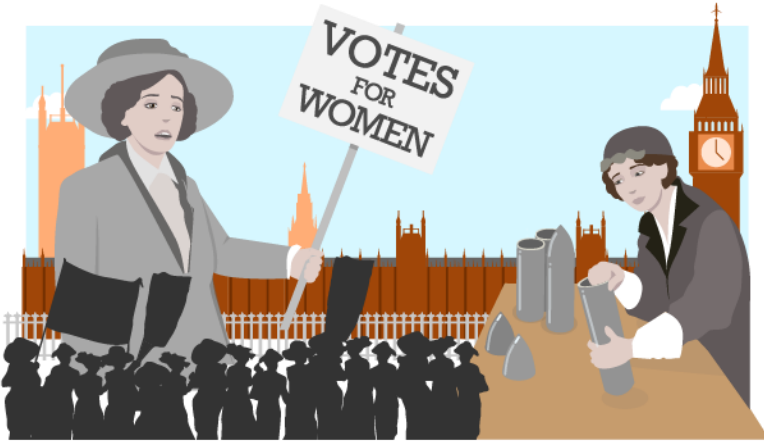


Year 8 Pack 3

The Campaign for Women's Suffrage



Name:

History Teacher:

Task: work through the tasks in this booklet to learn about how women gained the right to vote in 1918. This booklet will cover the tactics of women, the response of the government and them eventually gaining the vote.

Life for women at the start of the 19th century

Women and men were not equal in the 19th century. Women were seen as 'the weaker sex'. This particularly affected middle-class women because they had no reason to leave the home or go to work. The middle classes took the role of women very seriously because they did not have to worry about things like poverty. The ideal woman was to be 'the angel in the house' and support her husband.

Rights for married women

At the beginning of the century, women had very few rights of their own, particularly once they were married. Upon marriage, women became the property of their husband. A remnant of this can still be seen today with married women taking their husband's surname. It was never the other way around. Whilst divorce was very unfashionable in general, it was possible for men to divorce their wives for a variety of reasons, like them failing to look after their needs properly or committing adultery (having an affair). It wasn't until half way through the century (1857) that women could divorce an abusive husband.

Working women

There was a view that women should not work. However, in industries such as textiles whole branches of an industry were reliant upon the labour of women. Even after 1842, women were still involved in coal mining, but only above ground. In agriculture and domestic service women were an essential part of the workforce. A few middle-class women worked before they got married. However, once married, whatever they had earned became the property of their husband, just like them.

Politics and government were matters for men. Women supposedly did not have the brain capacity to understand such things and so they were entirely excluded from the process. Women could not vote, no matter who they were and there were certainly no women in Parliament.

Task: Complete the table below to show how life was different for men and women in the 19th century:

Life for men in 19 th century	Life for women in 19 th century

Task: Explain why women didn't have the right to vote in the 19th century?

Suffragettes: The early year 1903-1906

In 1897, several local women's suffrage groups (suffrage means the right to vote) came together to form the National Union of Women's suffrage societies (NUWSS). These suffragists, led by Millicent Fawcett, believed in peaceful protest and was prepared to work with politicians (men, of course) to achieve their goals. They wrote letters to newspapers and MPs, produced leaflets, got signatures on petitions and held peaceful demonstrations to persuade MPs to support them.

By the beginning of the 20th century, despite their best efforts, women were still unable to vote in parliamentary elections. Many suffragists became increasingly impatient with these unsuccessful peaceful methods of protest. In 1903, Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughter Christabel and Sylvia set up the Women's social and political union (WSPU). Its motto 'deeds not words'. Its members soon became known as the 'suffragettes' – a nickname given to them by the Daily Mail – to avoid any confusion with the older and more peaceful NUWSS.

One of the most important aspects of the WSPU leadership was to organise events that got them publicity for their cause. Their actions – whether it was disrupting political meetings, chaining themselves to railings or destroying property – put their campaign on the front pages of the newspapers.

Task: Answer the questions below

- 1. What was the aim of the NUWSS? What sort of tactics did they use?**
- 2. How were the WSPU different to women's suffrage organisations before them?**
- 3. Why was the WSPU founded?**
- 4. What do you think the 'deeds not words' motto meant?**
- 5. What did the WSPU do to try to get attention?**

Task: Study source B – What can you learn from this source about the WSPU and their tactics:

I can learn....

Details in the source that tell me this

Source B: An extract from Emmeline Pankhurst, My own story, 1914. Here she is describing the aims of the WSPU

"To secure for women the Parliamentary vote as it is or may be granted to men. To limit our membership to women and to be satisfied with nothing but action on our question. 'Deeds not words' was to be our motto. Our members are absolutely single-minded; they concentrate all forces on one object, political equality with men. No member of the WSPU divides her attention between suffrage and other social reforms."

Suffragettes: Developments, 1906-08

In 1908 liberal Asquith told suffrage groups to prove there was popular support for the idea.

Both the NUWSS and WSPU set out to gain popular support with publicity events and to demonstrate this support to the government:

- Thousands of leaflets were given out: the WSPU even dropped them from airships. There was also a suffragette newspaper, called Votes for Women, which suffragettes sold in the street
- Women stage publicity stunts to raise public awareness and advertise meetings
- Both the WSPU and NUWSS held large demonstrations in London, with supports coming from all over the country. In 1907 the NUWSS attracted over 3000 women to march in London. The WSPU march to Hyde park in June 1908 had over 300,000 protestors, with brass bands playing suffragette songs.

Task: If you had supported votes for women in 1906, would you have supported the NUWSS or the WSPU? Explain why:

Source A: Members of the WSPU demonstrating on a boat on the River Thames, opposite the House of Commons. Note the banner advertising their planned demonstration for June 1908.



Source B: The great 'Votes for Women' demonstration held in Hyde Park on 21 June 1908, organised by the suffragettes. Marchers came from all over Britain.



Source C: A member of the WSPU who had chained herself to railings outside the House of Commons. This tactic meant that the police found it difficult to remove them, so the women had more time to make their protests heard and seen.



Task: Study source A, B and C then complete the table below to explain how you think each group might have reacted to each of these tactics.

Group	Source A	Source B	Source C
The public			
The media			
The government			