Rules for Rulers

Read how two English documents limited power and protected rights.

7.C.6.2.C "Describe influences of early English tradition related to the principles of limited government and individual rights, such as found in the Magna Carta and established by the English Bill of Rights."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two limits on a ruler's power, circle two protections for people, and number each mark 1 for Magna Carta or 2 for the English Bill of Rights. Use your marks to compare the documents.

When Rulers Faced Rules

1. In 1215, English barons pressed King John to accept Magna Carta, a written agreement about royal power. John had demanded heavy payments and angered many powerful people. Magna Carta said the king could not collect certain payments without the kingdom's common counsel. It also said a free person could not be imprisoned or punished except by lawful judgment or the law of the land. These rules put written limits on a ruler, though they did not protect everyone equally in 1215.

2. Centuries later, a dispute over royal power led Parliament to offer the crown to William and Mary. In 1689, they accepted the English Bill of Rights. It said a monarch could not suspend laws or raise taxes without Parliament's consent. It also called for free elections to Parliament and protected the right to petition the king. Those rules made the ruler answer to another part of government while giving people ways to challenge decisions. Yet voting and other protections still did not reach everyone living in England.

3. Think of a ruler who orders a tax and then jails a critic without a lawful judgment. The two English documents offer different checks on those actions. Magna Carta placed early limits on royal demands and punishment. The English Bill of Rights strengthened Parliament's role in lawmaking and taxes and named further protections. Over time, English colonists in North America drew on this tradition when arguing that rulers must obey laws and respect rights. Neither document created equal rights for all, but both helped shape later ideas about limited government.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did each document limit a ruler's power to demand money?

2. How did Magna Carta protect a free person from a ruler's punishment?

3. How did free elections and the right to petition, named in the English Bill of Rights, give people ways to challenge power?

4. How could English colonists use the tradition described in the passage to argue against a ruler who claimed laws did not apply to him?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A school leader removes students from a club without following school rules and refuses to read their written concerns. In four or five sentences, propose two fair school rules to prevent these actions, and explain how one resembles a protection in Magna Carta and the other resembles a protection in the English Bill of Rights.

ANSWER KEY

Rules for Rulers

GRADE 7 · 7.C.6.2.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two limits on a ruler's power, circle two protections for people, and number each mark 1 for Magna Carta or 2 for the English Bill of Rights. Use your marks to compare the documents. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did each document limit a ruler's power to demand money?	**Magna Carta required the kingdom's common counsel for certain payments. The English Bill of Rights required Parliament's consent to raise taxes.**
2	How did Magna Carta protect a free person from a ruler's punishment?	**It said a free person could not be imprisoned or punished except by lawful judgment or the law of the land.**
3	How did free elections and the right to petition, named in the English Bill of Rights, give people ways to challenge power?	**Free elections helped people choose members of Parliament, while petitions gave them a way to bring concerns to the king.**
4	How could English colonists use the tradition described in the passage to argue against a ruler who claimed laws did not apply to him?	**They could argue that rulers must obey laws and respect rights, as the English documents required.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Before removing students from a club, the school leader should follow the school's written rules. That resembles Magna Carta's protection against punishment outside the law. Students should also be allowed to send written concerns to the leader and receive a reply. That resembles the right to petition protected by the English Bill of Rights.

Accept accurate explanations in students' own words. For Part 3, look for two workable school rules and a clear, distinct connection to each English document.