Year: 7
Subject: History
Topic/Unit: The power of medieval monarchs
When: Autumn Half Term 2

Huntington School
Learn and succeed

Overview: This unit explores the complex nature of power in medieval society by investigating the reigns of three significant figures: **Eleanor of Aquitaine, Henry II, and King John**. Also, an introduction on source evaluation.

Why this? Why now? It challenges the misconception that medieval monarchs possessed absolute, unchecked power. By examining the relationships between the Crown, the Church, and the nobility, students will understand how power was negotiated, resisted, and eventually codified in law. This is an important stepping stone in the numerous changes to power that students will encounter later in their study of History.

Building on…building to: This unit picks up threads from previous studies of **Norman changes** and the **power of religion** in the medieval period. It provides a vital foundation for upcoming units on the **English Reformation** later this year. Furthermore, it prepares students for Year 7 studies of the **Tudors** and Year 8 investigations into how power shifted during the **Early Modern and Industrial periods**. Also building crucial source skills needed for the Nazi GCSE Unit.

Sequence Summary:

- **Lesson 1: The Power of a Queen.** An investigation into Eleanor of Aquitaine's rise to power, her cultural influence on English fashion, and her role as the King's deputy.
- **Lesson 2: What can Thomas Becket tell us about the power of Henry II?** This demonstrates the limits of royal power against religious authority.
- **Lesson 3: Why did Barons risk their lives to challenge King John?** Analysis of John's failures as monarch which led to the singing of the Magna Carta.
- **Lesson 4: Source Practice –** students will begin to make inferences from sources about a topic**.**

Key Vocabulary:

- **Baron, Excommunication, Inference, Magna Carta, source**

Assessments: Students will complete a comparative A3 grid tracking details of power and source-based evidence across the three monarchs. Source practice task where students must distinguish between **describing** a source and **making an inference** regarding royal authority. Knowledge from this unit will be used and assessed in History assessment 1.

Able and Interested: Students will engage with historical debates, such as whether Eleanor of Aquitaine's move to Poitiers was for personal freedom or strategic administration. They may also research the "papal bull" of 1215 to understand the international opposition to Magna Carta.

Inclusion, Personal Development and Wider Skills: Lessons utilise diverse evidence, including **tomb effigies**, **murals**, and **eyewitness accounts**, to support visual and literacy-based learning. Understanding Magna Carta supports personal development by introducing the origins of the "rule of law" and the right to a fair trial.