

The Fight for Equality: The Suffragettes

Learning objective: To understand the role of the Suffragettes in the campaign for women's right to vote in the early 20th century.

Read the passage carefully about the Suffragettes. Use the information to answer the questions, ensuring you provide evidence from the text where possible.

In the early 1900s, women in the United Kingdom were not permitted to vote in general elections. While men had the right to choose their representatives in Parliament, women were excluded from this democratic process. Ellie, a historian who loves studying the past, explains that a group known as the Suffragettes decided to take bold action to change this. Led by Emmeline Pankhurst, the Suffragettes campaigned tirelessly, using the slogan 'Deeds, not words.' They organised large marches, public speeches, and protest rallies to highlight the injustice of the situation. Some members felt that peaceful methods were being ignored, so they adopted more dramatic tactics to force the government to listen. These actions often led to arrests and imprisonment. Despite the challenges and opposition they faced, the Suffragettes remained steadfast in their commitment to achieving equality. Their persistence gradually changed public opinion. It was not until 1928, after years of struggle, that all women in the UK were finally granted the same voting rights as men. Their legacy remains a vital part of British history, reminding us of the importance of standing up for fairness.

Word bank: suffrage · campaign · equality · parliament · protest · democracy

1. Identify two methods the Suffragettes used to highlight their cause according to the text. (2 marks)

2. In what year were all women in the UK finally granted the same voting rights as men? (1 mark)

3. Why do you think the Suffragettes chose the slogan 'Deeds, not words' to describe their approach? (2 marks)

4. What might have happened if the Suffragettes had decided to stop their campaign when they were first ignored by the government? (2 marks)

5. Do you believe the Suffragettes were justified in using 'dramatic tactics' to achieve their goal? Justify your answer using your own opinion. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a poster that a Suffragette might have carried during a march in the early 1900s. Include a powerful slogan and symbols that represent equality.



Extension challenge: Compare and contrast the methods used by the Suffragettes with peaceful protest movements you have learned about in other historical contexts. Why is it important for citizens to have a voice in a democracy? Write a short speech explaining why you think voting is a vital right for everyone.