

KS3 History

Lesson 3 of an enquiry of 6 lessons

Did Henry III learn from John on how to rule?

Enquiry: Why did Kings struggle to rule England?

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Background to Henry III's reign

Henry's reign began when he was just 9 years old. Leading barons helped him rule through a **regency council**. Henry's rule started really well as he re-issued Magna Carta. The barons quickly supported him and forced Prince Louis of France and the King of Scotland from England's lands. However, as Henry got older he wanted to rule without the regency council. Soon, Henry wanted to have more power and began to ignore his barons. Henry began to repeat the same mistakes that his father had made. But this time Magna Carta gave the barons more power.



Henry and his barons

Henry originally worked with the barons during his regency. However, things changed once he got married to Eleanor of Provence. He started to listen more to his wife's relatives. His wife's relatives were foreign and Henry's English barons disliked being ignored. At times, Henry was willing to rule following the rules of Magna Carta. However, in 1258, things started to go wrong. Henry failed to buy Sicily and this angered the Pope. The barons used this as an opportunity to remind Henry how a good king should rule.



Henry and the Church

Henry ruled with the **permission** of the Church. His father, John, had handed England over to the Pope. This meant that the Pope had chosen Henry to be King of England. Henry and the Pope's relationship was good. That was until the Pope asked for Henry's support to attack Sicily. In return, the Pope offered to crown one of Henry's sons as King of Sicily. Henry offered to help pay for Sicily. Unfortunately, Henry did not have the money to pay. The Pope eventually lost patience with Henry and threatened to excommunicate him if he did not give the money he was owed.



Henry and war

Henry was a king who liked peace. However, Henry was aware that his father had lost many of the Angevin lands' in France. Those lands were, in theory, Henry's by right. This led Henry to try and get them back. Henry attacked France twice. Both times he suffered crushing defeats. To pay for the wars in France, Henry had had to collect more taxes and this upset the people of England. Things were looking very similar to King John's reign.



Why did Henry struggle to rule England?

Henry was struggling to rule England for a number of reasons. He upset the barons through using foreign **advisors**. Henry protected these advisors against his own barons. This looked like Henry was rejecting Magna Carta. Some barons therefore started planning how to challenge Henry. Failing to gain lands in France, the cost of taxation and finally the problems with the Pope saw the barons pushed too far. It was looking like Henry was not able to rule England by himself or with Magna Carta.



Glossary

Regency council - A group of barons who helped a king rule until they were old enough to rule in their own right.

Permission - To be allowed to do something.

Advisors - People who give help, support and ideas to someone who rules.



Comprehension Questions

1. How was England ruled at the beginning of Henry's reign?
2. What made the barons turn against Henry?
3. What caused the Pope to threaten Henry with excommunication?
4. What happened when Henry tried to attack France?
5. Why was Henry at risk of a rebellion from his barons?

Starter sentence - Henry was at risk of the barons rebelling because...

Extension:

Why was Henry struggling to rule England?

