RS Notes: The Magna Carta

History

* King John succeeded his brother, Richard I
  + He lacked his bro’s military prowess
  + Spent most of reign regaining lost land in France
    - To pay for this, he taxed his subjects harshly
  + Battle of Bouvines (July 1214) marked the end of English hopes of regaining Normandy
    - He was no longer able to resist the barons’ demand that their liberties be confirmed
  + June 15, 1215, at Runnymede he agreed to the ***Magna Carta***
    - He never actually signed it, but it did carry his seal

Importance

* King John was forced to approve this, but tried to get the Pope to annul it
  + He issued a papal bull saying that it was “as unjust and unlawful as it is base and shameful”
  + It was never annulled
* The Magna Carta paved the way for our current system of government
  + It was the original model of modern British democratic constitution
    - Our government is based off of theirs
      * *Note: This will be explained in more detail in a later unit.*
* The Magna Carta placed limits upon the absolute power of the king and made him subject to the law
  + The most famous clause states that a man who commits a crime must be properly tried by the law (in the Bill of Rights)
  + It also contained clauses relating to the treatment of heirs and widows and to the payment of debts
  + It provided for uniform measures of wine, ale, corn and cloth throughout the realm
* When the US was founded, we knew we did not want to be under the tyranny of a king, like in England.
  + The Founding Fathers used the Magna Carta as a basis for creating a government that does not allow one person to rule absolutely