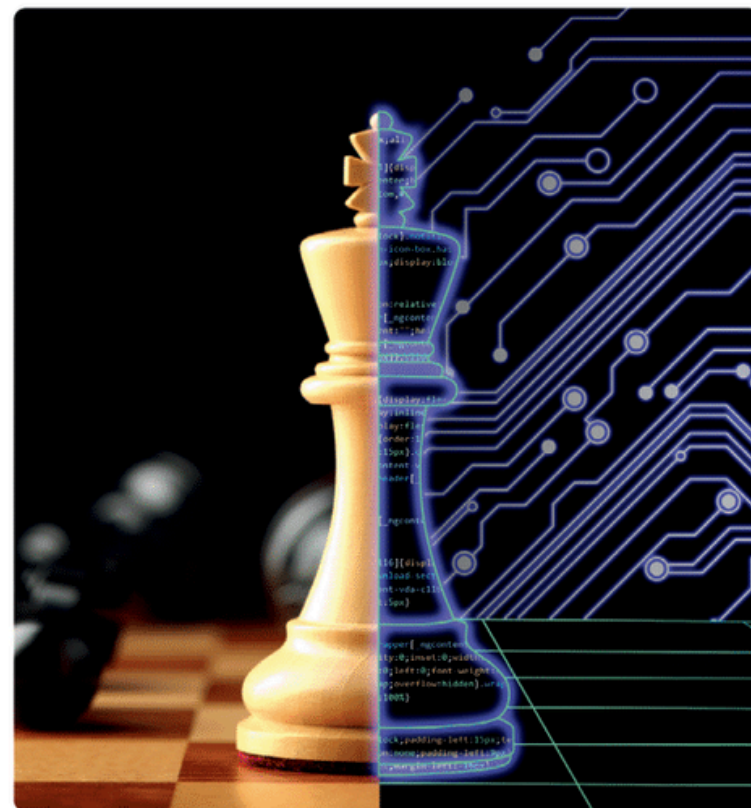


WILL WE NEED A MAGNA CARTA FOR AI?

Over 1,000 years ago in 1215 the need to regulate power led to an unprecedented historical challenge to established authority. The barons of England imposed a new democratic system on King John. Centuries later the charter inspired both the English Bill of Rights of 1689 and its American counterpart of one hundred years later. Today, as the power of AI is becoming greater than ever, many are calling for another ‘Magna Carta’ that will determine who will oversee the control, scope and application of this new tool. Can this be achieved? Can we afford not to achieve it?



LEAD IN

1 Consider these two quotations. Then answer the following questions.

“If you’re arguing against AI, then you’re arguing against safer cars that aren’t going to have accidents, and you’re arguing against being able to better diagnose people when they’re sick.”

Mark Zuckerberg - Founder of Facebook

“The development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race... It would take off on its own, and re-design itself at an ever-increasing rate. Humans, who are limited by slow biological evolution, couldn’t compete, and would be superseded.”

Stephen Hawking (1942-2018), English theoretical scientist, cosmologist and author of *A Brief History of Time*

1. Which of the two quotations paints an optimistic idea of Artificial Intelligence? Which predicts a danger for humanity?
2. Which position would you adopt? Why?
3. What benefits and what risks can you foresee for AI?

Share your opinions with the rest of the class.

FIRST Reading and Use of English | Part 6

2 You are going to read an article about the implications of Artificial Intelligence. Six sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences (A-G) the one which fits each gap (1-6). There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

‘AI is likely to be either the best or worst thing to happen to humanity.’ Stephen Hawking’s comment on Artificial Intelligence points out the need to tackle the ethics and implications of AI.

There is a mix of enthusiasm and fear surrounding AI. 1 Will it lead to the end of cancer? Will autonomous robots take control of the world? AI exists and is pervasive. 2 The time has come to start thinking about its implications. Four questions need answers:

