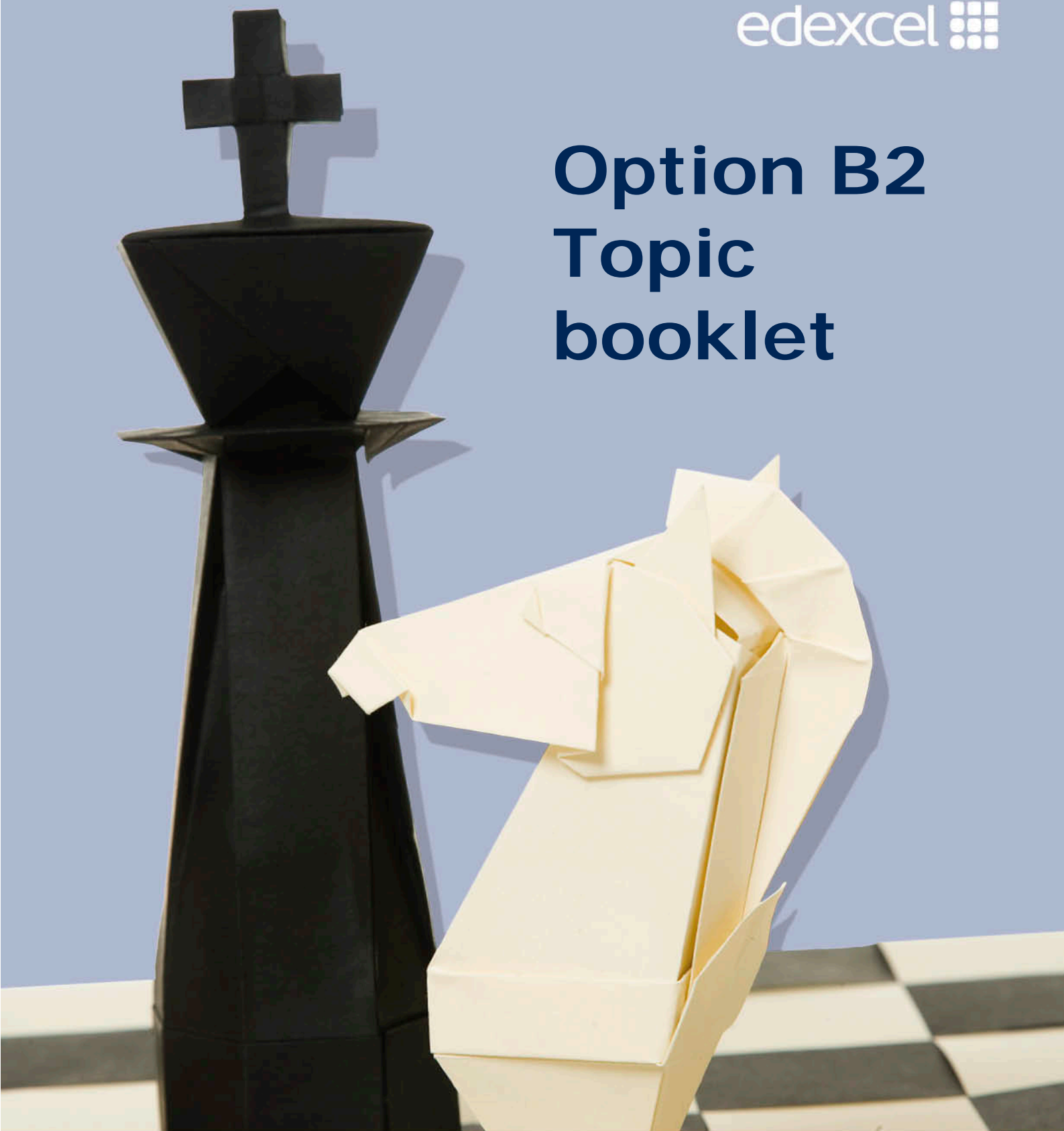


Option B2 Topic booklet



The reigns of King Richard I and King John, 1189–1216

GCSE (9-1) History

Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in History (1HI0)

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Version 4 (March 2025)

This topic booklet has been updated to include changes made to new issues of the specification and sample assessment materials.

- Issue 5: language and assessment changes, for first assessment June 2025.
- Issue 6: content changes, for first teaching September 2024 and first assessment June 2026.

Information on new resources has also been added.

Summary guidance on the changes can be found [here](#).

1. Overview

The two brothers, Richard I and John, are commemorated very differently. Outside the Houses of Parliament, a Victorian statue depicts Richard I as a glorious warrior; no mention is made of his battle atrocities or the fact that he spent only six months as king in England. In contrast, his younger brother is remembered for failure in a memorial at Runnymede in Surrey; it marks the signing of Magna Carta and John's greatest humiliation. This depth study, by focusing on the years 1189–1216, allows students to develop a greater appreciation of this pivotal period. The content is divided into three key topics covering government and society, the overseas exploits of Richard I and John and finally, the collapse of John's kingship.

