**Lesson 7: Depth 2**

**How successfully did medieval monarchs overcome early challenges?**

**Activity 1a: Read the story of Matilda and add pictures to the storyboard as you go. If the reading is too hard, just read the summary boxes.**

**Background:**

In 1120, King Henry I’s son drowned. Henry only had a daughter, Matilda, to take over the throne when he died, which was unpopular as people preferred for men to rule. He made the barons swear to support Matilda as their queen when he died. Matilda married a French prince, and had three sons.

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| The prince drowned when his ship sank. | The barons swore to protect the king’s daughter, Matilda. | Matilda married a French prince and had three sons. |

**Development 1:**

Despite swearing to protect Matilda, **Henry’s nephew Stephen secretly gathered some barons to support his claim to the throne**. When Henry died in 1135, **Stephen was crowned king** before Matilda could return from France. **She was furious, and gathered an army to fight Stephen** in a civil war!

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| Some barons secretly supported Stephen. | Henry died and Stephen was crowned king. | Matilda was furious! |

**Development 2:**

In 1141, **Matilda captured and imprisoned Stephen but** before she was crowned she introduced a very unpopular tax and **was chased out of London**. Stephen was freed! In 1142, **Stephen captured Matilda but she escaped** to France. The war continued until 1153, when eventually people were fed up of war.

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| Matilda captured and imprisoned Stephen. | Matilda was chased out of London and Stephen was freed. | Matilda escaped to France. The war continued. |

**Consequences:**

Eventually, in 1153, Stephen and Matilda reached an agreement. **Stephen would remain king of England, but when he died, Matilda’s son Henry would become king instead of his children**. This happened only one year later, when Stephen died in 1154 and Henry was crowned King Henry II.

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| Matilda and Stephen reached an agreement. | Stephen would stay king. | When Stephen died, Matilda’s son became King Henry II. |

**Activity 1b: Read through the story of King Henry II and Thomas Becket and add pictures to the storyboard as you go. If the reading is too hard, just read the summary boxes.**

**Background:**

In the 1100s, 1/6 of the population of England were part of the clergy, working for the Church. They were all outside the control of common law. This meant that if they committed a crime, they would not have a normal trial and punishment whereas other people might be fined, imprisoned or hanged. Instead, they just had to say prayers to repent for what they had done.

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| 1/6 of the population worked for the Church. | They were protected from laws and punishments. |

**Development 1:**

Henry II thought that everyone should have to follow the same laws. He tried to end the Church’s power in 1162 by giving his friend Thomas Becket the most powerful religious job in the country: Archbishop of Canterbury. He hoped that Becket would help him to reform the Church. However, Becket soon became very religious and took the job seriously and refused to help Henry.

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| King Henry II tried to change this by giving his friend Thomas Becket the job of Archbishop of Canterbury. | Thomas Becket took the new job seriously and didn’t help Henry. |

**Development 2:**

Henry and Becket argued for years. Eventually in 1170, in exasperation, Henry called out ‘Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?!’ Four of Henry’s knights overheard him. They rode to Canterbury and murdered Becket in the cathedral, slicing off the top of his head. When Henry heard, he was worried.

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| Henry and Becket argued for years. Henry eventually said, ‘Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?!’ | Four of Henry’s knights murdered Becket in the cathedral by slicing off the top of his head. |

**Consequences:**

In anger, everyone supported the Church against Henry, and Becket was seen as a martyr. Thousands of people came to visit his tomb. Henry knew he could not change the Church now.

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| Everyone supported the Church against Henry. | Thousands of people came to the Church to visit Becket’s tomb. |

**For extra information, watch from 1:22** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\_EKUIBz\_po0**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_EKUIBz_po0)

**Activity 1c: Read through the story of King Henry II and the Great Rebellion and add pictures to the storyboard as you go. If the reading is too hard, just read the summary boxes.**

**Background:**

In 1173, King Henry’s oldest son, also called Henry, was angry about the murder of Becket and other actions of the King, such as giving castles to John, his youngest brother.

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| King Henry’s son (Young Henry) was angry about the murder of Thomas Becket. | Young Henry was also angry that the king had given some of his castles to his younger brother, John. |

**Development 1:**

He decided to rebel against his father. Young Henry was supported in the rebellion by his brothers Geoffrey and Richard, and their mother Eleanor of Aquitaine who left her husband and went to France.

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| Young Henry decided to rebel against his father, the king. | Young Henry was supported by his brothers Geoffrey and Richard, and their mother Eleanor. |

**Development 2:**

King Henry asked Pope Alexander III to help him, in exchange for repenting for Becket’s death. The king walked barefoot through Canterbury, and asked the monks to whip him 300 times, before spending the night at Becket’s coffin. Henry was then forgiven for his actions, but he knew that he could no longer challenge the Church’s power. The Benefit of Clergy was not removed until 1827.

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| King Henry asked the Pope to help him, in exchange for repenting for Becket’s death. | Henry walked barefoot through Canterbury, and was whipped 300 times. He was forgiven. |

**Consequences:**

In 1174, King Henry and his rebellious sons managed to reach an agreement. He forgave his sons but not his wife Eleanor. Both Young Henry and Geoffrey died, leaving King Henry with only two heirs: Richard, who inherited the throne when he died in 1189, and John, his favourite child.

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| King Henry and Young Henry reached an agreement, and the king forgave his sons. | Young Henry and Geoffrey died, leaving only two sons: Richard and John. |

**Activity 2: Complete the table to decide how successfully the monarchs overcame each challenge.**

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|  | **Matilda** | **King Henry (and Becket)** | **King Henry (and the Great Rebellion)** |
| **Who threatened the monarch’s power?**  **Circle one and then**  **give specific examples:** | People (including barons) / other royals / the Church  Stephen and… | People (including barons) / other royals / the Church | People (including barons) / other royals / the Church |
| **How much did the challenge weaken the monarch?**  **Explain your answer:** | Completely / quite a lot / not much / not at all  Because… | Completely / quite a lot / not much / not at all  Because… | Completely / quite a lot / not much / not at all  Because… |
| **Overall, how successful was the monarch in overcoming the challenge?**  **1 (unsuccessful) to 5 (successful), and explain your answer.** | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5  Because… | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5  Because… | 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5  Because… |

**Activity 3: Summary of early challenges to medieval monarchs**

**In your book, answer the following questions:**

1. Which was the biggest threat? Why?
2. How successfully did the monarchy hold on to their power by 1189? Give examples and explain your answer.