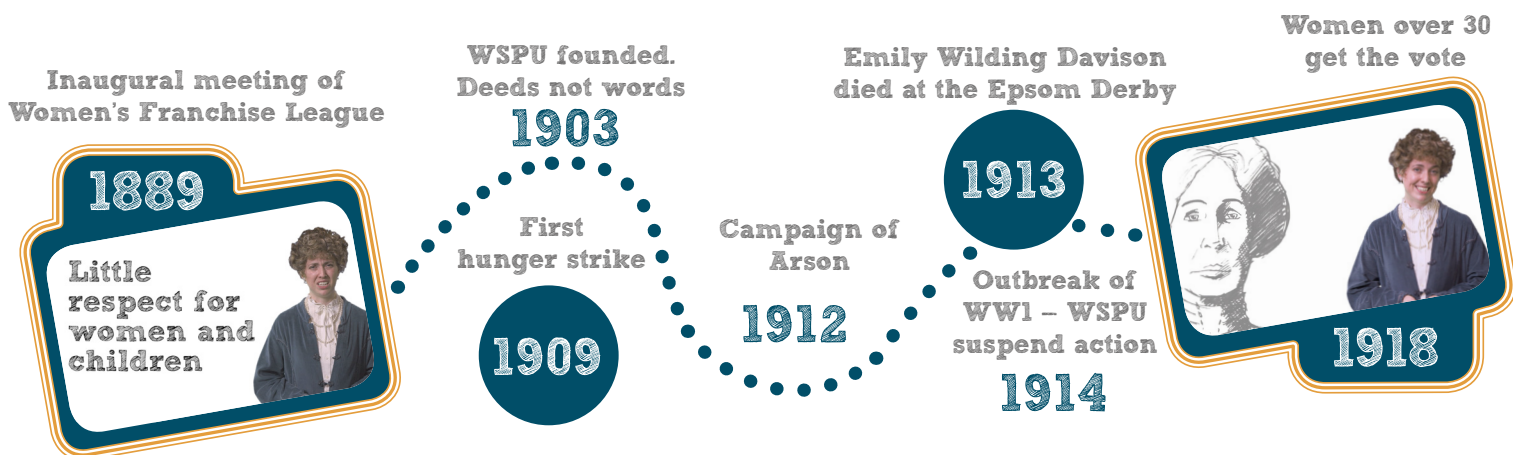


# Who were the Suffragettes?

Aimed at Key Stage 3 – year 9



## National Curriculum subject links

*Challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world, 1901 to the present day*

- *Women's suffrage*

## Coverage and links

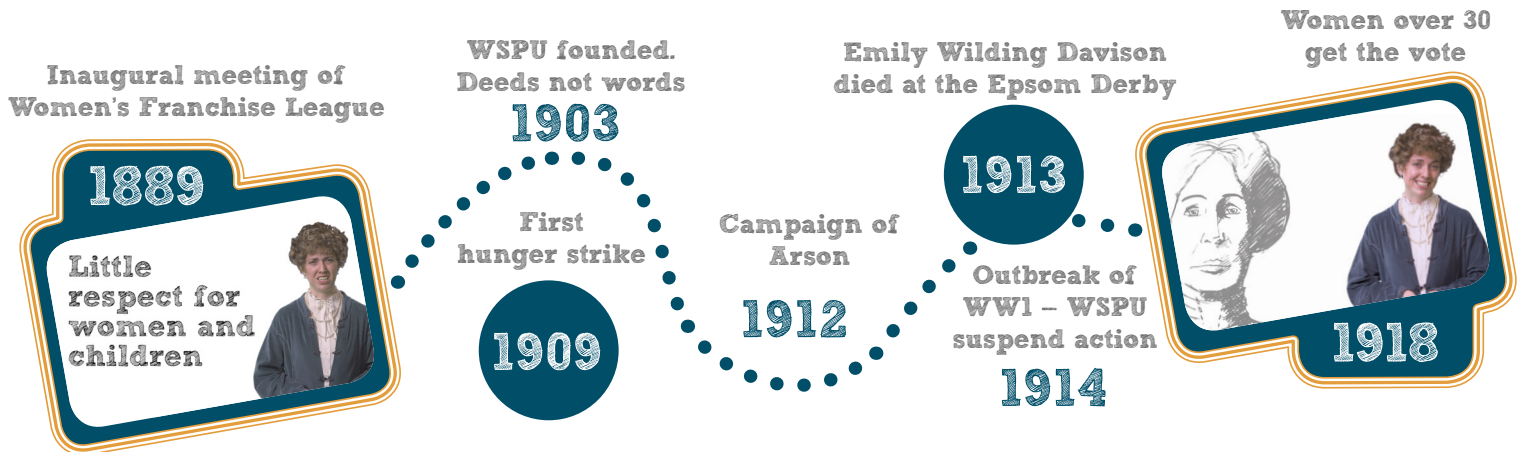
**The story** of women's suffrage in the early years of the 20th century is one that perhaps doesn't get enough attention in secondary school history classrooms. This short scheme of work seeks to look at one aspect of that story by teaching pupils about who the suffragettes were, what inspired them, how they worked and at the end, judges their work against other factors in bringing about votes for women. While describing has been seen as a lower level skill, the ability to identify key features, to use precise language to capture the meaning of events and people, and the ability to produce meaningful accounts and short biographies is hugely important.

