

Enquiry 6b: Teachers' notes

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How effective was the 'Votes for Women' campaign in Bristol?

Enquiry overview

About the lessons

This series of lessons has been designed to help you mark the one hundredth anniversary of women's suffrage. It explores the history of the suffrage movement from the mid-nineteenth century onwards and focuses particularly on the local context of the campaign in Bristol. The unit will explore the ups and downs of the campaign in Bristol, key individuals related to the campaign in Bristol and the level of success of the different tactics employed by suffragists and suffragettes in the area. Pupils will explore how typical the campaign in Bristol was in comparison to the national picture.

Key learning points

- The 30 women from Bristol and Bath who signed the 1866 petition.
- Suffragist and suffragette activities and events in Bristol.
- The chronology of the campaign in Bristol.
- Key individuals.
- Using contemporary sources to examine reactions to the campaign and to make judgements about the level of success.
- Examination of similarity and difference between the local and national campaigns.

Outline

Usually, we explore 'Votes for Women' on a national scale, taking different examples from around the country to suit our needs. Much of the focus is often on London. This enquiry gives students the opportunity to explore the campaign in one specific, important city – Bristol. Using a range of evidence, students will look in detail at events in Bristol and then compare it to the 'textbook' version of events, looking for similarities and differences.

Key areas of focus are:

- The key individuals and events in Bristol related to the suffrage campaign.
- Use of contemporary sources to examine reactions, significance and success.

- Examination of similarity and difference through comparison to the 'textbook' version.

Lessons

The content is appropriate for addressing the relevant requirements of the National Curriculum for teaching about suffrage in history.

The lessons are designed for use with Key Stage 3 students and may be adapted for use with Key Stage 4. At the start of each lesson there is a recap to help teachers check that students have grasped the knowledge from previous sections.

Rationale for the enquiry:

i) Scholarly rationale

Increasingly, research into the suffrage

campaign is focusing on the local area. Much evidence has emerged recently, some of it changing our perceptions of the campaign. This enquiry gives us an opportunity to dig deep into specifics and thus, hopefully, to add to our understanding of the 'Big Picture' history of the topic.

ii) Curricular rationale

Both suffrage and local history are part of the Key Stage 3 history curriculum. This lesson gives us an opportunity to do both, if you are a Bristol area school, and to explore a significant case study of suffrage in action if you are not from the Bristol area. By examining events in one city in detail, students are allowed to ask questions about similarity and difference, as well as impact.

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Breakdown of the scheme of work

The enquiry comprises four lessons. It is envisioned that it would be taught in Year 9, allowing teachers to draw on and reinforce students' knowledge of the different periods, political developments and events studied earlier in the key stage.

Lesson	Key content
L1: Why did some women in Bristol want the vote in 1866?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 1866 petition to Parliament. • Using the Suffrage Database. • The 30 women from Bristol and Bath who signed the petition: their background, activities and motives. • Was Bristol typical?
L2: How effective was the campaign in the 1870s and 1880s?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings and petitions, including Durdham Downs meetings, 1883. • Colston Hall demonstration, 1880. • Women's Liberal Association. • The activist women involved in the campaign.
L3: How was the campaign re-invigorated after 1897?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resurgence of suffrage activity in Bristol from 1897. • Annie Kenney, Bristol organiser, WSPU: how significant was she? • Lost evidence – Annie's Arboretum and the Blathwayt family. • Why is this important to historians?
L4: How active and successful were suffragists and suffragettes in Bristol 1897–1914?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions of both the suffragists and the suffragettes 1897–1914: • window-smashing • attack on Winston Churchill • pillar box attacks. • Use of sources, including contemporary newspaper articles. • Making a judgement as to 'how active' and 'how successful' these actions were.
Outcome activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the accumulated evidence to explore similarities and differences between Bristol and the national picture. • Making a judgement as to how effective the suffrage campaign was in Bristol. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) How similar and how different was the campaign in Bristol to that in the rest of the country? (b) What was the impact of the campaign on Bristol?

Lesson 1:

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How effective was the 'Votes for Women' campaign in Bristol?

Key ideas:

This lesson focuses on using the database to discover what we can about those women from Bristol and Bath who signed the 1866 petition. It concludes by asking students

to consider whether the response to the petition in Bristol is typical of the country as a whole, and the utility of evidence.

