

LESSON 2: Exploring Connections between Charters

Lesson 2 asks students to dive deeper into the world of the charter by exploring connections between charters using MCE's very thoughtful user interface. The learning goals center on the value of historical context and document corroboration in explaining trends, and things that deviate from trends. Lesson 2 might come immediately after Lesson 1, or as part of an exploration of the medieval world in general.

The instructor divides students into groups of 4 or 5 and then gives each group a different charter. These can be randomly selected, but ideally the selection would highlight a variety of features, dates and locations.

The students' first goal is to find 2 other similar charters by matching at least one of the following features of the charter:

- Witnesses (Agents)
- Place Name
- Date
- Charter Authenticity
- Kind of Possession

Students then need to find context for the charters.

- For example, if they found witness connections
 - Who is the connecting witness?
 - Who are the other witnesses? Are there other witness overlaps?
 - Are the place names similar? Can you find anything about the place name in Wikipedia (have your instructor help you)?

Dates and places work similarly: students can search for information about the region in which their charter is placed and decide if the type of geography affects the contents of a charter. Searching for significant events that happened shortly before or shortly after the recording of their charter offer the students a way to search out elements of the charter that may have been influenced by those events, elements that weren't influenced by other historical events, and why people did or didn't respond to historical events in charters.

Instructors can customize the types of information they emphasize in this lesson to suit their syllabus. A linear narrative of medieval Europe would mean putting the charters in date context—names of kings, dates of conflicts or other significant historical events that surround the charter in time—or in place—with a short report on the region from which the original charter was drawn.