

## Unit 16 The franchise: why did it take so much longer for British women to get the vote?

### About the unit

In this unit, pupils use sources and accounts to learn about the struggle women, and their male supporters, had to undergo in order to achieve full female suffrage. This will be put into context by referring to the struggle for universal male suffrage. Pupils will learn that gaining universal female suffrage was, in part, an outcome of society's changing perception of the role, status, functions and rights of women.

The unit is expected to take 8–11 hours. There is scope to adjust some of the teaching activities to take account of the time constraints in different schools.

### Where the unit fits in

This unit builds on work done in unit 10 'France 1789–94', unit 11 'Industrial changes' and unit 12 'Middle-class life 1900' and provides parallels with aspects of unit 15 'Black peoples of America'.

### Expectations

#### At the end of this unit

**most pupils will:** demonstrate knowledge of the long campaign to widen the franchise 1800–1918/1928; analyse the way different women tried to obtain more equal treatment for women; describe the ideas and attitudes of those people who were opposed to the idea of women and less wealthy men participating in the political process; research how different groups of people tried to achieve political change 1815–48; demonstrate knowledge and understanding of different methods used by suffragettes and suffragists; explain why women got the vote in 1918; select, organise and use relevant information in a piece of structured writing

**some pupils will not have made so much progress and will:** demonstrate some knowledge of key events and individuals in the debate about the franchise 1800–1918/1928; describe aspects of the careers of at least two different women who tried to obtain more equal treatment for women; demonstrate some knowledge of why some people were opposed to the idea of women and less wealthy men having the vote; use sources of information to describe one attempt to achieve political change 1815–48; describe the way at least two individuals tried to achieve women's suffrage 1867–1914; describe how women got the vote in 1918; select and combine information in a piece of structured writing

**some pupils will have progressed further and will:** demonstrate detailed knowledge of the long campaign to widen the franchise 1800–1918/1928, making links between the campaign and wider social and political developments; analyse and compare the way different women tried to obtain more equal treatment for women; carry out detailed research into how different groups of people tried to achieve political change 1815–48; analyse the ideas and attitudes of those people who were opposed to the campaign; use their initiative to investigate and compare how different groups tried to achieve political change 1815–48; explain the different methods used by suffragettes and suffragists and evaluate their relative effectiveness in obtaining political change; consider conflicting interpretations about why women got the vote in 1918; reach substantiated conclusions in a piece of structured writing

### Prior learning

It is helpful if pupils have:

- encountered the history of arguments about who should be involved in the political process in previous units
- done substantial work on the role of women in British, European and other contexts
- experience of using some of the techniques involved in planning an extended piece of writing

### Language for learning

Through the activities in this unit pupils will be able to understand, use and spell correctly words relating to:

- the campaign to extend the franchise, *eg suffrage, inequality, radical discrimination, status, democracy, reform, revolution, agitation, suffragist, suffragette*

Speaking and listening – through the activities pupils could:

- discuss and evaluate conflicting evidence to arrive at a considered viewpoint

Reading – through the activities pupils could:

- appraise texts quickly and effectively for their usefulness

Writing – through the activities pupils could:

- write closely argued text where precise links and connections are made within sentences

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## Resources

Resources include:

- information on the careers of three campaigning women 1800–1918 and the changing status of nineteenth-century women
- information about those excluded from the franchise in 1815
- material for research enquiries into different protest groups 1815–48, including Chartism
- information on Chartist women and organisations
- information about the causes of the 1867 and 1884 reform legislation
- information about individuals and groups involved in the campaign for women's suffrage 1867–1914
- First World War posters relating to women
- useful websites, *eg* [www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/](http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/)
- CD-ROMs, *eg* *Britain 1750–1900* (*British Library*)

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## Out-of-school learning

There are opportunities for pupils to carry out further research using local libraries, television programmes and newspapers. Pupils could find out more about the modern political system by visiting their local council or the Houses of Parliament or by observing an election taking place locally.

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## Future learning

Having studied the way women won the vote 1918–28, pupils could build on this unit by later studying the changing role of women in the later years of the twentieth century.