Most students will know something of this period from its popular depiction in the tales of Robin Hood. While that does have some basis in truth, this GCSE option allows the reality to be discovered, including how England, at the start of 1189, was just one part of the Angevin Empire. The Roman Catholic Church provided another source of international authority, with the power to inspire Richard I to fight a brutal Middle Eastern war or even the power to imperil people's souls through using the weapons of Interdict and excommunication against John. Meanwhile, amid the grand politics, life inside England continued and this option addresses aspects of social history by looking at the difficult lives of the peasant classes and England's Jewish community, as well as life and work in towns.

Medieval kings could be terrifying. Historians have often referred to the concept of Angevin despotism when looking at the reigns of Richard I and John. They wielded power absolutely. Added to this was the Angevin temper: John is widely believed to have murdered his nephew. While Richard's majesty ultimately ensured the support of the 'great men' of English society, under John, the monarchy's authority collapsed. His reign provides a fascinating case study into how not to rule. John's failure also changed the world. While Magna Carta had little impact at the time, it has come to be seen as embodying democratic values, helping inspire the American Revolution and the framing of the US Constitution. This option is therefore an ideal introduction to political concepts and institutions.

The three key topics provide a framework for teaching and understanding the option but should not be taken in isolation from each other. There is chronological overlap between the topics and this structure helps highlight the complexity and interplay of different aspects within society.

1.1 Assessment (from June 2025)

Students answer four questions for the British depth study: Questions 1(a) and (b), Question 2 and either Question 3 or Question 4.

- Questions 1(a) and (b): these are compulsory and target AO1. Each question asks students to describe one feature.
- Question 2: this is compulsory and targets AO1/AO2. It focuses on causation.
- Questions 3/4: students have a choice of two questions. These target AO1/AO2 and require a judgement. They may focus on any of the following: similarity, difference, change, continuity, causation, consequence, or significance.
(Note: there is no SPaG mark awarded.)

Detailed information and guidance on assessment can be found in the separate [Getting Started Guide](#).

2. Content guidance

2.1 Summary of content

Life and government in England, 1189–1216

The first key topic provides an overview of life and government in England during the reigns of Richard I and John. Students should understand that its dominant feature was the feudal system which was based on grants of land in return for loyalty and knight service; this underpinned the relationship between the king and his 'great men', made up of the barons and the clergy. The feudal hierarchy also extended downwards to the manorial lord and his peasant tenants at the bottom of society. However, students should appreciate that England was more complex than this traditional feudal structure suggests; while the patterns of agricultural life in England had hardly changed since the Norman Conquest, the rural population was rapidly expanding, and towns and trade were flourishing.

Students should be aware that, from the reign of William I, Jewish people had been encouraged to settle in a number of towns in England but that antisemitism did create continuous underlying tensions that often surfaced in the form of direct attacks and discriminatory practices. Students should understand that Richard's accession coincided with a period of attacks and discrimination and should be able to describe and explain developments in the years 1189–1216.

Students should understand the huge powers the monarch wielded and the importance of securing the succession; whereas the transition from Henry II to his son, Richard I, was effectively unchallenged, John faced a challenge from his nephew Arthur, who was supported by King Philip of France. They should understand the importance of ruling effectively and the role of personality in governing, as highlighted by the government of England under Richard and John. Students should be aware of England's position with regard to the Angevin Empire and that power had to be delegated to justiciars and that money for foreign adventures on the Continent and Middle East had to be raised.

Involvements overseas, 1189–1204

The second key topic is focused on the contrasting overseas experiences of Richard I and John. Students should be aware that England in this period was far from an isolated kingdom; it was part of the vast Angevin Empire and with wider obligations to protect the Christian Church. They should understand Richard's reasons, following Jerusalem's fall to the Muslim forces of Saladin, for embarking on the Third Crusade, and how he used his professional, disciplined army, to take the port city of Acre and defeat Saladin at Arsuf. They should also understand that Richard's campaign had flaws; he failed to capture Jerusalem, the goal of the Crusades. They should be aware of the consequences of his arrogance in leadership, angering his fellow leaders, including King Phillip II of France. Richard I's capture during his return from the Holy Land and the demand for a huge ransom should be covered.

Students should understand that Richard I spent the final five years of his life successfully fighting against King Phillip II of France over Normandy. They should understand too the cost and importance of the construction of Chateau Gaillard on Normandy's frontiers, and that Richard's hope that this would be his lasting legacy proved unfulfilled. They should understand that John was incapable of matching his brother's exploits and that, by 1204, he had lost control of Richard's great castle and then Normandy itself. Students should appreciate the impact of this loss and that it was caused principally by John's own poor decision-making.

