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