Rules for Rulers

Trace how three English documents limited royal power.

6.C.4 "Examine key ideas of the Magna Carta (1215), the Petition of Right (1628), and the English Bill of Rights (1689) as documents to place limits on the English monarchy and how they have affected the shaping of other governments."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one rule that limits the monarch in each paragraph. Circle the people or group named in that rule to compare whose power or rights each document protects.

When English Rulers Faced Limits

1 In 1215, English barons faced a king who demanded money and punished opponents. They forced King John to seal the Magna Carta, or Great Charter. It said the king could not demand certain payments without the agreement of leading men. It also said a free person could not be jailed or lose property without lawful judgment or the law of the land. These protections did not cover everyone equally. Still, the charter put a bold idea in writing: even a king must follow the law.

2 Centuries later, England's rulers still clashed with Parliament over power. In 1628, Parliament presented King Charles I with the Petition of Right. It argued that the king could not collect taxes without Parliament's approval or imprison people without giving a lawful reason. It also objected to forcing people to house soldiers in their homes. Charles accepted the petition but later acted against its limits. Parliament had used a written document to challenge royal actions and defend rights it believed English people already had.

3 In 1689, after Parliament offered the crown to William and Mary, the English Bill of Rights set more rules for rulers. Monarchs could not suspend laws or raise taxes without Parliament's consent. The document also protected free elections to Parliament and the right to petition the monarch. Together, these three documents helped build the idea that government power has limits. Later governments drew on that idea. For example, the United States Constitution limits government power, and the U.S. Bill of Rights protects rights such as the right to petition.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did both the Magna Carta and the Petition of Right limit a ruler's power to demand money? Who had to agree in each case?

2. What limit on jailing people appears in both the Magna Carta and the Petition of Right?

3. The Petition of Right and the English Bill of Rights both limited taxes. What additional limit or protection did the English Bill of Rights set?

4. According to the passage, how did the idea shared by these three documents shape later government in the United States? Give one example.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine an island government with a ruler and an elected council. Write a three-sentence charter that sets two different limits on the ruler, each inspired by a different document in the passage, and explains how one limit would protect people.

ANSWER KEY

Rules for Rulers

GRADE 6 · 6.C.4

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one rule that limits the monarch in each paragraph. Circle the people or group named in that rule to compare whose power or rights each document protects. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did both the Magna Carta and the Petition of Right limit a ruler's power to demand money? Who had to agree in each case?	**The Magna Carta required the agreement of leading men for certain payments. The Petition of Right said the king could not collect taxes without Parliament's approval.**
2	What limit on jailing people appears in both the Magna Carta and the Petition of Right?	**Both rejected jailing people without a lawful basis. The Magna Carta required lawful judgment or the law of the land, while the Petition of Right called for a lawful reason.**
3	The Petition of Right and the English Bill of Rights both limited taxes. What additional limit or protection did the English Bill of Rights set?	**Accept any one: monarchs could not suspend laws without Parliament's consent; elections to Parliament had to be free; people had the right to petition the monarch.**
4	According to the passage, how did the idea shared by these three documents shape later government in the United States? Give one example.	**The documents helped build the idea that government power has limits. The U.S. Constitution limits government power, or the U.S. Bill of Rights protects the right to petition.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Inspired by the Magna Carta, the ruler may not take a fisher's boat unless a court decides the seizure follows the law. Inspired by the English Bill of Rights, voters must be free to choose council members without the ruler choosing the winners. The first rule protects people from losing their belongings just because the ruler wants them.

For the open task, accept any two distinct limits tied accurately to two different documents, plus an explanation of how one protects people. Students may adapt the limits to the island setting.