King John's downfall, 1205–1216

The final key topic is focused on John's downfall in the decade following the loss of Normandy. Students should understand that, during this period, John's use of arbitrary power progressively alienated many of the 'great men' of the nation whose support he needed to rule. Students should appreciate the significance of, and understand the impact of, the Interdict and excommunication after John refused to accept the Pope's nomination for Archbishop of Canterbury and became embroiled in a bitter dispute with the Papacy. Students should understand that while John was able to win back papal approval in 1213, by this point support among the baronial class had been weakened. They should recognise that this resentment partly stemmed from John's often unjust and unwelcome involvement in the day-to-day government of England, but that chiefly it reflected the huge financial extortions demanded by John to fund his military re-conquest of Normandy. Students should understand the impact of the failure to regain Normandy in 1214, with a small but significant section of England's barons going into open revolt, winning the upper hand in the first baronial war and forcing John to sign Magna Carta in an attempt to limit his power and secure good governance. While the Charter would have long-lasting significance, students should recognise that at the time it was quickly annulled, leading to the second baronial war, French involvement in which tipped the balance against John. Students should understand the condition of England at the time of John's death in 1216 when a minor acceded to the throne, with William Marshal in the role of Protector.

Key terms

It may be useful at the start of the course to provide students with a list of key terms and concepts that they will need to be familiar with for this option. Students should be familiar with the terminology found in the specification content.

The list of terms below is not intended to be a comprehensive checklist, rather simply a useful starting point for teachers to produce their own list of terms that their students may not fully understand or have difficulty spelling.

Students should also be familiar with broad terms, such as economic, government, political, religious and social.

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| • Angevin | • Interdict |
| • antisemitism | • itinerant kingship |
| • Aquitaine | • justiciar |
| • arbitrary power | • Magna Carta |
| • archbishop | • overlord |
| • baron | • papal |
| • bishop | • pogrom |
| • chivalry | • ransom |
| • crusade | • regent |
| • demesne | • revenue |
| • excommunication | • scutage |
| • feudal system | • sheriff |
| • fief | • succession |
| • forfeit | • tenants-in-chief |
| • hierarchy | • vassal |
| • homage | |

2. Content guidance

2.2 Content exemplification

This section provides additional guidance on the specification content. It should be remembered that the official specification is the only authoritative source of information and should always be referred to for definitive guidance. Any examples provided here do not constitute additional specification content and other relevant material illustrating aspects of the specification can be used.

Key topic 1: Life and government in England, 1189–1216		Exemplification
1 The feudal system	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The feudal hierarchy and the nature of feudalism (landholding, homage, knight service, labour service); forfeiture.• The role and influence of the Church.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The feudal system in which land was held directly from the king or indirectly through a lord in return for knight service. Feudal ceremonies such as homage and oath taking to confirm the relationship between lord and vassal. Peasant tenants, at the bottom of the feudal structure, who had to meet obligations to their lord including labour service. The role of forfeiture.• The Church's responsibility for England's spiritual well-being. Its huge wealth and political power. Archbishops, bishops and abbots, among the 'great men' of the nation, with a role advising the king. The influence of the Church on everyday life. Papal authority over the English Church. The concept of Christendom as a force creating links with Europe.
2 Kingship and succession	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The nature of kingship: duties, rights, rituals.• Richard I as king: his claim to the throne; how power was secured; his character.• John as king: his claim to the throne; how power was secured and the murder of Prince Arthur; John's character.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kingship in the medieval period as a 'personal business'. The king as the country's chief decision maker and with huge powers, for example to make laws, decide on foreign and domestic policy, raise an army and mint coins. The expectation that the king would protect England from all threats, administer justice, supervise the Church and govern in the best interests of his people. The symbolic display of the king's majesty to the wider public in regular crown-wearing ceremonies.• Richard's peaceful inheritance of the English throne following the death of his father, Henry II. His retention of the support of the English nobility as king, despite long absences from England, partly as a result of his charismatic personality.• Richard's death and lack of heir; designation of John as his heir. The claim to the throne of John's nephew, Arthur of Brittany; the backing for his claim for example from many French nobles as well as King Philip II of France. John's capture of Arthur in 1202 in a surprise attack, and the reaction to the subsequent murder of Arthur in a chivalric age.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> John's limitations, such as lacking the diplomacy of his father and generalship of his brother. The suspicious nature of his character, which alienated many barons.
3 Royal government and finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How England was governed when Richard was absent, 1189–99, and during King John's continued presence in England, 1199–1216. Royal revenues: the royal demesne and the role of sheriffs in collecting revenues; feudal incidents; scutage; taxes on moveables and income in 1207. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government of England by justiciars, when Richard spent only six months of his ten-year reign in England, and the mixed results of this. For example, the unpopularity of William Longchamp who was removed in 1191 and the well-regarded work of Hubert Walter who was in post 1193–98. John's role during Richard's reign, his involvement in rebellion and his relationship with Philip of France. John's far greater role in the running of England following the loss of his Continental lands in 1204. The identification of his rule with oppressive government. The need to finance foreign adventures under both Richard I and John, and the pressures this placed on royal income. The main regular royal revenue from the royal demesne (land held directly by the king) through rents and the sale of crops and livestock, and collection devolved to sheriffs. Income from feudal rights over the barons including scutage (payment in lieu of military service) and reliefs (inheritance tax). John's exploitation of these. John's introduction of new taxes, including a version of income tax in 1207.
4 English society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Countryside: the nature of agriculture and peasant life. Towns: life in towns; their role in the economy. Jews in Medieval England: legal status; role in moneylending; antisemitism; the causes and extent of the pogroms of 1189–90, including the significance of the coronation of Richard I; royal exploitation via taxes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> England as an agrarian society based on a manorial economy. Wool as the main cash crop. The divide between the free and unfree peasants. The link between the agricultural cycle and peasant life. The continued prosperity of towns during this period. The distinctive organisation, laws and customs of towns. The position of freemen in towns. Towns as centres of local, national and international trade. Supply from England of food, raw materials and textiles, mainly to the Low Countries. The king's legal protection of Jews, the only non-Christian group allowed in England, and their status as the king's property, which also involved their exploitation through taxation. The barring of Jews from many occupations. Their leading role in moneylending, as non-Christians were able (legally) to lend money at interest. Economic envy and religious intolerance as a result of the Crusades and the rise in antisemitism throughout Europe. Widespread attacks on Jews following Richard's coronation, including, for example, the massacre at York in 1190.

