

Serfs in 1215

You don't have any privileges (!) but still, this is how it is for your masters....

1) Status Quo: how things are at the moment

• The King or any royal official can take wood from your master's castle whenever they like
• If a free man dies without having made a will, the dead man's possessions and lands all go to the King
• If anyone has done anything wrong against the law, they can remain unpunished for weeks, months or even years
• If any merchant travels the country for trade there is no guarantee that they won't be attacked
• If you are involved in an ordinary lawsuit you will be expected to attend the royal court wherever it is travelling around the country
• The King can choose what taxes people pay
• You can be forced to build a bridge if required over a river
• There is no standard measure for ale

Discuss the above situations

Choose the three which as a group you think go against people's liberty the most.

Write down in order of priority the three liberties you would then want to see established and say why:

	Liberty	Reason why
1		
2		
3		

2) Decision-making: how things are at the moment

• All decisions on taxes are made by the King
• All decisions on punishments for crimes are made by one person, usually the King or one of his men
• Decisions affecting the church are not made by the church

Discuss the above situations

Choose the one which goes against people's liberty the most.

Write down what you would want to see established and say why:

	Decision-making process	Reason why
1		

Craftsmen in 1215

You have only few privileges but still

1) Status Quo: how things are at the moment

• If you have committed a very minor crime, the punishment can be extremely severe
• A royal official can take goods from a craftsman without having to pay
• If you owe debt, royal officials can seize your land or rent as payment regardless of whether you can pay off the debt
• If any craftsman travels the country for trade there is no guarantee they won't be attacked
• People who have committed crimes can be punished without standing trial
• The King can choose to enclose part of a river bank for his own use
• If fined, a craftsman's tools may form part of the fine and he will then lose them
• There is no standard measure for cloth

Discuss the above situations

Choose the three which as a group you think go against people's liberty the most.

Write down in order of priority the three liberties you would then want to see established and say why:

	Liberty	Reason why
1		
2		
3		

2) Decision-making: how things are at the moment

• All decisions on taxes are made by the King
• All decisions on punishments for crimes are made by one person, usually the King or one of his men
• Decisions affecting the church are not made by the church

Discuss the above situations

Choose the one which goes against people's liberty the most.

Write down what you would want to see established and say why:

	Decision-making process	Reason why
1		

Farmers in 1215

You have hardly any privileges but still, this is how it is for your Lords...

1) Status Quo: how things are at the moment

• If you have committed a very minor crime, the punishment can be extremely severe
• A royal official can take produce from a farmer without having to pay
• If you owe debt, royal officials can seize your land or rent as payment regardless of whether you can pay off the debt
• If you are on trial, there are no witnesses to speak for/against you
• A royal official may take your cart should he wish without your consent
• The King can choose to enclose part of a wood for his own use if he wishes
• If fined, a farmer's equipment may form part of the fine and he will then lose it
• There is no standard measure for corn

Discuss the above situations

Choose the three which as a group you think go against people's liberty the most.

Write down in order of priority the three liberties you would then want to see established and say why:

	Liberty	Reason why
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2		
3		

2) Decision-making: how things are at the moment

• All decisions on taxes are made by the King
• All decisions on punishments for crimes are made by one person, usually the King or one of his men
• Decisions affecting the church are not made by the church

Discuss the above situations

Choose the one which goes against people's liberty the most.

Write down what you would want to see established and say why:

	Decision-making process	Reason why
1		

Merchants in 1215

You don't have many privileges but still...

1) Status Quo: how things are at the moment

• If you have committed a very minor crime, the punishment can be extremely severe
• A royal official can take goods from a merchant without having to pay for them
• If you have done something wrong it is possible to bribe your way out of trouble
• There is no guarantee that merchants won't be attacked as they leave and re-enter the country for trade
• People who have committed crimes can be punished without standing trial
• There is no standard measure for cloth
• If you are having to pay a fine, your merchandise can be taken as the fine
• If you die without a will, your goods and possessions go to the king

Discuss the above situations

Choose the three which as a group you think go against people's liberty the most.

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	Liberty	Reason why
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2) Decision-making: how things are at the moment

• All decisions on taxes are made by the King	•
• All decisions on punishments for crimes are made by one person, usually the King or one of his men	•
• Decisions affecting the church are not made by the church	•

Discuss the above situations

Choose the one which goes against people's liberty the most.

Write down what you would want to see established and say why:

	Decision-making process	Reason why
1		

Knights in 1215

1) Status Quo: how things are at the moment

• If a knight dies, the King will have all of the inheritance
• If a knight commits a very minor crime, the King can order a very severe punishment
• If anyone has done anything wrong against the law, they can remain unpunished for weeks, months or even years
• A constable can choose to demand payment from a knight to provide a night-guard even if the knight could provide this service himself
• The King may arrange a marriage for an heir without telling the heir's family
• The King can choose what taxes people pay
• Your noble Lord and master can force you to pay him any amount of money, for any reason, at any time
• There is no standard measure of ale or corn

Discuss the above situations

Choose the three which as a group you think go against people's liberty the most.

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2) Decision-making: how things are at the moment

• All decisions on taxes are made by the King
• All decisions on punishments for crimes are made by one person, usually the King or one of his men
• Decisions affecting the church are not made by the church

Discuss the above situations

Choose the one which goes against people's liberty the most.

Write down what you would want to see established and say why:

	Decision-making process	Reason why
1		

Nobles in 1215

1) Privileges: how things are at the moment

• If a nobleman dies, the King will have all of the inheritance
• If a nobleman dies, his widow must pay the King in order to receive her inheritance and dowry and must leave the marital home immediately
• If a nobleman has done anything wrong against the law, they can be punished to any extent as the King decides
• If a nobleman commits a very minor crime, the King can order a very severe punishment
• If a noblewoman's husband dies, she is obliged to remarry whether she likes to or not
• If you are involved in an ordinary lawsuit you will be expected to attend the royal court wherever it is travelling around the country
• The King can choose what taxes people pay and how much
• All nobles who have founded abbeys have to give them back to the King when the Abbot dies

Discuss the above situations

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Discuss the above situations

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The Church in 1215

1) Privileges: how things are at the moment

• The King has sole power over the rights of the Church
• The King has sole power over the liberties of the Church
• The King has sole power over the Church's elections
• A fine on a churchman's own personal property will be rated according to the value of the church property he has
• If an Abbot dies, the abbey will be returned to the King, not to the baron who founded it
• There is no standard measure of ale
• Taxes are decided solely by the King
• Taxes can be charged on church properties as the King chooses

Discuss the above situations

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2) Decision-making: how things are at the moment

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