**The focus** of the films used in the lesson sequence is on Emmeline Pankhurst, who speaks in each one. Of course, though, other leading members of the movement will be crossed along the way and you might find it useful to gather other materials about them and the suffrage movement. You will also need to make sure that pupils understand the word 'suffrage'.

**The unit** builds on other work that might be done in Key Stage 3 and you should certainly refer to this before you teach the unit. You could build on the story of parliament started in the Middle Ages, for example, and on more recent work on the extension of the male franchise in the 19th century. You might also build up to this unit with a short study of the different roles that women have played in the 20th century, highlighting how they had been almost completely excluded from the political process.

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## Suggested learning outcomes

By the end of these lessons, pupils will be able to...

- Describe the suffragette movement and specifically the role of Emmeline Pankhurst
- **Give key factual details from the story of the suffragette campaign**
- Give reasons why women were eventually given the vote in Great Britain.

## Pre-lesson homework

If you haven't done work on the male vote in the 19th century, then a homework introducing your pupils to this would be hugely useful. You could, for example, ask them to research one particular part of the story – the Peterloo Massacre, the Great Reform Act and the Chartist movement are all very important topics.

## Lesson 1 – Who was Emmeline Pankhurst?

Films to use

**Emmeline Pankhurst: Becoming a suffragist**

**Mrs Pankhurst: Marriage**

**Women's Franchise League (WFL)**

**Emmeline Pankhurst and Kier Hardie**

**The Manchester Workhouse**

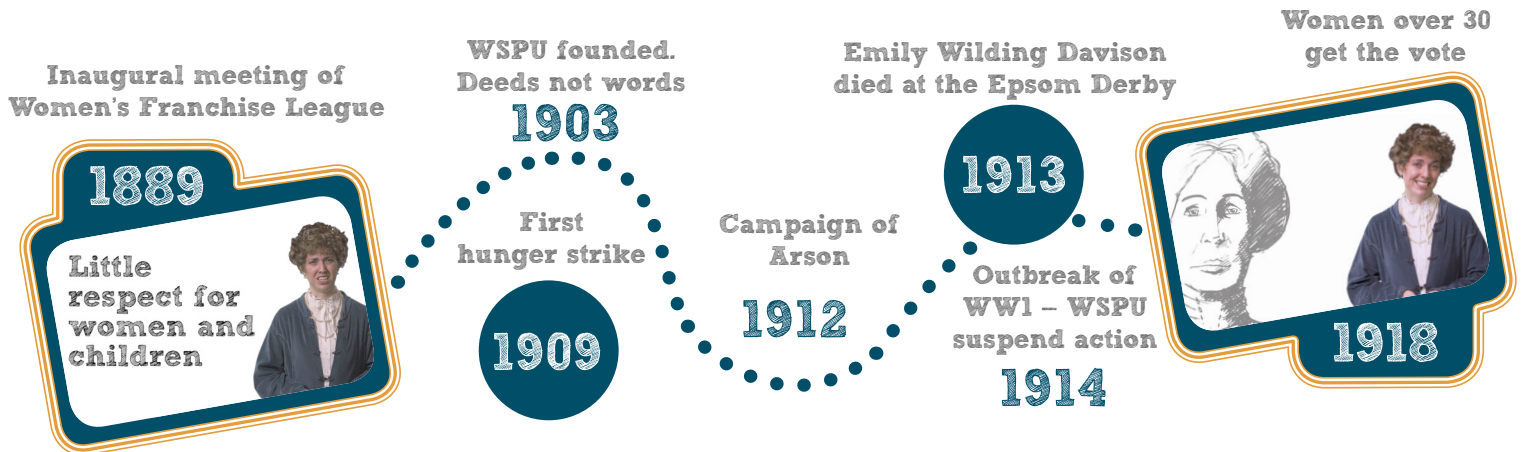
**Emmeline Pankhurst: Woman registrar**

**Start** the lesson with a picture like the one in **Appendix 1**. Ask your pupils to comment on the signs – what are the women demanding? What about the women themselves? How are they dressed? What is their demeanour? Introduce the suffragette movement here and Emmeline Pankhurst in particular.

