

The Fight for the Vote: The Suffragette Movement

Learning objective: To understand the history of the Suffragette movement and the campaign for women's suffrage in the early 20th century.

Read the passage below carefully. Use your historical enquiry skills to answer the questions, ensuring you provide evidence from the text to support your ideas.

In the early 1900s, women in the United Kingdom were not permitted to vote in parliamentary elections. While men had long held this right, women were excluded from participating in the democratic process. This sparked a fierce movement led by the Suffragettes, who were determined to secure 'votes for women'. Led by figures such as Emmeline Pankhurst, the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) adopted the slogan 'Deeds, not words'. They believed that peaceful petitions were no longer enough to change the law. Instead, they organised large-scale demonstrations, marches, and daring protests to bring national attention to their cause. The government faced immense pressure as these activists refused to be ignored. Although their methods were often controversial and led to many arrests, their courage ignited a vital conversation about equality. It was not until 1918 that the law finally changed, granting some women over the age of thirty the right to vote. This was a monumental triumph in the long journey toward universal suffrage, proving that persistent advocacy can reshape the foundations of a nation's government.

Word bank: suffrage · campaign · parliament · equality · activist · demonstration · democracy

1. Identify the official slogan used by the Women's Social and Political Union and explain what it implies about their approach to the campaign. (2 marks)

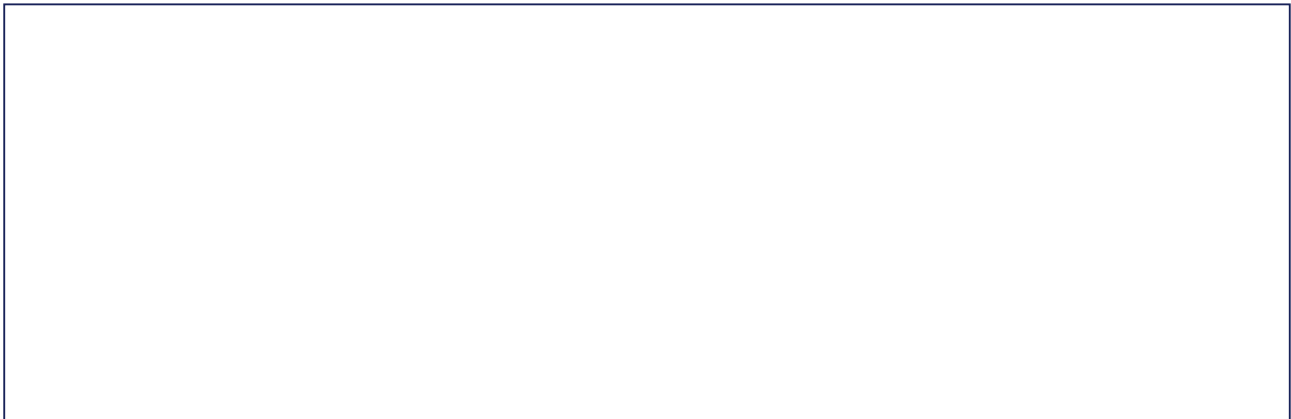
2. According to the text, which year were women first granted the right to vote in the UK, and were all women included in this change? (2 marks)

3. Why might the Suffragettes have felt that peaceful petitions were 'no longer enough' to achieve their goals? (2 marks)

4. The text describes the Suffragettes' methods as 'controversial'. Explain why the government might have viewed these actions differently than the activists did. (2 marks)

5. Justify whether you believe the Suffragettes' strategy of 'deeds, not words' was necessary to achieve their objective. Support your answer with a reasoned argument. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a commemorative poster that the Suffragettes might have carried during a peaceful march. Include their colours of purple, white, and green, and a bold slogan advocating for equality.



Extension challenge: Compare and contrast the methods used by the Suffragettes with other historical protest movements you have studied. What might have happened if the government had chosen to ignore their campaign indefinitely? Write a short diary entry from the perspective of an activist in 1910, describing the challenges and hopes for the future.