### Three campaigning women: what were they fighting for?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to analyse the types of arguments and struggles for women's rights that took place in the nineteenth century</li> <li>• to make links between women's legal status and their perceived gender roles</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give pupils accounts of three women who struggled against inequality or injustice. Choose three contrasting women from different parts of the period, <i>eg Harriet Taylor, Josephine Butler and Emmeline Pankhurst</i>.</li> <li>• Provide pupils with a grid for analysing the three women's struggles under three headings:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>What were they struggling for?</i></li> <li>– <i>What methods did they use in their struggle?</i></li> <li>– <i>Why do we not have to struggle for this today?</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Introduce the 'big question' for the whole unit <i>Why did it take so much longer for British women to get the vote?</i> Tell pupils that women did not get the vote until 1918–28. Carry out mini-voting activity about a classroom matter, but exclude one section of the group for an arbitrary reason, in order to emphasise the impact of exclusion from franchise.</li> <li>• Begin to explain and emphasise the teaching point, by introducing pupils to nineteenth-century views on public and private spheres of activity.</li> <li>• Use a large Venn diagram and give pupils a list of activities to position in the circles which should be labelled public sphere and private sphere, <i>eg making laws, declaring war, looking after children, etc.</i></li> <li>• Talk about which activities pupils have put in each sphere and tell pupils that Victorians regarded the private sphere as being the proper business of women and the public sphere that of men. Refer to the 'Angel in the House' model.</li> <li>• Brainstorm why and how this attitude inhibited women's progress toward national suffrage.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analyse three nineteenth-century/early twentieth-century women's struggles according to purpose, method, and compare with today</li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge of Victorian private and public spheres of activity by deploying information correctly in a Venn diagram</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any three women could be chosen, but two criteria may be helpful: (i) choose at least one woman who campaigned for the vote; (ii) look ahead to the rest of the unit to make content choices that will prepare pupils to be motivated and informed ready for later content.</li> <li>• While the unit is structured round women's franchise, it is important to bring out key points in the extension of male franchise and thereby avoid false assumptions.</li> <li>• Links could be made to unit 15 'Black peoples of America' where civil rights are addressed.</li> <li>• ICT: pupils could retrieve information from relevant websites about women who struggled against inequality. The analysis of women's work and struggle could be structured by compiling a table, and cutting and pasting text will encourage relevant selection. Pupils might complete the Venn diagrams with a drawing package.</li> </ul> |
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### Why did some people have the vote in 1815 and not others?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• about the principles that currently underpin western democracy</li> <li>• to analyse the social and cultural factors that excluded different groups of persons from the franchise in 1815</li> <li>• to understand and to articulate attitudes and principles different from their own</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help pupils to understand two fundamental principles which tend to affect current western democratic societies' beliefs about voting: (i) responsibility and (ii) freedom. Ask them <i>Why should all 18-year-olds have the vote?</i> Ask them to think of people who do not have the vote. Ask them to think back to earlier units where they encountered institutions of 'slavery' or 'serfdom'. Exactly why were these people not considered eligible to vote?</li> <li>• Give pupils lists of facts or fact cards about who could and could not vote in 1815. Discuss principles, <i>eg property owning, legal freedom, beliefs about responsibility</i>, which underpinned each. Remind them about continuity from earlier periods they have studied.</li> <li>• Using a parallel timeline activity, remind pupils of (or introduce pupils to) what was happening in France.</li> <li>• Check pupils' understanding by interviewing individual pupils posing as characters from the period who must explain to their puzzled interviewer why it is a shocking idea that women and/or many men other than landed gentry should vote.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explain why different criteria are sometimes employed to include or exclude people from the franchise</li> <li>• demonstrate an understanding of the reasons why different people could or could not vote in 1815</li> <li>• present, in role, reasons why extension of franchise would have seemed shocking to many people in 1815</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links could be made to any current school activity in which pupils are involved in a voting or other democratic activity – elections to a school council, elections for class captain, mock elections, etc. Ask pupils to consider whether or not a situation could arise in which pupils might be deprived of a vote.</li> <li>• Citizenship: links with work on characteristics of parliamentary and other forms of government and on the electoral system and the importance of voting.</li> <li>• The year 1815 has been used as a focus in this section to pick up the effect of the end of the Napoleonic Wars on British society and politics. Teachers should make this clear to pupils.</li> <li>• Links could be made with unit 10 'France 1789–94' and particularly with the corresponding societies that were established, contributing to the government's fear of revolution in Britain.</li> <li>• Links could be made with unit 15 'Black peoples of America' specifically where slavery and civil rights issues are addressed.</li> <li>• Language for learning: there are opportunities in this part of the unit for work on word families and their roots, <i>eg democracy, democratic, demos</i>. This may help some pupils gain a better understanding of various terms used here and elsewhere in the unit.</li> </ul> |
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Pupils should learn:

Pupils:

### Who was struggling for political change between 1815 and 1848?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to carry out an investigation into the ways in which different groups sought to challenge the existing political system between 1815 and 1832</li> <li>• to refine skills in the selection of relevant items when researching the activities of a nineteenth-century protest group</li> <li>• about the reasons for, and limitations of, the 1832 Reform Act</li> <li>• to explain the main reasons for the immediate failure of the Chartist Movement</li> <li>• about the ultimate achievement of five of the Chartists' six demands and whether or not this was directly, or indirectly, due to the Chartists</li> <li>• that the Chartists' attitudes to women were typical of attitudes common in Victorian Britain</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell pupils that the period 1815–28 was a period of great tensions – of repressions, riots and risings. Remind them of the recency of the French Revolution, of corresponding societies, the returning soldiers and the government's fear of revolution in Great Britain.</li> <li>• In pairs or groups, pupils research one of: Spa Fields Riot 1816, Derbyshire Rising 1817, the Blanketeers, Peterloo Massacre 1819, the Cato Street Conspiracy 1820.</li> <li>• Each group reports findings to the class as if they were advising the government. Initiate a whole-class discussion on which event posed the greatest threat to the government. Build up a timeline of revolt and repression.</li> <li>• Tell pupils the story of the events 1828–32 that led to the 1832 Reform Act. Ask pupils to consider the apparent strangeness of people like William IV and Earl Grey supporting parliamentary reform at that time.</li> <li>• Outline the main changes made by the Reform Act. What has changed? How does this reflect changes happening in Britain? What about women?</li> <li>• Ask pupils to speculate about what radicals and the working class were likely to do next, given their disappointment with the 1832 Act. Remind them, first, of constraints on action.</li> <li>• Tell pupils that the Chartists were one group of largely working-class people agitating for change. Give pupils a summary of the Six Points of the People's Charter. Ask pupils to annotate this with reasons why the governing classes were unlikely to agree with these.</li> <li>• Use this activity to monitor and review pupils' understanding of the existing government system.</li> <li>• Provide pupils with a series of information cards about women and the Chartist Movement 1838–48. Each card should focus on a specific activity, development or individual.</li> <li>• Ask pupils to use their knowledge of Victorian Britain to discuss and explain why the Chartists, who made such radical demands, had these attitudes to women.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide an account of events and developments by which different groups sought to challenge the political system between 1815 and 1832</li> <li>• select information pertinent to the investigation</li> <li>• create a timeline and timeline commentary indicating the significance of key events between 1815 and 1832</li> <li>• use knowledge of the 1832 Reform Act to speculate about the options open to those who were disappointed by this legislation</li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the implications of the Chartists' 'Six Points' by suggesting the likely reaction of the governing classes to these demands</li> <li>• demonstrate an understanding of the attitude of the Chartists towards women's participation in the political system</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers might prefer to choose just two or three violent protests, 1815–28, depending on resources available and the degree of detail that time or pupils' ability will allow. The main criterion for choice should be: What will help as many pupils as possible to understand (i) types of people that were struggling for change; (ii) why most struggles were bound to fail?</li> <li>• Reports by government spies on the activities of the campaigning or plotting group could provide opportunities to model an appropriate style of language for pupils so that they produce an official report that demonstrates 'period-feel' and avoids anachronistic references.</li> <li>• The introduction of 'radicals' here will need an explanation.</li> <li>• Teachers may wish to extend the study of Chartists and Chartism by addressing it, additionally, as a response to economic hardship and by considering the links between the Chartists' economic situation and their political aspirations.</li> <li>• Teachers may wish to place Chartism in the context of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century radical and working-class demands concerning the franchise.</li> </ul> |
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### Why did more people get the vote in the second half of the nineteenth century?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• why the 1867 and 1884 Acts were passed</li> <li>• to develop their understanding of causation by constructing diagrams using (and refining) 'organising techniques' taught in earlier units</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give pupils lists of possible factors why the 1867 and 1884 acts were passed. Include some obviously bogus reasons and some less obviously bogus. Ask pupils to use their period knowledge to select those reasons which they think are sensible.</li> <li>• Introduce pupils to simple accounts of 1867 and 1884, either through stories or sources, and ask them to check whether they were right. Ask pupils to summarise the main changes to the franchise, emphasising how they affected the proportion of men who could now vote.</li> <li>• Assess pupils' understanding by asking them to produce simple causation diagrams to explain why either or both of these Acts were passed.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• select appropriate reasons for the passing of Reform Acts in the second half of the century</li> <li>• organise these reasons into a causation diagram, classifying the reasons appropriately</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensible reasons why the acts were passed might include: 'political parties wanted the support of new voters'. Bogus reasons might include 'elections would be more fun'.</li> <li>• Teachers may wish to link this with Forster's Education Act of 1870.</li> <li>• Key skills: these activities provide opportunities for pupils to demonstrate evidence of improving own learning and performance (pupils use causation diagrams as a way of checking their understanding of the issues relating to the 1867 and 1884 acts).</li> <li>• Language for learning: appraise accounts quickly and effectively for their usefulness.</li> <li>• Citizenship: links with work on characteristics of parliamentary and other forms of government and on the electoral system and the importance of voting.</li> </ul> |
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### What freedoms were women obtaining?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to evaluate the extent of the changes to women's economic, legal, and political status by 1901</li> <li>• that by the end of the nineteenth century many women were able to vote in local elections but not national ones</li> <li>• that the 'Angel in the House' model still held good by the end of the century</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Return to the 'Angel in the House' model of Victorian women and to the division of interest into public and private spheres.</li> <li>• Pupils brainstorm what they think women could and could not do in the mid-nineteenth century.</li> <li>• Provide pupils with a number of partially completed 'factcards' relating to legislation affecting women's steps on the way to equality with men. Pupils, in groups, research and complete the factcards to find out what happened to bring about changes in the status and independence of women.</li> <li>• Pupils use the information they have researched to speculate about the range of attitudes in men and women these changes may have brought about. Give pupils examples of specific attitudes of actual men and women. <i>Would all women have felt the same? All men?</i></li> <li>• Final discussion on whether the 'Angel in the House' model still held good by, say, the end of Victoria's reign in 1901.</li> </ul> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate a knowledge of the ways in which women were achieving equality with men throughout the nineteenth century</li> <li>• show an understanding of the impact legislation could have had on the attitudes of men and women to female equality</li> <li>• discuss and evaluate conflicting evidence to arrive at a considered viewpoint</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 'factcards' could include the following information:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 1834 Women ratepayers could vote for Poor Law Guardians</li> <li>– 1839 An 'innocent' mother could have custody of her children until they were seven years old</li> <li>– 1857 Divorce Act: if her husband had deserted her, a woman had the same rights to property as a single woman. Men could divorce for a wife's adultery; women had to prove adultery and cruelty (only equality of treatment in 1923)</li> <li>– 1870 Married Women's Property Act: women could keep own earnings, property acquired after marriage and hold a separate savings account</li> <li>– 1882 Married Women's Property Act: women could keep property acquired before marriage</li> <li>– 1870 Education Act: women ratepayers could vote for, and serve on, school boards</li> <li>– 1873 An 'innocent' mother could have custody of her children until they were sixteen years old</li> <li>– 1875 Women could be elected as Poor Law Guardians</li> <li>– 1888 Women could vote in county and borough elections</li> <li>– 1891 A man could not compel his wife to live in the matrimonial home</li> <li>– 1894 Women could serve on urban and district councils as councillors</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
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Pupils should learn:

Pupils:

### Who was campaigning for votes for women?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that arguments and campaigns for suffrage predated the suffragette campaigns of the early twentieth century</li> <li>• about the factors that caused different types of people to argue or campaign for female suffrage</li> <li>• to develop knowledge and understanding of campaigning methods used by suffragists and suffragettes</li> <li>• to use their classifying skills (developed earlier) in a new historical setting</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain to pupils that, meanwhile, alongside all these events, many different people were arguing for and against votes for women. Illustrate with examples of individuals, eg <i>John Stuart Mill</i>, <i>Mrs Humphry Ward</i>, <i>Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst</i>, <i>David Lloyd George</i>, <i>Sylvia Pankhurst</i>, <i>Millicent Fawcett</i>, <i>Annie Kenny</i>, <i>Emily Davison</i>. Give pupils sample arguments and ask them to match them to individuals involved.</li> <li>• Check pupils' understanding of this work by asking them to suggest social and political types who would <i>not</i> have argued or campaigned for votes for women.</li> <li>• Pupils investigate suffragist and suffragette campaigns. Use focused, limited research in which pupils must classify different methods used and the reasons why these methods were used. More able pupils use timelines and timeline commentaries to indicate when and why methods changed, and what the differences were between the two groups.</li> <li>• Display timelines and use these to recap, to reinforce and to remind pupils of the overarching question: <i>Why did it take so long for British women to get the vote?</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate understanding of nineteenth-century arguments for female suffrage by matching these to types of individual involved</li> <li>• explain why some groups and some women would <i>not</i> have supported female suffrage, thereby demonstrating deeper knowledge of social/ political values and attitudes</li> <li>• select and organise information on suffragette campaigns</li> <li>• start to relate this information to the overarching question for the whole unit</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arguments for female suffrage abounded even before active campaigning began.</li> <li>• Mrs Humphrey Ward was the founder of the Women's Anti-Suffrage League.</li> <li>• Links could be made to unit 11 'Industrial changes' and to unit 12 'Middle-class life 1900' where pupils address the changing position of women in society.</li> <li>• Activities in previous units should make the work of classification of the different methods used by suffragettes easily accessible. Pupils should be encouraged to recall headings that were generated in previous classification exercises and, reasoning from that experience, to think of suitable headings for this mini-research into suffragette campaigns. It is important that the choice, wording and suitability of headings is discussed fully.</li> <li>• ICT: pupils could use ICT to select and organise information that could aid their analysis.</li> </ul> |
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Pupils should learn:

Pupils:

### Why did women gain the vote in 1918 and not before?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• about the role that women in Britain played during the First World War</li> <li>• to analyse and evaluate the impact of women's war work on political, social and cultural attitudes</li> <li>• to evaluate the changes in franchise in 1918 and 1928 as they affected men and women</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using video clips, visual sources, suitable websites or overhead transparencies of visual sources, give pupils an overview of women's war work.</li> <li>• Ask pupils to annotate a poster encouraging women to take part in the war effort, with reference to (i) the propaganda devices used; (ii) the values and attitudes revealed by the poster.</li> <li>• Ask pupils to think back to work at the start of the enquiry on 'freedom' and 'responsibility'. Ask pupils to speculate about how established attitudes to women might now change.</li> <li>• Direct pupils to sources of information on legislation in 1918 and 1928. Ask them to (i) note how it affected women and men; (ii) list the reasons why this happened when it did.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• annotate a poster encouraging women to join the war effort with reference to (i) the propaganda devices used; (ii) the values and attitudes revealed by the poster</li> <li>• suggest reasons why women's war work shifted attitudes to female suffrage</li> <li>• explain causes and consequences of suffrage legislation in 1918 and 1928</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A wide variety of posters encouraging women to take part in the war effort exist in many collections, the most accessible of which, by personal visit or mail order, is probably housed in the Imperial War Museum, London.</li> <li>• Teachers may like to extend this activity to a consideration of the reasons why many prominent individuals, <i>eg Herbert Asquith</i>, changed their minds on the subject of female franchise.</li> <li>• ICT: pupils could create a spreadsheet using quantitative data on the changing range of women's occupations by 1918. They could analyse the data and produce graphs of trends.</li> </ul> |
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### Why did it take so much longer for women to get the vote?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to construct a piece of formal, extended writing using techniques of selecting, sorting and arranging</li> <li>• to revise and deploy knowledge gained in this unit</li> <li>• to develop new skills in persuasive and promotional writing</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a structure for an essay (answering the above question) which will require pupils to go back over all foregoing work and select relevant items. Build the essay around four main issues:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– nineteenth-century views on voting</li> <li>– nineteenth-century views about women</li> <li>– how nineteenth-century views on voting changed</li> <li>– how nineteenth-century views about women changed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Afterwards, devise paired activity in which pupils write short promotional reviews on each other's essays.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• select, recall and organise relevant information into an argument explaining why it took so much longer for women to gain the vote</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By this stage in key stage 3 pupils will be used to returning to the 'big question' at the end of a unit. All of the foregoing activities will have prepared them for the structural and linguistic work that they need to undertake in order to prepare the essay. Writing frames should probably be avoided as this will pre-empt the thinking on sorting, organising and style that the activities above have been designed to develop and which build on similar work in earlier units. Pupils should now be writing closely argued text where precise links and connections are made within sentences.</li> <li>• Language for learning: lower-attaining pupils could be supplied with sample sentence stems in order to model appropriate style for a formal history essay. Provide them with sorting devices to produce their own essay structure. Pupils could check spelling of keywords with their learning partners.</li> <li>• Citizenship: links with work on legal and human rights and responsibilities and on the electoral system and the importance of voting.</li> <li>• ICT: pupils could use ICT to select and organise information to help their historical analysis.</li> </ul> |
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