

# Votes for Women!

How did the work of the people campaigning for suffrage change the voting system in the UK?

## 1. What is democracy? Who should be allowed to vote?

- Before 1832 **parliament** was made up of members of parliament who represented their area or community. The problem was that these were weirdly distributed and did not share the opinions of the masses.
- only male landowners could vote so most people still had no say in who governed the country.
- In addition, most MPs represented areas of the countryside (where the landed gentry had their ancestral homes) not the towns and cities – even a city as big as Leeds didn't have an MP, despite the fact that many more people lived in the towns and cities due to the Industrial Revolution.
- The **Great Reform Act (1832)** aimed to change the way that the wealthy land-owners controlled the country.

### Significance

## 3. Who were the instrumental characters involved in the fight for women's suffrage?

- **Millicent Fawcett** was an English politician, writer and feminist. She campaigned for women's suffrage by legal change and in 1897–1919 led Britain's largest women's rights association, the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) also known as suffragists.
- **Emmeline Pankhurst** was a leader of the women's rights movement during the late 1800s and early 1900s in England. She worked for 40 years to achieve equal voting rights for women and men. She started the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) with her daughters. Members became known as 'suffragettes'.



### Continuity & change

## 5. What was the government's reaction to the actions of the NUWSS and the WSPU? How and when did women achieve the right to vote?

- The more aggressive tactics of the suffragettes led to many of them being imprisoned. While in prison, many of these women went on hunger strikes and refused to eat. To stop them from becoming ill, they would be force fed through tubes. When this was seen as inhumane, the Cat and Mouse Act was brought in.
- At the outbreak of World War One, the two groups agreed to suspend their campaigns and support the war effort.
- Women joined the war effort through the Women's Land Army, Munitionettes, Voluntary Aid Detachment and the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps.
- In 1918, just before World War One ended, the government finally passed a law giving some women the right to vote for the first time.

### Cause & Consequence

Golden Thread: Social Change, Changing power of the monarchy

Chronology: 1830 - 1935  
Year 6 Autumn 2

## 2. What was the role of women in 19th Century society? How was it changing?

- Historical sources, paintings and stories can help us to understand the contrasts between the treatment of males and females in society at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, including those by local artist GF Watts.
- There were many reasons why the women of the late 1800's and early 1900's wanted to see drastic changes and it wasn't just because they didn't have the right to vote.
- This injustice and inequalities were some of the many reasons why women started fighting for their rights and we will be learning about the work of the determined ladies who paved the way for the changes that have been made.

### Cause & Consequence

## 4. What methods did Suffragettes use to gain the vote? X2 lessons

- The **NUWSS (Suffragists)** wanted to be heard but they wanted to do this in a respectable way. They believed that, if they were thought to be **thoughtful, intelligent and law-abiding** people, they would be able to win the **respect** of Parliament, which could eventually lead to them the right to vote. They did this with petitions, letters, songs, visuals and peaceful protests.
- The **WSPU's (Suffragettes)** tactics started becoming more aggressive. They penned a new motto, '**Deeds not words**'. They began throwing stones and bricks at protests, attacking police officers, planting bombs, chaining themselves to railings and setting fire to places frequently visited by people in power, such as golf courses.



### Cause & Consequence

#### Assessment Task:

#### Why should Clara Lambert be commemorated by the place that she lived?

- Children to use the information gathered, historical sources, paintings, propaganda posters and stories to aid in drawing conclusions about the significance of Clara Lambert in the achievement of the vote.
- Children to write a letter to petition Clara Lambert - the militant Suffragette who died in Farncombe – having a blue plaque.



### Continuity & change