**The aim of Lesson 1** is to write a short biography about Emmeline Pankhurst, so as you watch the films here, pupils will need to gather notes about her character, the defining moments in her life, her work and her friendships.

# Who were the Suffragettes?

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## Lesson 1 – How significant was Florence Nightingale? ...continued

There is a worksheet you could use in **Appendix 2**, but your pupils could instead keep notes under these headings in their exercise books.

The first film, **Emmeline Pankhurst: Becoming a suffragist**, offers something under each heading. Her political awareness is led by her parents and by friends she makes in Paris. She reads a journal that changes her outlook. Make sure that you give time after the film for pupils to be confident about the sorts of detail that might go under each heading.

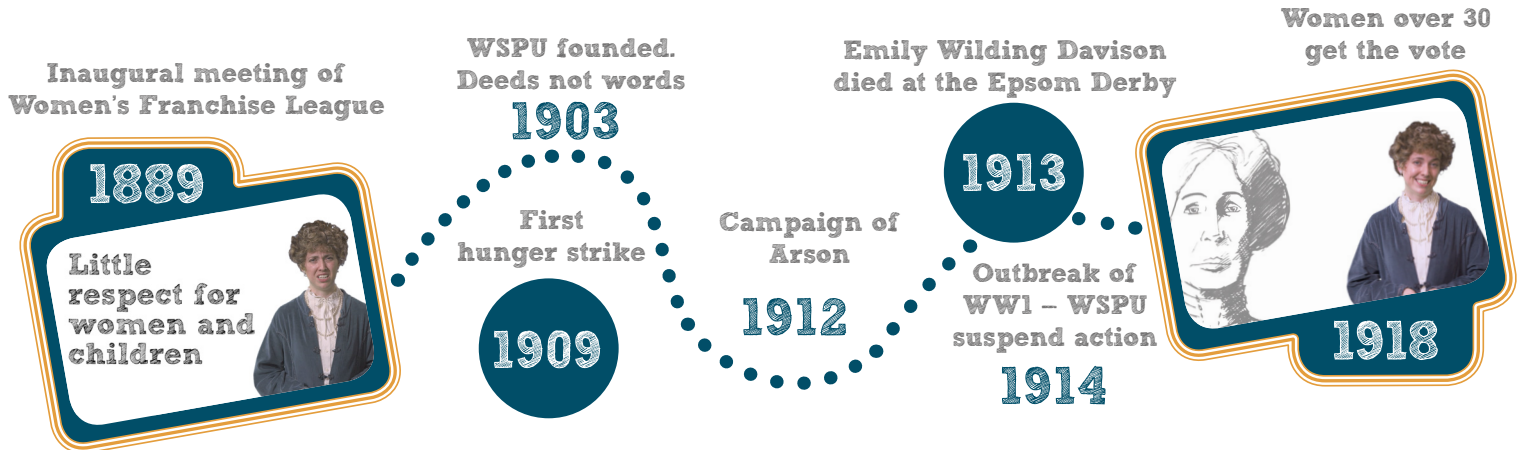
Then go on to show the next few films. In **Mrs Pankhurst: Marriage**, pupils will notice that marriage was a defining moment for her, because her new husband did not expect her to be a typical Victorian wife and instead supported women's right to vote, allowing her to found the Women's Franchise League. In **Emmeline Pankhurst and Kier Hardie** pupils will learn that friendship with a prominent Labour politician led to her growing involvement in politics. They will also see that she became the Poor Law Guardian in Manchester.

The rest of the films follow a similar pattern. Each one will make several points worthy of note. At this stage, you could keep showing the films and allow pupils to make their own notes. Alternatively you could work together at the end of each film, keeping tighter control over what your pupils record.

At the end of the lesson, pupils should then use these notes to write a short pen portrait of Emmeline Pankhurst. Ask the pupils to describe her in 200 words.

