on feudal payments Protection from illegal imprisonment A council of 25 Barons who would insure that King John followed the laws

### **Legacy**

Although King John did not follow the agreement, the ideas put forth in the Magna Carta became lasting principles of liberty to the English. Three of the clauses are still in force as English law including the freedom of the English Church, the "ancient liberties" of the City of London, and the right to due process. The ideas of the Magna Carta also influenced the constitutions and development of other countries. The American colonists used the rights guaranteed in the document as a reason to rebel and form their own country. Many of these rights are written into the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Read more at: [http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle\\_ages/king\\_john\\_magna\\_carta.php](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/king_john_magna_carta.php)

## Research Topics About Civil Rights:

<b>Movements:</b>	<b>Major Events:</b>	<b>Civil Rights Leaders:</b>
<b>African-American Civil Rights Movement</b> <b>Apartheid</b> <b>Disability Rights</b> <b>Native American Rights</b> <b>Slavery</b> <b>Abolitionism</b> <b>Women's Suffrage</b>	<b>The Magna Carta</b> <b>Jim Crow Laws</b> <b>Montgomery Bus Boycott</b> <b>Little Rock Nine</b> <b>Birmingham Campaign</b> <b>March on Washington</b> <b>Civil Rights Act of 1964</b>	<b>Susan B. Anthony</b> <b>Ruby Bridges</b> <b>Cesar Chavez</b> <b>Frederick Douglass</b> <b>Mohandas Gandhi</b> <b>Helen Keller</b> <b>Martin Luther King, Jr.</b> <b>Nelson Mandela</b> <b>Thurgood Marshall</b> <b>Rosa Parks</b> <b>Jackie Robinson</b> <b>Elizabeth Cady Stanton</b> <b>Mother Teresa</b> <b>Sojourner Truth</b> <b>Harriet Tubman</b> <b>Booker T. Washington</b> <b>Ida B. Wells</b>

Read more at: [http://www.ducksters.com/history/civil\\_rights/african-american\\_civil\\_rights\\_movement.php](http://www.ducksters.com/history/civil_rights/african-american_civil_rights_movement.php)

# Magna Carta

## Test Quiz

Questions on this quiz are based on information from  
Magna Carta.

1. The king of what country was forced to sign the Magna Carta?
  - a. France
  - b. England
  - c. Spain
  - d. Germany
  - e. Denmark
2. Which king signed the Magna Carta?
  - a. Edward III
  - b. Richard I
  - c. Henry VIII
  - d. John
  - e. James I
3. What year was the Magna Carta signed?
  - a. 1066
  - b. 1114
  - c. 1215
  - d. 1392
  - e. 1401
4. True or False: Both sides thought the agreement was good for the country and had every intention of keeping it.
  - a. TRUE
  - b. FALSE
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.
5. What happened after the document was signed?
  - a. Civil war between the barons and king broke out
  - b. The king became a much better ruler
  - c. The barons gave up London
  - d. All of the above
  - e. None of the above
6. In what language was the Magna Carta written?
  - a. English
  - b. Spanish
  - c. French
  - d. German
  - e. Latin

7. What government body was eventually formed from the council of 25 barons?
- a. Politburo
  - b. Congress
  - c. Senate
  - d. Parliament
  - e. Cabinet
8. True or False: Some of the clauses of the Magna Carta are still in force as English law.
- a. TRUE
  - b. FALSE
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.
9. What finally put an end to the civil war between the barons and the king?
- a. They signed a peace treaty
  - b. The pope intervened
  - c. The king defeated the barons and had them replaced
  - d. They signed another agreement called the Magna Carta II
  - e. King John died
10. Which of the below was NOT a part of the Magna Carta?
- a. The protection of church rights
  - b. A council of 25 barons to watch over the king
  - c. The right for each free man to vote for king
  - d. No new taxes without the agreement of the barons
  - e. Protection from illegal imprisonment

**About this quiz:** All the questions on this quiz are based on information that can be found on the [Magna Carta](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/king_john_magna_carta.php) page at /history/middle\_ages/king\_john\_magna\_carta.php.

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