2. Content guidance

Key topic 2: Involvements overseas, 1189–1204		Exemplification
1 The nature of crusading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of crusade and attitudes in England to the crusade. • The nature of the English crusading army: who they were, why they went. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of crusade stemming from the First Crusade when Jerusalem was captured by Muslim forces. The view of contemporaries that the Crusade was the highest duty a king could perform. • The men who joined the crusading army – from ‘great men’ to ordinary soldiers – and the reasons why, such as religious and financial reasons and the fulfilment of feudal duties.
2 Richard and the Third Crusade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The immediate causes of the Third Crusade; Richard’s motives for involvement in the Third Crusade. • Richard’s quarrel with Philip II; Richard’s military victories at Acre and Arsuf. • The failure to recapture Jerusalem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The launch of the Third Crusade after Saladin’s recapture of Jerusalem in 1187 – the first to involve English troops in large numbers, as Richard took an army of around 8000 professional soldiers. Richard’s decision to go on Crusade despite his need to rule a large empire, and his motivations including the chance for martial glory and his sense of duty. • The lack of trust between Richard and Phillip II as a result of their rivalry in France and the fact that they supported different claimants to the throne of Jerusalem. Philip’s decision to abandon the crusade and return to France, • Richard’s leadership – his capture of Acre within one month of arriving and massacre of Muslim prisoners. The importance of Acre as a key port, giving the crusaders a bridgehead for advancing to Jerusalem. His advance towards Jerusalem and his defeat of Saladin in their only set piece confrontation at the Battle of Arsuf. • Richard’s decisions regarding Jerusalem, for example not to launch an assault owing to the reduced size of the crusader army, his lack of resources, the strength of the city’s defences and the negotiation of a truce with Saladin in which Christians were allowed access to the city for pilgrimage.

Key topic 2: Involvements overseas, 1189–1204		Exemplification
3 Aftermath of the crusade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richard's return from the Holy Land. Richard's capture, the ransom and its burden on England. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richard's shipwreck on leaving the Holy Land in 1192 and capture by two of his enemies: Leopold, Duke of Austria, whom Richard had insulted on the Crusade, and the German Emperor Henry VI, whose rival Richard had supported in a power struggle. The impact of Richard's capture on England; as a £60,000 ransom had to be raised, a 25% tax on income was imposed and gold and silver were taken. Richard's re-assertion of his authority, his reconciliation with John.
4 Richard, John and the loss of Normandy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The competing aims of Richard and John and Phillip II in Normandy. Richard and Chateau Gaillard: its cost and importance. John and the fall of Chateau Gaillard; the loss of Normandy (1204). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phillip II's desire to dominate France – which meant resisting the ambitions of Richard and John. Richard's aim to defend his French territories and regain land lost to Phillip during his imprisonment. Intermittent warfare 1194–99 between Phillip and Richard, with Richard gaining the upper hand as a result of his superior military skill. John's relationship with Philip, for example John's oath of allegiance, Philip's anger over John's marriage to Isabelle of Angouleme, questions over John's role in the murder of his nephew Arthur, and John's financial weakness. His fluctuating military successes in his campaigns in France. The building of Chateau Gaillard from 1196. Its strategic position on the Seine, protecting the approach to Rouen, Normandy's capital. Its huge cost of £12,000. The castle's fall to Phillip in 1204, marking the end of John's control over Normandy.