# Who were the Suffragettes?

Aimed at Key Stage 3 – year 9



## Lesson 2 – How did Emmeline Pankhurst's views change?

Films to use

- **Women's Social and Political Union**
- **Protest, arrest and prison**
- **Emmeline Pankhurst in prison**
- **Emmeline Pankhurst and William Churchill**
- **Protest, action and hunger strike**
- **Conciliation and violence**
- **The Cat and Mouse Act**
- **Campaign of Arson 1912**

**To start** the lesson, ask pupils to say what Emmeline Pankhurst's main political idea was. Pupils are likely to reply quite quickly that it was to get women the vote, that women should be equal to men in this regard. Explain that in this lesson, they are going to see that while that belief never wavered, the people she met and the stories she heard convinced her that the methods she used to campaign needed to change.

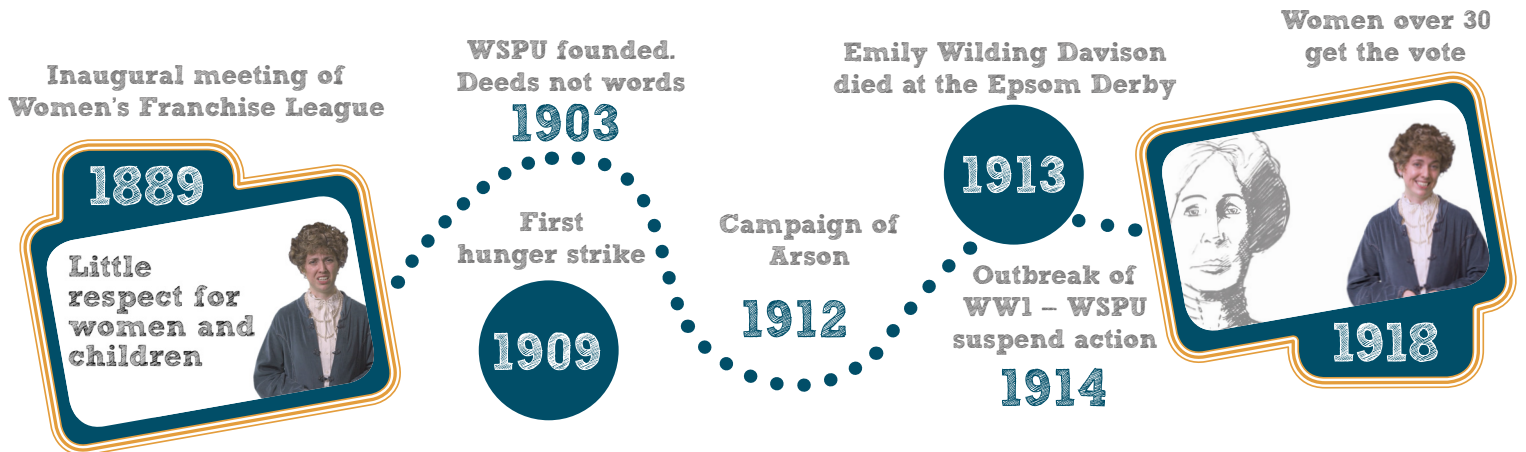
**Pupils will need** to draw a timeline in their books that runs from 1900 to 1914. They will need enough space to write a few notes about the turning points in Emmeline Pankhurst's story. As they watch the films in this lesson, ask pupils to record important events, their dates and suggest how they changed Emmeline Pankhurst's views.

Play **Women's Social and Political Union**. In the film, pupils learn that in October 1903, Emmeline Pankhurst formed the WSPU to focus on direct, non-violent action. That phrase might need some explanation and in doing so, your pupils will start to consider the extent to which this was a turning point in her story. What they will certainly note is that this is a case of women taking charge of the campaign, having been let down by the politicians.



# Who were the Suffragettes?

Aimed at Key Stage 3 – year 9



## Lesson 2 – How did Emmeline Pankhurst's views change? ...continued

In the second film, **Protest, arrest and prison**, pupils should record the date in October 1905 when Emmeline's daughter, Christabel, was first arrested and then in February 1908 when Emmeline herself went to prison for six weeks. What does this suggest about her changing views? Was the campaign still non-violent?

**Continue** this task through the rest of the films listed above.

**All have a date** mentioned in the titles or during the course of the film. Keep talking about the extent to which the events in the film represent a change in Emmeline Pankhurst's campaign. How much of a turning point is this? You could also ask why it changed.

**At the end** of the films pupils should compare their notes. What was the biggest turning point in the story? Was it a natural progression from non-violence in 1903 to arson in 1912? Was the slashing of The Rokeby Venus in 1914 going to achieve much at all?

