## Topic 1 Content: The Rise of England as a Nation-State

#### Introduction



Click the numbers to reveal a timeline. Exit the interactivity when you are done exploring the content.



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#### William the Conqueror



With the line of succession in England unclear after the death of King Edward, William the Conqueror of Normandy launched the Norman Conquest in the eleventh century A.D. (C.E.) in an effort to wear the English crown. William was crowned king after his forces' victory at the Battle of Hastings in 1066 A.D. (C.E.).

Once William obtained the crown and secured his control, he organized England into a more structured feudal government. He also developed a system of taxation by collecting an annual land tax based on the value of landholdings. This was the only universal tax collected by rulers at this time. To do this, William performed the first census in England since Romans had been there: he sent people to count every farm, every person, and even every pig and chicken, ultimately compiling the information into the Domesday books, and determining the kingdom's worth. Today, this book is still important because it reveals a lot of information regarding daily life in medieval times. Another result of the Norman Conquest was the gradual emergence of new English culture that sprung from the intermarriages between Normans and Anglo-Saxons.



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#### Henry II

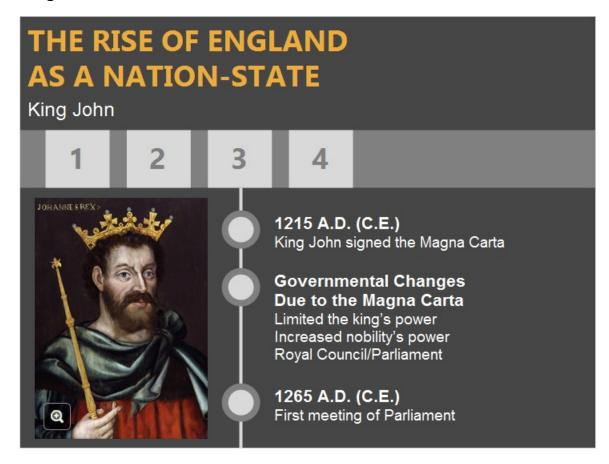


The next king to make great strides toward a nation-state was Henry II, who became king in 1154 A.D. (C.E.). Henry II developed a system of law that promoted fairness and equality. To do this, he instated a jury system that reached verdicts after evaluating common local knowledge. Of course, this system is much different than our court systems today. Henry II also unified the court system by sending judges throughout the country to hear and resolve various disputes, ultimately recording the cases. Subsequent judges were bound to follow the decision of an earlier judge in a similar case. This created a common law system throughout England.



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#### King John

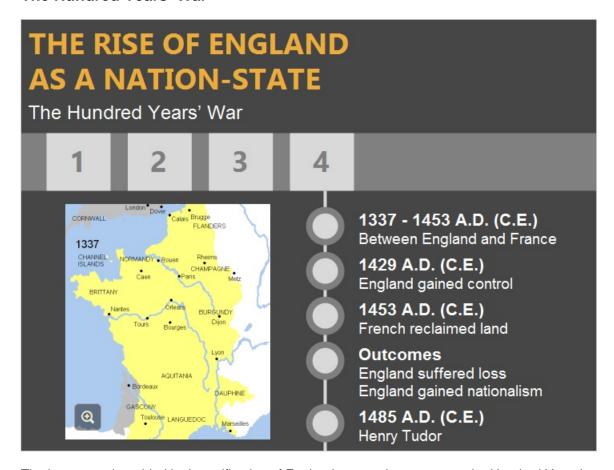


In 1215 A.D. (C.E.), King John was forced to sign the Magna Carta, a document that mandated no free man could be punished except through law. This right is still in existence today. The Magna Carta limited the power of the king, and increased the power of nobility. It also stated that the king could no longer collect taxes without consent from the Royal Council. Today, the Royal Council is known as the Parliament, and is a type of representative government that makes legislative decisions on behalf of the people. England's first Parliament met in official capacity to advise the king in 1265 A.D. (C.E.) under King Edward I. The government that governs England today is still bicameral, or has two "houses," although both the House of Lords and the House of Commons are modernized and much more democratic. In the beginning, the clergy and nobles met in the House of Lords, while knights and important townspeople met in the House of Commons.



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#### The Hundred Years' War



The last event that aided in the unification of England as a nation-state was the Hundred Years' War, a war that took place between England and France as they struggled to control French territories. The war lasted from 1337 to 1453 A.D. (C.E.), a little over one hundred years. You can see from the gray area on the map that England initially gained a lot of control over France in 1429 A.D. (C.E.). With a victory in 1453 A.D. (C.E.), the French reclaimed that land, which is indicated in yellow on the map. In the end, England failed to gain control over French territory, and suffered many causalities. However, the war helped unify England by giving its people a sense of nationalism, or a feeling of loyalty to their country and people. After the Hundred Years' War, England experienced a series of civil conflicts in which nobles fought for control of the monarchy. Known as the War of the Roses, the fighting came to an end when Henry Tudor established a new dynasty in 1485 A.D. (C.E.), and gained support for his strong monarchy.

