The Fight for the Vote: Ellie's History Lesson

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

Read the passage carefully and answer the questions below. Ensure you use evidence from the text to support your answers.

Ellie the elephant, known for her incredible memory, often shares stories of the past with her friends. She explains that in the early 1900s, women in Britain were not allowed to vote in general elections. While many people campaigned peacefully for years, a group known as the Suffragettes decided they needed more radical action to be heard. Led by Emmeline Pankhurst, the Suffragettes believed in the motto 'deeds, not words.' They organised large marches, hunger strikes, and public protests to demand the right to vote. Their journey was not easy; many were arrested for their actions and faced harsh treatment from authorities. Despite the risks, they remained determined to change the law. Their bravery kept the issue of equality at the forefront of the country's attention. Eventually, their long struggle began to bear fruit, helping to pave the way for the Representation of the People Act, which allowed women to vote in 1918. Ellie reminds us that their persistence was essential in shaping the democracy we see today, proving that every voice deserves a chance to be counted.

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

1. According to the text, what was the main goal of the Suffragettes in the early 1900s? (2 marks)

2. What was the motto used by the Suffragettes to describe their approach to activism? (1 mark)

3. Why might the Suffragettes have felt that peaceful campaigning was not enough to achieve their goals? (2 marks)

4. How did the treatment of Suffragettes by the authorities suggest that the government felt threatened by their movement? (2 marks)

5. Do you think the Suffragettes' decision to use 'radical action' was justified? Explain your reasoning using evidence from the passage. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a poster that a Suffragette might have carried during a march in the early 1900s, including a slogan and a symbol of equality.

Extension challenge: Research one other person involved in the women's suffrage movement and write a short paragraph explaining their specific contribution to the cause.