**Now ask** your pupils to write a piece describing how Emmeline Pankhurst's campaign for the vote changed. Encourage them to talk about the turning points and what it changed from and to.

## Lesson 3 – How did the Suffragettes finally win the vote for women?

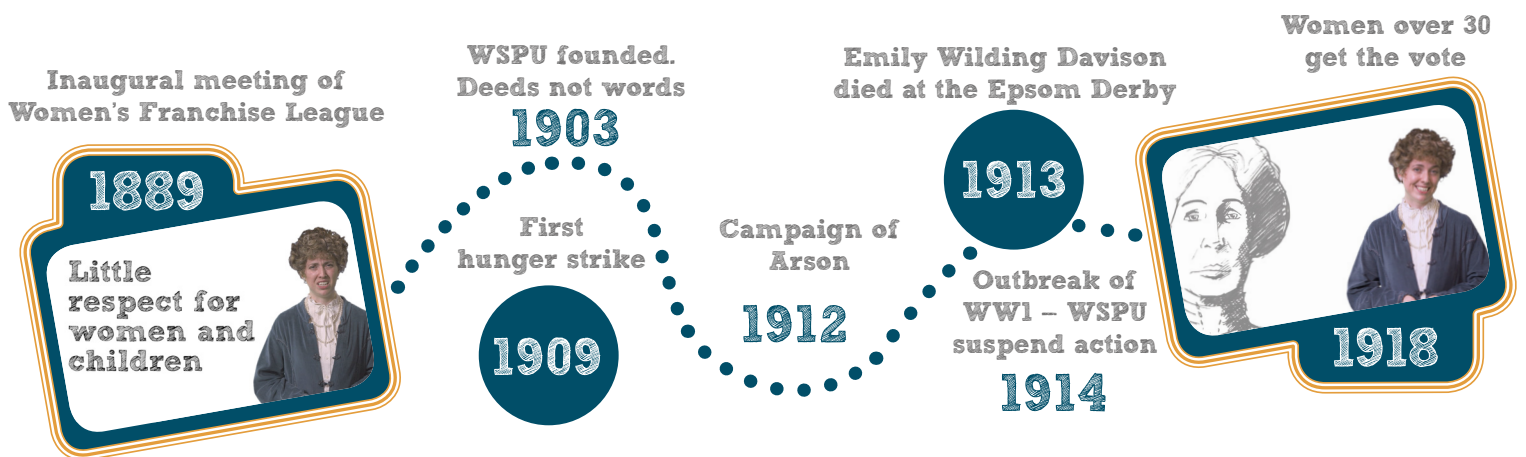
Films to use:

- **The Epsom Derby, 1913**
- **Emily Wilding Davison**
- **Suffrage and WW1**

**Start** the lesson with a review of what has happened so far. Emmeline Pankhurst is one of the key players in a campaign to get women the vote. The campaign started with direct, non-violent action, but has become ever more radical in the face of continued opposition. By 1913, members of the WSPU were on hunger strike and engaged in a campaign of vandalism and arson.

# Who were the Suffragettes?

Aimed at Key Stage 3 – year 9



## Lesson 2 – How significant was Mary Seacole? ...continued

Show the film, **The Epsom Derby, 1913**. In the film, Emmeline Pankhurst talks about her reaction to the death of Emily Wilding Davison. There are questions to be asked at this stage about whether she meant to kill herself or not. The film takes a neutral position, saying she 'stepped' in front of the King's horse. There is some evidence to suggest that she intended to go home – she had a return ticket for the train – but other evidence says she was prepared to die for the cause. There is the potential to extend that particular part of the lesson if you want to, by holding a debate about the weight of evidence for each position. Footage from 1913 is available on YouTube ([one version is here](#)) and this would certainly be of interest at this point in the lesson.

