

Knowledge organiser: Getting the Vote

| Industrialisation, the increase in the population and migration to towns and cities led to new ideas about who should be involved in the government of Britain. This set the country on the path to becoming a democracy. By 1928, all adult men and women had the right to vote. | | Chronology: what happened on these dates? | | Vocabulary: define these words. | |
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| | | 1819 | 'The Peterloo Massacre'. A public meeting in Manchester to demand reform of Parliament. About 15 people were killed and 400–700 injured when magistrates ordered the cavalry to end the meeting. | Constituency | The areas represented by an MP |
| Summarise your learning | | 1832 | Parliamentary Reform Act redistributed seats to ensure that new towns and cities were represented. Small boroughs lost MPs. New MPs created. Electorate increased. One in five men had the vote | Democracy | A system of government in which citizens choose their representatives by voting |
| Topic 1: How democratic was Britain in the 19th century? | Government was not democratic in 1830: only 1 in 10 men could vote; women could not vote; new industrial towns and cities were not represented whilst some small boroughs, with tiny populations, had multiple MPs. Pressure for reform began the process of making Britain more democratic. | 1867,1884–85 | Reform Act extended the franchise to male householders and lodgers in boroughs paying £10 a year. Doubled the franchise. Further Reform Acts passed extending the franchise and equalising the size of electoral constituencies. | Franchise/Suffrage | The right to vote in elections |
| | | 1857–86 | Acts passed giving women more rights over their property and earnings. | Pocket boroughs | Constituencies where aristocrats or wealthy landowners selected MPs |
| Topic 2: What's the truth About Victorian women? | Married Victorian middle and upper-class women depicted as 'the Angel in the House' – the perfect, obedient wife and mother. Working-class women worked in factories, coalmines or as domestic servants. There were some exceptional women who challenged the stereotype. | 1914–18 | World War 1. Women were called upon to do men's jobs whilst they were away fighting. | Rotten boroughs | Constituencies with very small populations but had one or two MPs |
| | | 1918 | The Representation of the People Act gave the vote to all men over 21 and women over 30 who had property. | Suffragettes | Members of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) who used violent methods to get the vote |
| Topic 3: How did women get the vote? | Middle and some working-class women campaigned for the vote, some using violent methods. In the long term, war work helped women to convince male politicians that they deserved the vote. | 1928 | Equal Franchise Act gave the vote to all women over 21. | Suffragists | Members of the National Social and Political Union who campaigned for the vote by non-violent means |
| | | Who or what were these people/events? | | | |
| Topic 4: How much more democratic was Britain by 1930? | By 1930, Britain had become a democracy in comparison with the position in 1800 although there remained aspects of representation that needed further reform. | Elizabeth Garrett Anderson (1836–1917) | Pioneered opportunities for herself and other women to qualify as doctors and work in the medical profession. | Millicent Fawcett (1847–1929) | Founder of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (1897). Campaigned peacefully for the vote for women. |
| | | Gertrude Bell (1868–1926) | The first woman to graduate from Oxford University. Travelled through the Middle East. Climbed mountains. Only female member of military intelligence. Influencer of diplomatic decisions. | Emmeline Pankhurst (1858–1928) | Founder of the Women's Social and Political Union (1903). Favoured the use of violent and extreme methods to achieve their aims quickly. |