

THE SUFFRAGETTES

1. Read the article quickly and decide why it was written:

- to encourage young people to vote in elections
- to tell the story of how women got the right to vote
- to explain why women and men should have equal voting rights

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This week's iconic women: the Suffragettes

If you are a secondary school student, then quite soon you will have the opportunity to vote in your country's elections. If you are eighteen, you will have this right and of course, it will not matter if you are male or female. This might seem normal now, but 100 years ago things were very different.



For example, in Britain, before 1918, it was against the law for women to vote in their country's elections. This meant that even intelligent, successful and well-educated women didn't have the chance to choose their political leaders. In contrast, any man had the right to vote. In 1897, a group of women decided to try to change things and the National Union of Women's Suffrage began. Their leader was a woman called Millicent Fawcett and their goal was to change the law to give women the same right to vote as men.

Millicent Fawcett believed in non-violent protest, but other women felt that her progress was too slow. In 1903 a woman called Emmeline Pankhurst started a different group: the Women's

Social and Political Union (WSPU). They had the same aims as Fawcett's group, but they used more extreme and violent methods to attract attention to women's suffrage. The word suffrage actually means 'right to vote' and the women who supported the fight for this right became known as 'Suffragettes'.

As part of their protests, some women in the WSPU committed serious crimes. They attacked politicians, set fire to post boxes and churches and vandalised buildings. Most of the women who committed crimes were sentenced to prison, but many of them continued to protest by breaking prison rules or refusing food.



One of the most famous suffragettes was a woman named Emily Davison. As a student, Davison had already done something very unusual for a woman at that time. She had graduated from Oxford University with a first class honours degree. She was a passionate suffragette who believed in 'actions, not words'. Unfortunately, she is perhaps most well-known because, at a famous horse race in 1913 (probably as part of a protest,



but no one really knows), she stepped in front of the King's horse and was killed.

In 1914 World War I began and Emmeline Pankhurst and the WSPU decided it was more important to help the country during the war than to continue their fight. While the men went to fight, women did men's jobs and kept Britain running. In 1918, helped by the vital role that women played during the war, the Suffrage movement had its first success and women over the age of thirty got the right to vote. By 1928, women were finally given identical voting rights to men.

When you reach voting age, take a moment to remember the people who fought for this right in the past. Don't miss the opportunity you have to express your opinion.



Glossary

opportunity (n) = a chance to do something
goal/aim (n) = something that you hope to do in the future
progress (n) = the process of getting closer to finishing something

honours degree (n) = a university degree that is above basic level
vital (adj) = extremely important

2. Read the article again. Are the sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 Millicent Fawcett was the leader of the group known as the WSPU. _____
- 2 Millicent Fawcett and Emmeline Pankhurst wanted the same thing. _____
- 3 Emily Davison believed that what people do is more important than what they say. _____
- 4 Emily Davison was well-educated. _____
- 5 Emmeline Pankhurst fought in World War I. _____
- 6 In 1918 the voting rights of men and women became equal. _____

3. Read the article again. Choose the correct answer.

1 In Britain, before 1918, the following group had the right to vote:

- a well-educated women only
- b all men
- c all women
- d well-educated men only

2 The WSPU believed that:

- a non-violent protest was not fast enough.
- b non-violent protest was the best method.
- c violent protest was too extreme.
- d violent protest was too slow.

3 The article says that in prison, many of the suffragettes:

- a vandalised the prison building.
- b stopped protesting.
- c stopped eating.
- d attacked other prisoners.

4 In 1918:

- a suffragettes were given the right to vote.
- b all women were given the right to vote.
- c women who helped in the war were given the right to vote.
- d some women were given the right to vote.

4. Match the underlined words in the article with their definitions.

peaceful
say what you think
enthusiastic
illegal
clever
exactly the same
carry on

identical
against the law
continue
intelligent
passionate
non-violent
express your opinion

5. Complete the sentences with words from the glossary or underlined words from the text.

- 1 The information from the witnesses was _____. It helped us to catch the suspect quickly.
- 2 Like people, dolphins are extremely _____ animals. They have good memories, can solve problems and can communicate with each other.
- 3 Since they employed more officers, the police have made _____ fighting street crime in the area.
- 4 Your school wants you to _____ on the plans for a new cafeteria. Complete the questionnaire and tell us your preferences.
- 5 Peter and George are _____ twins. They look exactly the same, except Peter is slightly taller.
- 6 The _____ to learn a new skill in prison helps prisoners to find jobs when they finish their sentences.
- 7 In the UK it is _____ for anyone under the age of seventeen to drive.
- 8 Paul studied very hard at university and received a(n) _____ in Engineering.

9 The police investigate violent crimes such as mugging, and _____ crimes such as computer piracy.

10 The main _____ of organisations such as Amnesty International is to protect human rights.

11 If you _____ eating fast food every day, you'll become overweight and unwell.

6. Choose the correct options:

1 My brother's football team lost 10-0 on Saturday. He sad he had never felt such humiliate /humiliation.

2 At this company, we do not discriminate/discrimination.

3 The segregate/segregation of male and female prisoners is very important for everyone's safety.

4 The assassinate/assassinations of the Prime Minister has shocked the nation. He was killed outside his home on Friday evening.

5 The teachers had to separation/separate the two boys after they started fighting during the basketball game.