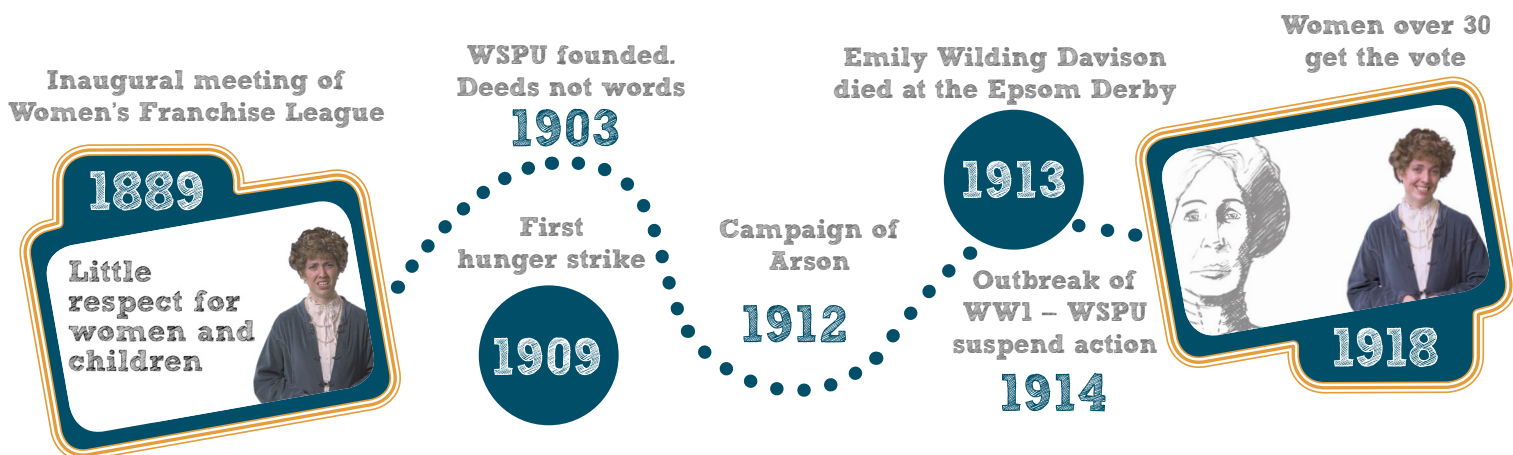
**Now** show the film, **Emily Wilding Davison**. This reveals how much Davison was, in fact, prepared to die for the cause of women's suffrage. This time the language is stronger: she 'threw' herself in front of the King's horse. Whether we believe it or not, Emmeline Pankhurst is convinced that that was her intention. Discuss what this means for the campaign in general. What would a death – possibly a suicide – do to the campaign? Would it inspire more women to join? Would it shake their opponents?

**The final film in the sequence, Suffrage and WW1**, ends the story by talking about the impact of World War I and the WSPU's support for the national war effort. Why would this, rather than all the violent actions of the previous decade, win women the vote? You might also discuss the limitations to the Representation of the People Act and what this means for the campaign in general.

**The** second half of the lesson should be spent on a final piece of writing. Pupils should spend time crafting either a narrative account of the suffragette movement – a type of writing now used at GCSE level – or an extended definition of 'suffragette' for inclusion in an encyclopaedia.

## Who were the Suffragettes?

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## Differentiation, assessment and reflection

### Extension

There are lots of readings that stronger pupils might take on as extra research in or out of the classroom. A recent chapter in *The Fateful Year: England 1914* (Viking, UK) by Mark Bostridge covers the slashing of *The Rokeby Venus* and other violent actions by suffragettes. It is very readable and would add colour to a study of their campaign.

### Scaffolding

**Support** could be given with the creation of word banks to help pupils write their pen-portraits and narrative accounts. The word limits could also be reduced to make those tasks more manageable. Could they write 100 words? In the final task, weaker pupils could be challenged to write about just one or two aspects of the campaign.

### Formative assessment opportunities

- Throughout the sequence, it will be important to ensure that pupils are learning the factual details they are hearing. This should be reinforced with lots of question and answer in class and through informal written tests.
- In addition, in Lesson 1, at various points in the lesson you could ask pupils to come up with one word to describe Emmeline Pankhurst. Does the word change as the lesson goes on?
- In Lesson 2 you should keep asking about each event, comparing them to each other constantly.

### Reflection

At the end of the unit, pupils could put the suffragettes back into the story of the development of Parliament and universal suffrage. You might also look at recent attempts to widen the franchise even more – the 2014 Scottish referendum allowed 16-year-olds to vote, for example. Is it time for a new suffrage campaign?

## Who were the Suffragettes?

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Inaugural meeting of Women's Franchise League

1889

Little respect for women and children



WSPU founded. Deeds not words

1903

First hunger strike

1909

Campaign of Arson

1912

Emily Wilding Davison died at the Epsom Derby

1913

Outbreak of WW1 – WSPU suspend action

1914

Women over 30 get the vote



1918

### Appendix: Photo of the suffragettes



Image courtesy of [www.timeshighereducation.com](http://www.timeshighereducation.com)



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### Appendix 2: Emmeline Pankhurst worksheet

#### her character

#### defining moments

#### her work

#### her friendships

