

The Magna Carta-Using Primary Sources p121

Name _____

Per _____

The Magna Carta was the first document to place **limits on the power of the English monarch**. It also helped set up a basic framework for England's **judiciary**, or system of courts.

(18) . . . We ourselves, or in our absence abroad our chief justice, will send two justices to each county four times a year, and these justices, with four knights of the county elected by the county itself, shall hold the assizes¹ in the county court, on the day and in the place where the court meets. . . .

(20) For a trivial offence [or crime], a free man shall be fined only in proportion to the degree of his offence, and for a serious offence correspondingly, but not so heavily as to deprive him of his livelihood. . . .

(55) All fines that have been given to us unjustly and against the law of the land, . . . shall be entirely remitted² or the matter decided by a majority judgment of the twenty-five barons . . . together with [the] archbishop of Canterbury

(60) All . . . that we have granted shall be observed in our kingdom in so far as concerns our own relations with our subjects. Let all men of our kingdom, whether clergy or laymen, observe them similarly

—Magna Carta, 1215

Review the excerpt to find details for your answers.

1. **Infer** Why do you think locally elected knights attended county courts?(part 18)
2. **Draw Conclusions** If overly heavy fines for trivial offenses ruined people's livelihoods, what effects do you think might result?(part 20)
3. **Identify Cause and Effect** How might steps such as those described in this document weaken the power of a king?(Parts 18, 55, 60)

¹ Assizes are county court sessions

² To remit is to pay or give something back