

# Magna Carta - 1215

- document signed in England in 1215 by King John and his Barons (lords)
- purpose was to...
  - limit the power of the King of England
  - establish laws all citizens had to abide by, including the king
- reason behind Barons (lords) wanting MC especially had to do w/ outrageous tax

levels John kept increasing

- Barons revolted against John, march on London, capture him

- John had to accept his rule wasn't arbitrary, meaning...

- he couldn't just have someone punished because he said so

- punishment only occurred after process of law was completed

- One part of MC said...

- a committee of 25 Barons could be elected at any time to over rule actions

of King, or...

-if King overstepped provisions of MC

-this led to concept of a Parliament (or Congress) to separate powers of government

-John had no intention of abiding by MC

-claimed he was forced to sign under threat

-Pope sided w/ John

-John's eventual rejection sends England into civil war

-Barons had re-sworn

allegiance to John after  
he signed it  
-many other English monarchs,  
both male & female, will ignore  
MC, most notably...  
Henry VIII

## Importance

- A) true beginnings of modern era concept of Rule of Law as opposed to Rule of One or Rule of Few
- B) MC includes idea of Due Process

Or... an accused person must be granted opportunity to defend self... leads to concept of trial by jury

C) MC is influential to US Founding Fathers who wrote US Constitution, especially Bill of Rights

D) serfs were not protected by MC, but process begins as many will start to say all citizens will/should eventually have rights protected under law