2. Content guidance

Key topic 3: King John's downfall, 1205–16		Exemplification
1 The dispute with the Papacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes of the dispute. • The Interdict and its impact on everyday life. • The significance of the reconciliation between John and Innocent III. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit the power of the Roman Catholic Church and Rome's attempts to stop European monarchs making religious appointments. Pope Innocent III's call for the election of Stephen Langton as the new Archbishop of Canterbury following the death of Hubert Walter in 1205. John's refusal and the subsequent placing of England under an Interdict in 1208. • The impact of the Interdict on everyday life such as being unable to hold funerals, Mass, and marriage services. • John's excommunication and then decision in 1213 to back down to prevent Innocent III forming an alliance with Philip II. Acceptance of Langton as Archbishop and England as a fief of Rome. The Pope as an ally of John.
2 Worsening relations with the barons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing financial impositions to raise money for war with France: taxation and 'fines'; John's use of arbitrary power. The plot of 1212. • The impact of the failure to regain Normandy in 1214. • The rebellion of 1215: Northampton, Lincoln, the march on London. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John's favouritism and use of arbitrary power, Declining baronial support for John over a decade. The huge financial pressure John put the barons under in attempts to recover Normandy, for example levying scutage (payment in lieu of military service) 11 times compared to Richard's three. The case of William de Braose as an example of the use of fines with his family being starved to death following his failure to pay a huge fine. The debt of many northern barons and their plot to oust John in 1212. • The impact of John's serious failure in Normandy, for example Philip II's victory at Bouvines in 1214 and John's return to England, discredited, having wasted his huge war chest of £130,000. • Rebellion by around 39 barons out of 165, led by Robert fitz Walter. The refusal of the majority to support either the king or the rebels. The rebels' taking of London in May 1214.

Key topic 3: King John's downfall, 1205–16		Exemplification
3 Magna Carta and the First Barons' War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Runnymede: the motives of John and the barons, and the main provisions of Magna Carta. Reasons for the outbreak of the First Barons' War. The siege and taking of Rochester; the invasion of Prince Louis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The situation in 1215 and the motives of John and the barons to agree to Magna Carta. The events at Runnymede. Magna Carta – highlighting of baronial grievances, for example prohibiting of imprisonment without due process (Article 39) and the selling of justice (Article 40); establishment of a committee of 25 barons to ensure the terms of the charter were obeyed (Article 61). John's powerful supporters, for example William Marshal as well as the Pope. The Pope's annulment of Magna Carta, restarting the war. The siege of Rochester castle for seven weeks. John's re-establishment of control: by March 1216 only London was not under his control. The rebels' appeal to Philip II's son, Prince Louis, for help and the arrival of his army in Kent, forcing John into retreat.
4 England in 1216	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The condition of England at the time of John's death. The problem of the succession. The role of William Marshal as Protector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The condition of England at the time of John's death, such as rule by a Protector, finance, the economy, seizure of land by Llywelyn, civil war, control of some lands by both Scotland and Prince Louis. John's death in October 1216, before Louis could comprehensively defeat him and take the throne. English support for John's nine-year-old son, Henry III, who was proclaimed king, with Marshal as Protector. Role of Marshal.

3. Student timeline

The timeline below could be given to students, and could be further edited and added to by them. Inclusion of dates and events in this timeline should not be taken as an indication that these are prescribed: the official specification and associated assessment guidance materials are the only authoritative source of information and should always be referred to for definitive guidance.

July 1189	Death of Henry II Richard succeeds to his father's dominions (England, Normandy, Anjou, Aquitaine)
August 1189	Richard I arrives in England and begins raising funds for the Third Crusade
September 1189	Richard I crowned King of England at Westminster Attacks on England's Jewish population (pogroms)
December 1189	Richard I embarks on the Third Crusade
1190	Attacks on England's Jewish population (pogroms). Major attack in York (March)
July 1191	Acre captured
September 1191	Richard I defeats Saladin in the Battle at Arsuf
Early 1192	King Philip II of France and Prince John, Richard's younger brother, start plotting against Richard
September 1192	Richard I and Saladin conclude a truce
October 1192	Richard I is shipwrecked in the Adriatic and becomes the hostage of the German Emperor, Henry VI
January 1193	John attempts to seize the English throne
December 1193	Hubert Walter is appointed England's chief justiciar
February 1194	Richard I is released following the payment of a £60,000 ransom
March 1194	Richard I lands in England, leaving in May, never to return
1194–99	Richard I engages in five years of intermittent warfare against Philip II
1196	Richard I starts constructing Chateau Gaillard
1199	Richard I is killed and is succeeded by John

3. Student timeline

August 1200	John abducts and marries Isabella of Angouleme
Spring 1202	Philip II declares John a rebel and confiscates his Continental lands in favour of Arthur of Brittany
August 1202	John is victorious in the Battle of Mirebeau
March 1204	Chateau Gaillard is captured by Philip II
June 1204	Philip II conquers Normandy
1207	John comes into conflict with Pope Innocent III by opposing the appointment of Stephen Langton as Archbishop of Canterbury
March 1208	A papal Interdict is imposed on England. The following year John is excommunicated
1210	John starves William de Braose's wife and son to death
1212	Rumours circulate of a baronial plot to kill John
May 1213	John agrees to accept Langton as Archbishop and also turns England into a Papal fief
February 1214	John lands an army in France, re-establishing control over the Aquitaine
July 1214	John's allies are defeated by Phillip II at the Battle of Bouvines
May 1215	39 out of England's 165 barons revolt against John
June 1215	John is forced to sign Magna Carta
August 1215	Pope Innocent III annuls Magna Carta and civil war begins again
May 1216	Prince Louis of France lands in England
October 1216	John dies of dysentery. The barons turn against Louis in favour of John's son, who becomes King Henry III

4. Resources

The sections below list a range of resources that could be used by students and teachers for this topic.