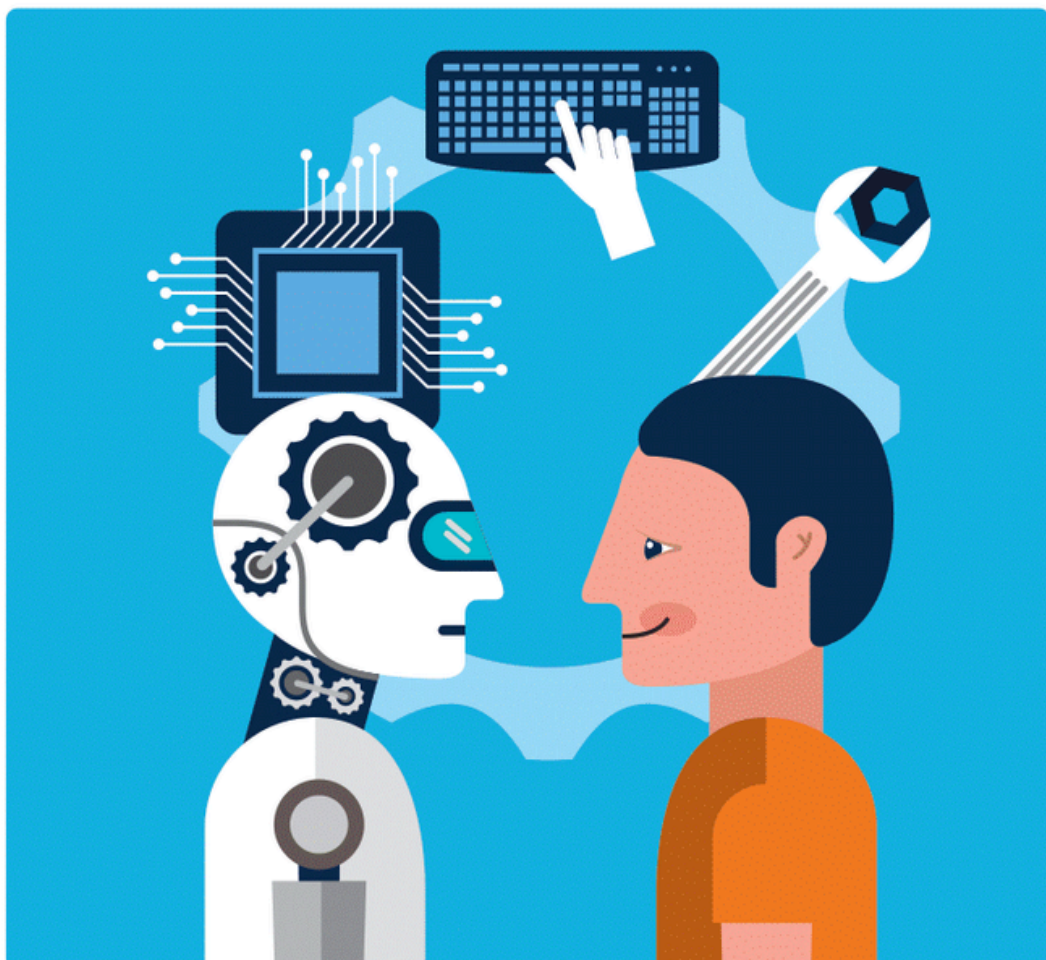
- 1 – How will it affect us in our daily lives?
- 2 – What are the potential opportunities presented by AI?
- 3 – What are the potential risks of Artificial Intelligence? How can we avoid them?
- 4 – What ethical issues come with the development and use of Artificial Intelligence?

While we do not (and cannot) know what the future of AI will bring, we already understand that we must tackle a number of urgent questions:

- 3
- How will it manage inclusion and diversity?
- How can we prepare people for the future?
- Can we guarantee control over data and protect our privacy?



↑ King John signs the Magna Carta by James William Edmund Doyle (1864). Illustration for *A Chronicle of England*.



4 One thing is clear, however. We need new legislation for this new technology. There is growing interest and discussion at an international level and the world must look for solutions, regulation and control systems that can be applied and enforced on a worldwide not national level.

A thousand years on from 1215 we are talking about a sort of ‘Magna Carta’ for AI. This will be vital if we are to build and maintain public confidence in AI, guarantee transparency and defend citizens’ rights and privacy. 5 AI must not remain the exclusive preserve of the world’s advanced economies but must be made accessible to all humanity regardless of nationality or social and economic status. As we move forwards into the unknown, leadership must be assumed by political institutions like the United Nations and the European Union and not left in the hands of multinational commercial and financial bodies.

6 We must work towards a Magna Carta for the third millennium, to make sure that AI becomes the best thing to happen to humanity.

- A. None of us, however, seems to be adequately informed about its potential.
- B. The time has come for new legislation.
- C. To all this, we must add a further concern.
- D. Two extreme scenarios emerge.
- E. At present there are more questions than answers.
- F. Who will be responsible for its development?
- G. You only have to use your smartphone to be involved.

VOCABULARY Lab

3 Match the words (1-7) with their ‘partners’ in the article (a-g). Write a letter in the boxes.

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| 1. ethical | <input type="checkbox"/> | a. confidence |
| 2. potential | <input type="checkbox"/> | b. economies |
| 3. urgent | <input type="checkbox"/> | c. institutions |
| 4. public | <input type="checkbox"/> | d. issues |
| 5. citizens | <input type="checkbox"/> | e. opportunities |
| 6. advanced | <input type="checkbox"/> | f. questions |
| 7. political | <input type="checkbox"/> | g. rights |

COMPREHENSION

4 Answer the following questions.

1. What terrible fear of AI is mentioned in the article?
2. What would a ‘Magna Carta’ for AI be expected to defend?
3. What potential problem of inclusion is cited in the text?
4. Who should be responsible for providing leadership in the application of AI?
5. Do you think a new ‘AI Magna Carta’ is a dream or a possible reality? Who would you entrust with this task?

DEBATE

5 Debate the following motion in two teams.

AI: utopia or dystopia?

- Team A - Utopians - will argue in favour of AI.
- Team B - Dystopians - will argue against AI.

Both teams might consider some of the following issues:

- the applications of AI that are already in use;
- the impact of AI on employment;
- the autonomous development of AI technology.