

# Enquiry Question: What can sources tell us about who had power in the medieval period?

## Key dates:

1137 Eleanor of Aquitaine marries King Louis VII of France.	1152 Eleanor marries Henry Plantagenet.	1154 Henry II becomes King.	1170 Death of Thomas Becket.	1173 After supporting a rebellion, Eleanor is captured.	1189 Richard I (the Lionheart) becomes King.	1199 John becomes King.	1215 John signs the Magna Carta at Runnymede.	1272 Edward I's becomes King.	1277 Edward conquers Wales.
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Key word	Definition	What do I need to know? (Linked to PLC statements)		
Reign	The period that a king or queen rules for.	Power of the Church	The Church had a hierarchical structure, with the Pope at the top, followed by bishops, priests, and monks/nuns. Cathedrals served as religious centres, while parishes provided local worship. The Church emphasised the importance of the afterlife and going to Heaven, demonstrated by Doom paintings in medieval churches. This made the Church powerful because people followed their teachings to avoid going to Hell.	
Excommunication	When someone is kicked out of the Catholic Church.			
Pope	The head of the Roman Catholic Church. Catholics looked to the Pope for leadership in religious matters, so he was very important. When one Pope dies another is chosen.	Eleanor of Aquitaine	Eleanor was Queen of France through her marriage to Louis VII and later Queen of England as the wife of Henry II. However, not only was Eleanor married and a queen, she also became a political figure in her own right. Eleanor helped Louis to run France and even went with him on a crusade in 1149. They eventually ended their marriage in 1152. Historians believe that she may also have influenced some of Henry's decisions during his reign. The couple eventually separated in 1167 and Eleanor moved back to her own land in France. Eleanor was captured in 1173 and kept in prison for the next 16 years. This was because she was believed to be plotting with her son against her former husband, King Henry II.	
Pilgrimage	A journey to a religious place, such as a shrine of saint.	Henry II and Thomas Becket	Henry II wanted to have more control over the Church so he made his friend, Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Their relationship turned sour when Becket refused to agree with the King's plans to control the church. This disagreement led to Becket's murder in Canterbury Cathedral by knights who believed they were acting on the King's orders. Henry II's conflict with Becket, the demonstrates the struggle between royal authority and the Church. Becket's murder in 1170 led to public outrage and Becket was made a saint, highlighting the limitations of the king's power in the face of religious power.	
Clergy	A member of the Church, e.g. priest, bishop, archbishop.			
Tithe	A 10% religious tax charged by the Church.			
Archbishop	An important member of the Church. The most important member of the Catholic Church in England was the Archbishop of Canterbury.	King John	King John's reign was marked by conflicts with the Church and powerful barons in England. John argued with the Pope over who should be the new Archbishop of Canterbury. This forced the Pope to excommunicate John. In 1208, Pope Innocent III placed England under an Interdict which meant all the churches were closed. Eventually, John made peace with the Pope in 1214.  John was seen as a poor military leader and given the nickname 'Softsword'. He lost Normandy in 1204 and he needed money to help get it back. To do this, John taxed his people and increased fines on his barons. One tax that the barons really hated was called scutage.	
Dynasty	A sequence of rulers from the same family			
Scutage	A payment made by a baron to the king in order to stay at home rather than fight. The more knights a barons owed the king then the more the scutage was.			
Magna Carta	The 'Great Charter' was an agreement made by King John and the barons in 1215 to limit the powers of the king.	Magna Carta	In 1215, after the barons rebelled against King John, he was forced to sign the Magna Carta. The Magna Carta is significant because it was the first document to limit the power of the monarchy and establish the principle that everyone, including the king, is subject to the law. It also protected the rights of the people and laid the foundation for democracy and the rule of law.	
Plantagenets	The English royal dynasty that ruled England from the accession of Henry II in 1154 until 1485.			
Authority	The power or right to give orders, make decisions and make people follow them.	<div>Disciplinary knowledge - how do historians use sources?</div> <div>Historians use primary sources to study the past. These are things that were <b>created at the time of an event</b>, like letters, diaries, paintings, or even objects. Historians use primary sources, like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, to learn about the past. Imagine each source, such as letters or diaries from long ago, as a unique puzzle piece. These pieces give us firsthand information about what happened in history, and they can also support what we already know. Just as each jigsaw piece adds more detail to the overall picture, primary sources help historians build a complete understanding of history.</div>		
Barons	Also called nobles. They owned land and were under the King in the feudal system.			
Primary source	A piece of evidence created at the time of a period you are studying.			