The first section lists information on free support materials available on the Edexcel website. On the [GCSE History \(9–1\) from 2016](#) page:

- select the [Teaching support](#) tab, where resources are separated out by Plan, Teach, and Track and Assess;
- or select the [Course materials](#) tab, and then select the appropriate tab for [Specification and sample assessments](#), [Exam materials](#), or [Teaching and learning materials](#).

The table below provides a selection of the free support materials available on the Edexcel website. Details and links for all the free support available can be found in [this document](#). It is updated regularly, so worth bookmarking.

The second section lists publishers who have been endorsed for GCSE (9–1) History. Endorsement means that a resource has been through our quality assurance process to confirm that it meets the teaching and learning requirements a specification is aimed at. Endorsement of a resource doesn't mean it's the only suitable material available, or that it is required to achieve the qualification.

The remaining sections list both endorsed resources and those that have not been endorsed. While these resources – and others – may be used to support teaching and learning, the official specification and associated assessment guidance materials are the only authoritative source of information and should always be referred to for definitive guidance.

There has been a rapid growth in podcasts in recent years, and we have added below links to a few well-known ones. Some may not be suitable for younger listeners, so please check carefully before sharing with students. Similarly, there are plenty of useful videos for History students on online sharing platforms, and any links below have been checked, but please exercise care before sharing social media links with students.

4.1 Free support materials

Resource	Details
Specification , sample assessment materials and specimen papers	The starting point for information on content and assessment in GCSE (9–1) History.
Past papers, mark schemes and examiner reports	An Edexcel Online login is required to access files with a silver padlock – check with your exams officer if you can't open them.
Getting Started Guide	An overview of the specification, to help you get to grips with the content and assessment requirements of the specification. Updated for Issues 5 and 6.
Summary guidance on changes for 2025 and 2026	Summary guidance with links on the changes being made for Issue 5 (first assessment 2025) and Issue 6 (2026).
Content changes for 2026: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic guidance • FAQs 	Guidance for each option on the changes being made to the content for Issue 6 of the specification (first assessment June 2026), and FAQs.

Resource	Details
Assessment changes for 2025: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guide FAQs 	Guidance on the changes being made to the assessment model for Issue 5 of the specification (first assessment June 2025), and FAQs.
Specification language changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track changes on Rationale FAQs 	Guidance on the language changes made for Issue 4 of the specification (first teaching September 2023, first assessment June 2025).
Paper 2 Guide	Teaching approaches and ideas for the period study and British depth study, with case studies from practising teachers.
Schemes of work	Sample outline schemes of work for each topic in the specification, in editable Word files. A digital interactive scheme of work is also available for both KS3 and GCSE.
Mapping documents	Mapping documents to help support teachers in moving to Edexcel GCSE History.
Exemplar student answers	Exemplar student answers, including from the summer 2018, 2019 and 2022 series, with examiner commentaries and mark schemes.
Student walkthroughs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper 2B playlist 	A series of pre-recorded student walkthroughs, created in collaboration with Harris Federation. <i>Updated for Summer 2025.</i>
Revision tips	Some useful revision tips for students. <i>Updated for Summer 2025.</i>
Command words	A series of student-friendly files exploring each command word in turn, plus a summary document paper-by-paper. <i>Updated for 2025.</i>

4.2 Endorsed resources*

[Pearson](#) – Designed to help develop confident, articulate and successful historians.

[Hodder Education](#) – The Hodder GCSE History for Edexcel students' book helps students achieve their full potential while ensuring pace, enjoyment and motivation.

[Oxford University Press](#) – Oxford's Edexcel GCSE History student books help to develop young historians who have the confidence to succeed, with the most up-to-date exam practice and a tried-and-trusted, accessible approach.

[Zigzag Education](#) – Photocopiable resources for learning, revision and exam practice.

[Anglia Tours](#) – A range of fully-guided History tours which enhance both teaching and learning for the related Pearson qualification.

[NST Tours](#) – Guided History tours to support teachers and students with GCSE History.

* You don't have to purchase any resources, including those from Pearson, to deliver our qualifications.

