

Enquiry 4: Teachers' notes

Why do historians have different views of the suffrage movement?

Enquiry overview

About the lessons

This short enquiry has been designed to help you mark the one hundredth anniversary of women's suffrage. It encourages students to think about different interpretations of the suffrage movement and why these interpretations differ.

Key learning points

- There is a history of interpretations of the suffrage movement that focus on different things.
- Historians draw on different sources of evidence for their interpretations.
- Historians can view the same body of evidence in different ways and put it to different uses.
- Spotlight on four historians' interpretations of the suffrage movement.

Outline

This is a mini-enquiry exploring current interpretations by historians working on the suffrage movement. It will also look at the relationship between their interpretations and the evidence with which they are working. Its aim is to introduce students to current debates about the suffrage movement but also to allow them to explore the way in which the evidence a historian chooses to focus on affects the way they construct their interpretation.

Lessons

As this enquiry is designed for Key Stage 5 students, it would be useful for those studying the following courses:

OCR

- Y111 Liberals, Conservatives and the Rise of Labour 1846–1918
- Y112 Britain 1900–1951

AQA

- 2M Wars and Welfare: Britain in Transition, 1906–1957

Edexcel

- Paper 3, Option 36.1: Protest, agitation and parliamentary reform in Britain, c1780–1928

Rationale for the enquiry:

i) Scholarly rationale

This enquiry includes a range of recent scholarship, covering interpretations that emphasise the importance of the suffragette campaigns, explore the radicalism of the suffragists and the effectiveness of their campaigns, and tackle some of the more uneasy questions around suffragette tactics,

such as whether they could be described as domestic terrorists. Including these perspectives gives the students an idea of the current state of debate in the field and introduces them to the wealth of competing interpretations that it is possible to have about the suffrage movement.

ii) Curricular rationale

This enquiry should allow students to explore the link between interpretation and evidence and also introduce the idea that the focus of a historian's work can influence them to view the same body of evidence in a different way to others working in the field or to put it to different uses. This should help to deconstruct over-determined analyses of interpretations focused on the details of provenance alone and simplistic judgements focusing on questions of 'bias'.

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Breakdown of the scheme of work

This enquiry has been designed to be taught following on from a previous sequence of lessons on the suffrage movement. It does include details of the suffrage campaigns, but will require some prior knowledge for it to be most effective.

Lesson	Key content
L1: The suffrage debate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce debate: interpretations of June Purvis, Julie Gottlieb, Fern Riddell and Jane Robinson.• Start to explore relationship between these interpretations and key bits of evidence.
EQ: Why do historians have different views of the suffrage movement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce question of provenance, particularly focusing on what the historians are primarily concerned with researching.• Link this back to the evidence.

Lesson 1:

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The suffrage debate

Starter: (Slide 5)

Show the students the key headlines about the suffrage debate using the PowerPoint. Ask students when they think these headlines were written. Take responses and reveal

that they are all from articles published in 2018. There is still a lot of debate over the suffrage movement today.

Activity 1: (Slides 6–7, Resources pp. 1–4)

Get students to read through the quotes from the **Four historians** on the resource sheets, working out their interpretations. Ask them to pick two colours and highlight the words that are being used to describe the suffragettes and the ones that are being used to describe the suffragists.

Whole-class discussion: If you asked each historian to sum up their view of the suffrage movement in a single sentence, how would they answer? Ask the students to write a sentence for each historian.

Activity 2: (Resources pp. 5–11)

Split the class into groups (or pairs if preferred) and assign them one of the four historians. They can use the relevant historian **Biography** resource sheet and stick it in the centre of an A3 sheet of paper. On one side of the sheet, reserved for evidence, they should place the key pieces of evidence (including the quotes and images) from the **Evidence pack** resource sheets that they think support the interpretation they are working with.

If the students need extra support, they can be given the Evidence pack during the activity; if not, they can be issued to the students as part of a plenary so that the students can identify and include any pieces of evidence that they have missed out.

Each group now needs to present their A3 sheet to the rest of the class and explain why the pieces of evidence they have selected support the interpretation they have been working with. Students should highlight or otherwise indicate on their sheets any pieces of evidence either that every other group has used in support of their interpretations, or that no other group has used to support their interpretations.

Activity 3: (Slide 8)

Outcome activity: Take the students through the tasks using the PowerPoint.

Whole-class discussion: Firstly, why have some pieces of evidence been used by all the groups but interpreted in very different ways? If relevant, you can also explore why some pieces of evidence have been ignored by different historians.

The students should then annotate the other side of their sheet, reserved for provenance, noting down any relevant ideas mentioned during the discussion and focusing in particular on the scope of the historian's work and how it influences the evidence they choose to engage with.

Plenary: (Slide 9)

Ask the students to write an extended answer to the enquiry question. They should mention all of the interpretations and consider what evidence they were drawing on and what their priorities and areas of focus were.

Final question: Why do historians have different views of the suffrage movement?

Resources needed:

- Enquiry 4 PowerPoint

- Enquiry 4 Resource Sheets pp. 1–11