

## Who was the best medieval monarch?

### Key dates:

1066	Battle of Hastings; often considered the beginning of the medieval period.
1154	The start of the Plantagenets' rule.
1215	The Magna Carta was signed, following the First Barons War.
1296	The beginning of the Wars of Scottish Independence.

'Fortunate beyond measure, wise, skillful, elegant in speech, courageous above all the princes of his days; a lover of peace. He was valiant, just, merciful and wise; the best lawgiver, the best friend, the best father... In short he had the most virtues and the fewest vices of any prince that ever I read of.'

From Joshua Barnes' *The History of that Most Victorious Monarch Edward III*, published in 1688. Barnes called Edward III 'one of the great kings, that perhaps the world ever saw'.

### Key terms:

<b>Monarch</b>	The ruler of a country or state, such as a king or queen.
<b>Heir</b>	The person entitled to take on the role of king or queen.
<b>Kingdom</b>	The area ruled over by a king or queen.
<b>Feudal system</b>	The structure of medieval society, based on the idea that everyone worked for the person or group above them. The king was at the top, and the peasants at the bottom.
<b>Allegiance</b>	Loyalty or commitment to the king or queen.
<b>Rebellion</b>	An attempt to challenge the king or queen's authority.
<b>Legitimate</b>	Someone who has a rightful claim to the throne.
<b>Noble</b>	A high-ranking man, who owned land and rules over people in the local area.
<b>Succession</b>	Inheriting the role of king or queen.
<b>Knight</b>	A soldier who served his lord in battle, or perhaps went on crusade.

### Evidence that the medieval kings were powerful and successful:

Evidence that the medieval kings were powerful and successful:	Evidence that the medieval kings were NOT powerful and successful:
The Plantagenet kings introduced laws and habits to England that remained in use for centuries to come.	Knights like William Wallace fought for Scotland to become independent from English rule.
Many of the medieval kings went on crusade, using their power, authority and wealth to protect Christianity.	King John I signed the Magna Carta, agreeing to the barons demands for change.
After the Black Death, King Edward III introduced the Statute of Labourers to make sure that peasants couldn't make demands for higher wages.	Influential women like Eleanor of Aquitaine and Eleanor Woodstock challenged the influence of the medieval monarchs, claiming power for themselves.
The Plantagenet kings ruled England from 1154 to 1485 - a long-lasting dynasty that overcame challenges and threats.	The positive reputation of Richard I can be challenged with evidence of his un-Christian ways and cruelty towards Jewish people.