4.3 Resources for students

Resource	Details
<i>Edexcel GCSE History (9–1) The reigns of King Richard I and King John, 1189–1216</i> (Pearson, 2016).	Student book written for this option in the specification.
<i>Revise Edexcel GCSE (9–1) History: The reigns of King Richard I and King John Revision Guide and Workbook</i> (Pearson, 2017)	A combined revision guide and workbook written for this option in the specification.
<i>Hodder GCSE History for Edexcel: The reigns of King Richard I and King John, 1189–1216</i> (Hodder, 2016)	Student book written for this option in the specification.
Thomas Asbridge, 'Richard I on Crusade', <i>BBC History Magazine</i> (January 2010)	Useful for higher-attaining students, an article assessing Richard I's military skills.
Sean McGlynn, 'King John and the French invasion of England', <i>BBC History Magazine</i> (June 2010)	An article identifying the main reasons behind the Barons' revolt, as well as the main events of the rebellion. Suitable for higher-attaining students.
BBC article, 'King John and Richard I: Brothers and Rivals' http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/middle_ages/john_01.shtml	In-depth article on the rivalry between John and Richard.
BBC articles, 'Richard I' and 'John' www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/richard_i_king.shtml www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/john.shtml	These biographies provide a more concise overview of the two monarchs.
The History Learning Site www.historylearningsite.co.uk/magna_carta.htm	A clear overview on the reasons for the barons' revolt, including a link to a full transcript of Magna Carta.
British Library www.bl.uk/magna-carta	An online exhibition packed full of information about Magna Carta, including a short animation on its origins.
David Starkey, <i>Monarchy Series 1</i> (Channel 4 DVD, 2007)	The episode 'Dynasty' covers the lives of Richard I and John. It is also useful for gaining a broad understanding of the Angevin period. There is also a book written to accompany the series.
<i>Ironclad</i> (Warner Bros, 2011)	A full-length film, it provides a vivid portrayal of King John's 1215 siege of Rochester Castle. Rated 15.
Simon Schama, <i>A History of Britain</i> (BBC DVD, 2006)	An accessible documentary, the 'Dynasty' episode of Series 1 covers the lives of Richard I and John.

Resource	Details
The Story of Magna Carta https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zT4hkAxzLg&t=458s	Animated film telling the history of Magna Carta.
The Angevin Empire and Richard the Lionheart https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUbtMNveRQU	'Ten Minute English and British History' Quick overview of The Angevin Empire and Richard the Lionheart. The first part is slightly earlier than the timeframe but is useful as an introduction.
King John and Magna Carta https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tycBBN2f2j0	'Ten Minute English and British History' Quick animation about King John and the Magna Carta.
Horrible Histories https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/shows/horrible-histories	The iconic CBBC series that brings history alive. Not all episodes are available but between iPlayer and YouTube many can be found.

4.4 Resources for teachers

Resource	Details
Thomas Asbridge, <i>The Greatest Knight</i> (Simon & Schuster UK, 2015)	A biography of William Marshal, whose remarkable life progressed from knight-errant under Henry II to the highest office during the reigns of Richard I and John.
W. B. Bartlett, <i>Richard the Lionheart: The Crusader King of England</i> (Amberley, 2019)	An accessible and balanced re-evaluation of Richard I.
Douglas Boyd, <i>Lionheart: the True Story of England's Crusader King</i> (History Press, 2014)	A reappraisal of Richard I's personality and record as king.
Sir Steven Runciman, 'Richard Coeur-De-Lion', <i>History Today</i> (Volume 41 Issue 7, July 1991)	An informative article, critically examining Richard I's conduct in the Third Crusade.
Richard Huscroft, <i>Ruling England 1042–1217</i> (Longman, 2005)	An authoritative text on early medieval England, with detailed analysis of Richard I and John. It is particularly useful for summarising the key historical debates.
Richard Huscroft, <i>Expulsion: England's Jewish Solution</i> (Stroud, 2006)	An accessible and wide-ranging chronological overview of the Jews of medieval England from the Norman Conquest to the Expulsion of the Jews.
David Carpenter, <i>The Struggle for Mastery: The Penguin History of Britain 1066–1284</i> (Penguin, 2003)	Part of the accessible Penguin history of Britain series.

