The Ten Commandments
from The New English Bible

The Lord came down upon the top of Mount Sinai and summoned Moses to the mountain-top, and Moses went up. The Lord said to Moses, “Go down, warn the people solemnly that they
must not force their way through to the Lord to see him, or many of them will perish. Even the priests,
who have access to the Lord, must hallow themselves, for fear that the Lord may break out against
them.” Moses answered the Lord, “The people cannot come up Mount Sinai, because thou thyself
didst solemnly warn us to set a barrier to the mountain and so to keep it holy.” The Lord therefore
said to him, “Go down; then come up and bring Aaron with you, but let neither priests nor
people force their way up to the Lord, for fear that he may break out against them.” So Moses went
down to the people and spoke to them.

God spoke, and these were his words:

I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.
You shall have no other god to set against me.
You shall not make a carved image for yourself
nor the likeness of anything in the heavens above, or
on the earth below, or in the waters under the earth.
You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous god. I
punish the children for the sins of the fathers to the
third and fourth generations of those who hate me.
But I keep faith with thousands, with those who
love me and keep my commandments.

You shall not make wrong use of the name of
the Lord your God; the Lord will not leave unpunished the man who misuses his name.

Remember to keep the Sabbath day holy. You
have six days to labour and do all your work. But
the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God;
that day you shall not do any work, you, your son or
your daughter, your slave or your slave-girl, your
cattle or the alien within your gates; for in six days

the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all
that is in them, and on the seventh day he rested.
Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and
declared it holy.

Honour your father and your mother, that you
may live long in the land which the Lord your God
is giving you.
You shall not commit murder.
You shall not commit adultery.
You shall not steal.
You shall not give false evidence against your
neighbour.
You shall not covet your neighbour’s house; you
shall not covet your neighbour’s wife, his slave, his
slave-girl, his ox, his ass, or anything that
belongs to him.

When all the people saw how it thundered and
the lightning flashed, when they heard the trumpet
sound and saw the mountain smoking, they trembled
and stood at a distance. “Speak to us yourself,”
they said to Moses, “and we will listen; but if God
speaks to us we shall die.” Moses answered, “Do
not be afraid. God has come only to test you, so
that the fear of him may remain with you and keep
you from sin.”

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Discussion Questions
1. Determining Main Ideas How should the
Hebrews act toward others?
2. Categorizing The commandments fall into two
categories of conduct. What are they?
3. Synthesizing In what way do the Ten
Commandments form a basis for civil law?
John, by the grace of God, king of England, lord of Ireland, duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and count of Anjou, to the archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls, barons, justiciars, foresters, sheriffs, stewards, servants, and to all his bailiffs and faithful subjects, greeting. Know that we, out of reverence for God and for the salvation of our soul and those of all our ancestors and heirs, for the honour of God and the exaltation of holy church, and for the reform of our realm, on the advice of our venerable fathers. . . .

[1] In the first place have granted to God, and by this our present charter confirmed for us and our heirs for ever that the English church shall be free, and shall have its rights undiminished and its liberties unimpaired; and it is our will that it be thus observed. . . . We have also granted to all free men of our kingdom, for ourselves and our heirs for ever, all the liberties written below, to be had and held by them and their heirs of us and our heirs. . . .

[12] No scutage [special tax] or aid shall be imposed in our kingdom unless by common counsel of our kingdom, except for ransoming our person, for making our eldest son a knight, and for once marrying our eldest daughter, and for these only a reasonable aid shall be levied. Be it done in like manner concerning aids from the city of London.

[13] And the city of London shall have all its ancient liberties and free customs as well by land as by water. Furthermore, we will and grant that all other cities, boroughs, towns, and ports shall have all their liberties and free customs. . . .

[38] No bailiff shall in future put anyone to trial upon his own bare word, without reliable witnesses produced for this purpose.

[39] No free man shall be arrested or imprisoned . . . , except by the lawful judgment of his peers or by the law of the land.

[40] To no one will we sell, to no one will we refuse or delay right or justice.

[41] All merchants shall be able to go out of and come into England safely and securely and stay and travel throughout England . . . for buying and selling by the ancient and right customs free from all evil tolls . . .

[42] It shall be lawful in future for anyone, without prejudicing the allegiance due to us, to leave our kingdom and return safely and securely by land and water, save, in the public interest, for a short period in time of war—except for those imprisoned or outlawed in accordance with the law of the kingdom and natives of a land that is at war with us. . . .

[63] Wherefore we wish and firmly enjoin that the English church shall be free, and that the men in our kingdom shall have and hold all the aforesaid liberties, rights and concessions well and peacefully, freely and quietly, fully and completely, for themselves and their heirs from us and our heirs, in all matters and in all places for ever, as is aforesaid. An oath, moreover, has been taken, as well on our part as on the part of the barons, that all these things aforesaid shall be observed in good faith and without evil disposition.


Research Option
Comparing and Contrasting Read the Bill of Rights in the United States Constitution. Then make a Venn diagram in which you compare the Magna Carta with the Bill of Rights. Share your chart with classmates.