

Lesson Plan: Votes for Women

Subject areas: English Speaking and Listening, English Writing, Citizenship and Social Studies

Initiate a debate around the methods the Suffragettes used to try to make their points and get their voices heard. Encourage the class to think about the types of protests and actions they undertook, and why they believed they were necessary. Allow the debate to develop freely, encouraging students to listen to each other's points, responding to and building on what is said.

Some possible questions to feed in to the debate:

KS2

- What methods do you think were most effective in the Suffragette campaign?
- Do you think the Suffragettes have had more success if they had used less extreme measures?
- What methods do you think the Suffragettes would have used if they had been active today?

Additional Questions for KS3

- Were the Suffragettes right to have paused their campaign during the First World War and what might have happened if they had continued?
- Does having no means of fair representation justify the Suffragettes breaking the law?
- Is it ever justifiable to break the law as part of a political campaign?

To generate a more lively debate you could start by posing a question and dividing the room up into two 'camps' who are to think of reasons for and against a given topic or question, they can then both present their reasons, and can then be free to choose which side they agree with and give justifications for their choices. For more debating ideas see Parliament's *Create the Debate* resources:

<http://www.parliamentweek.org/schools/create-the-debate/>

Further Development – letter writing exercise

Ask the class to write a letter from an imprisoned Suffragette, explaining to their sister or brother why they are willing to go to prison for their cause.

Explain that the letter needs to be able to convey not only their personal feelings, but also to justify their views in the wider context of the Suffragette movement. It should also make clear arguments in favour of what they are doing, and the results they hope to gain from it.

To develop this further, or to diversify the range of tasks, why not get your students to write different types of letters; to the Prison Governor explaining their decision to face jail for their cause, to the Police Commander to plead their case, or to the Prime Minister in order to campaign for a policy change, making sure that the style of the letter is adapted to the intended recipient, to best argue their case effectively.

Further Development – democracy today

Read or replay this section from the end of the Votes for Women Part Two audio:

Constance: I hope for this at least: that anyone in future times who has the right to vote will use it and will remember the struggles of the Suffragettes. Deeds, not words! Deeds, not words!

Ask the class if they think that Constance would be pleased with the development of democracy in the United Kingdom if she were alive today? Would she see a society where there is equality between men and women?

Ask the students to research local, national and European election voter turnout numbers. They can then contrast the relatively low numbers with the statement Constance made. Do they think people today take voting for granted?

Do they have suggestions for how to engage people more in the democratic process?

Curriculum Links:

England and Wales KS2:

English Speaking and Listening- Students can identify the gist of an account or key points in a discussion and evaluate what they hear (2a), ask relevant questions to clarify, extend and follow up ideas (2b), respond to others appropriately, taking into account what they say (2e), make contributions relevant to the topic and take turns in discussion (3a), and use different ways to help the group move forward, including summarising the main points, reviewing what has been said, clarifying, drawing others in, reaching agreement, considering alternatives and anticipating consequences (3f). Citizenship- Students can research, discuss and debate topical issues, problems and events (2a), reflect on spiritual, moral, social, and cultural issues, use imagination to understand other people's experiences (2e), and think about the lives of people living in other places and times, and people with different values and customs (4b).

England and Wales KS3:

English Speaking and Listening- Students can present information and points of view clearly and appropriately in different contexts, adapting their delivery for a range of purposes and audiences (2.1a). Students can use a range of ways to structure and organise their speech to support their purposes and guide the listener (2.1b), listen and respond constructively to others, taking different views into account and modify their own views in the light of what others say (2.1e), and take part in debates (3.1a). Citizenship- Students can weigh up what is fair and unfair in different situations, understanding that justice is fundamental to a democratic society, and explore the role of law in maintaining order and resolving conflict (1.1b). They can investigate ways in which rights can compete and conflict, and understand that hard decisions have to be made to try to balance these (1.2c). Students will be able to engage with, and reflect on, different ideas, opinions, beliefs and values when exploring topical and controversial issues and problems (2.1a), express and explain their own opinions to others through discussions, formal debates and voting (2.2a), communicate an argument, taking account of different viewpoints and drawing on what they have learnt through research, action and debate (2.2b), and justify their argument, giving reasons to try to persuade others to think again, change their opinions (2.2c).

Scotland Curriculum for Excellence:

Listening and Talking- Students can engage with others to make a relevant contribution, taking into account other peoples points of view (LIT 4-02a). Use real and imaginary situations in order to share feelings, ideas and information to convey a message, and seek clarity by asking appropriate questions (LIT 0-09a / LIT 1-09a). Social Studies- Being able to relate and compare their lives to the lives of other people in other times and situations (SOC 0-04a / SOC 2-04a). Students can also debate about the nature of democracy (SOC 4-18b).

Northern Ireland KS2:

Talking and Listening- Students can participate in group and class discussions. Share, respond to and evaluate ideas, arguments and points of view. Describe and talk about real experiences and imaginary situations. Personal Development and Mutual Understanding- Students can consider the idea of rights and responsibilities, recognise that people have different beliefs that shape the way they live, and recognise how injustice and inequality affect people's lives.

Northern Ireland KS3:

English- Students can engage through language with their peers and with fictional and real-life characters and situations to explore their own emotions and develop creative potential. Environment and Society- Students can investigate individuals who are considered to have taken a significant moral stand, and examine their motivation and legacy. Look into the impact of the events of the twentieth century, with particular reference to women's' rights. Explore issues around ethical awareness, and research and manage information effectively.