Resource	Details
Dan Jones, <i>The Plantagenets</i> (William Collins, 2013)	A highly readable yet detailed account of the reigns of King Richard and John. It is also useful for the coverage it provides on the other Plantagenet monarchs.
Dan Jones, <i>In the Reign of King John: A Year in the Life of Plantagenet England</i> (Apollo, 2020)	An illustrated edition of <i>Realm Divided</i> , Dan Jones's book on Plantagenet England in the reign of King John. Popular and prolific author and podcaster.
Colin McEvedy, <i>The New Penguin Atlas of Medieval History</i> (Penguin Books, 1992)	A series of annotated maps highlighting the key political, social and economic changes in medieval Europe. It is useful for learning about the medieval world beyond England.
Marc Morris, <i>King John: Treachery, Tyranny and the Road to Magna Carta</i> (Hutchinson, 2015)	One of the most recent biographies on King John by a leading historian on this period.
Thomas Asbridge, <i>Richard I, the Crusader King</i> (Penguin, 2019) Nicholas Vincent, <i>John: An Evil King?</i> (Penguin, 2022)	Penguin Monarchs Two titles from the new Penguin Monarchs series.
Nicholas Vincent, <i>Magna Carta: A Very Short Introduction</i> (OUP, 2012) Christopher Tyerman, <i>The Crusades: A Very Short Introduction</i> (OUP, 2005)	Oxford University Press, A Very Short Introduction Series An interesting and well-written series covering a wide variety of topics that serve as an excellent overview.
British Library https://www.bl.uk/magna-carta	British Library collection of resources on Magna Carta.
The National Archives https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/jews-in-england-1066/ https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/jews-in-england-1216-72/ https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/jews-in-england-1290/	A series of three lessons, developed by Dr Rebecca Searby, aimed at KS3 and KS4 students focusing on three key periods of Jewish life in medieval England: Why did Jews settle in England after 1066? What was the relationship between Christians and Jews from 1216-72? Why did Edward I expel the Jews in 1290?
The National Archives http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/medieval/magna-carta/ https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/humanrights/1215-1500/?hr-link=1215	Short videos relating to the Magna Carta. Link to resources about Human Rights. This looks at the creation of Parliament and Magna Carta.
Magna Carta 800th Anniversary http://magnacarta800th.com/	A website created for the 800th anniversary and rich in resources, including a schools section.
https://www.secretsofthemagnacarta.com/gcse-history-edexcel	A collection of resources and ideas exploring the Magna Carta.

Resource	Details
BBC History Extra https://www.historyextra.com/membership/cliffords-tower-massacre-medieval-anti-semitism-dean-irwin-podcast/	Podcast from 2021 by Dean Irwin about the antisemitic massacre at Clifford Tower in York in 1190 and how it fits into the wider story of England's medieval Jewish population.
BBC History Extra https://www.historyextra.com/period/medieval/persecution-jews-medieval-england-cliffords-tower-york/	Article from March 2019 by Sethina Watson and Jonny Wilkes on the persecution of Jews in medieval England.
England's Immigrants, 1330–1550 https://www.englishimmigrants.com/resources-for-teachers/jewish-migration	A database that reveals evidence about the names, origins, occupations and households of foreigners who chose to live and work in England in the era of the Hundred Years War, the Black Death and the Wars of the Roses. The resources for teachers page links to lesson plans and a series of podcasts, including this one by Dr Sethina Watson on Jewish migration.
School History Website http://www.schoolhistory.co.uk	A very comprehensive website with resources for teaching history. GCSE resources are arranged by exam board and cover most modules. Some resources are free but to get the full range available there is a subscription payment.
https://ks3historyhelp.weebly.com/the-crusades.html	A collection of resources and links on The Crusades.
How bad was King John? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tGFfxra5st4	Seven-minute video by Citizens Project exploring the reign of King John.
Podcast series Historical Association , free to members The Rest Is History Dan Snow's History Hit History Extra You're Dead to Me	There are lots of History podcast series available these days through various platforms. We have listed here a few well-known ones, and you can search for relevant episodes. There are also revision podcasts available. Please check they are suitable before sharing with students.

Educational Recording Agency

Transform History Teaching with Multimedia Resources from the Educational Recording Agency (ERA)

[The ERA Licence](#) provides seamless access to television and radio recordings, offering a single point of clearance for the rights needed to create and use authentic media resources in your classroom. With [ERA's free video streaming platform](#), licensed institutions can explore a rich library of curriculum-mapped TV and radio clips tailored to GCSE, AS, and A-level teaching.

Engage your learners with curated clips, full-length documentaries, and programmes that bring historical contexts to life. The platform also includes exclusive access to the **BBC Shakespeare** and **Literary Archives**, offering unique cross-curricular opportunities to enrich your lessons with impactful media—perfect for both homework and classroom activities.

To access this free resource [registration is required](#) - but is quick and simple. State schools in England are licensed under a central agreement with the DfE and the vast majority of independent schools also hold a current ERA Licence.

Our Migration Story

Our Migration Story (<https://www.ourmigrationstory.org.uk/>) has been designed with teachers in mind to support opportunities for teaching students to understand and appreciate the range of peoples, from all places, who have journeyed to and helped to shape the British Isles. It is a free, online resource, created and curated by academics to share source evidence of real individuals and their experiences of migration.

This range of stories and supporting sources will be of most value to teachers delivering our new *Migrants in Britain* thematic study; in addition we have identified *Our Migration Story* resources that could be used whilst teaching other topics on the GCSE (9–1) History specification, some of direct value, some more tangential. They are an interesting way to open up discussion, or to offer different perspectives on the history that you are teaching. More information on the resources and how to deliver them can be found at: <https://www.ourmigrationstory.org.uk/information-for-teachers/>.

For this topic, you might wish to consider:

- Jews in early Medieval England.
<https://www.ourmigrationstory.org.uk/oms/put-a-curse-on-my-enemies-meir-ben-elijah-and-the-jews-of-early-norwich>.

This resource addresses the immigration of Jewish families from the Norman Conquest onwards, as well as the challenges that they faced.