Starter: (Slides 5–8)

Students search the database for 'Petition Region' = Bristol; and 'Petition Town' = Bath. This gives you the 30 women in Bristol and Bath who signed the 1866 petition. Use just those 30 names to discover who they were, how old they were, what they did (or didn't do) for a living, and so on. Get the students to produce a list of names and all

they can discover about them.

(You might like to extend this activity and search the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (subscription is free to schools and libraries) to see whether you can discover more about each of the names.)

Activity 1: (Slides 9–10)

Activity: Students use the database to explain how the women were connected to Bristol, and what might have motivated their signing of the petition.

Whole-class discussion: Students discuss what they have discovered. What exactly can you tell about these women from the information we have? Some of the answers can be quite definite – what was their connection to Bristol? Others are more speculative – why might they have signed the petition?

Activity 2: (Slide 11, Resources p.1)

Activity: Ask the students whether or not Bristol was typical, and how they might find out. Students return to the database to search by either 'Petition Town' or 'Petition Region'. Each student could take one town, city or region, and explore those in that area that signed the petition. Students compile a short report to deliver to the class. Can they decide whether Bristol is typical or not? They can use the first **resource sheet** provided to make notes as they go.

Plenary: (Resources pp.2–11)

Whole-class discussion: Do we have enough information to be able to draw valid conclusions? This is a simple review activity, encouraging students to reflect on what they have learned during the lesson. It is a perfect opportunity to discuss the utility of evidence, and the tentative nature of some conclusions in history. You might conclude by asking students what else they might need to know about these

women to be able to make their judgement more secure.

Finally, students add any relevant material on Bristol to the empty column on the Timeline **resource sheet** (pp.2–6) by the appropriate date. An answer sheet is also available (pp.7–11).

Final question: Was Bristol typical?

Resources needed:

- Suffrage Database
www.suffrageresources.org.uk/database

- Enquiry 6b PowerPoint Lesson 1
- Enquiry 6b Lesson 1 Resource Sheets pp.1–11

Lesson 2:

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How effective was the campaign in the 1870s and 1880s?

Key ideas:

Following the failure of the 1867 Reform Act to give women the vote, Bristol was one of the first places in the country to set up a Women's Suffrage Society, in 1868. Meetings and demonstrations followed throughout the 1870s, 1880s and

1890s, sometimes organised locally, sometimes with national speakers. This lesson asks students to make a judgement as to how effective all this activity was – were the suffragists an effective organisation?

Recap and answers: (Slide 5) Use the PowerPoint to recap learning from last lesson, if required.

Starter: (Slides 6–8)

Introduce the 'Bristol Votes for Women' resource on the Know Your Place online map.

Use this resource to find out what the women of Bristol were up to from 1868 to the 1890s. Students add any events they come across onto the Lesson 1 Timeline

resource sheet in the appropriate place.

One of the more successful events was the series of meetings held on Durdham Downs over 22 consecutive nights in 1883 by Maria Colby (Slide 7). Thousands of people attended these meetings.

Activity 1: (Slide 8, Resources p.12)

Activity: Who was involved in all this activity? The **resource sheet** has examples of biographical cards for three of the women – Helen Blackburn, and Emily and Helen Sturge. Share the rest of the names involved between the whole class and ask them to make cards for these women. Are they the same women that signed the 1866 petition, or are they different? Use the Know Your Place map and the Suffrage Database to help you.

Activity 2: (Slide 8)

Activity: What would it have been like to attend a Durdham Downs meeting? Students write a letter to a friend, or a diary entry, imagining that they have attended one of these meetings. What might they have seen? Or heard? Or done? You can use textbooks or Enquiry 5 to find out more about meetings and demonstrations. Who would be speaking? What would they be saying? Would there be banners? What colours would be flying? (NB: not those of the WSPU!)

You might discuss these orally as a group, or as a research activity.

Plenary: (Slide 9)

As a conclusion, students make a judgement – however tentative – as to how effective these actions were. Large numbers attended the Colston Hall and Durdham Downs meetings. Bristol was one of the first towns to have a Suffrage Society in 1868 and the first to have a Women's Liberal Association in 1881. National speakers regularly visited the city. But what happened after 1883? It all seems to have petered out a little – why might that be?

Finally, students add any relevant material on Bristol to their Lesson 1 Timeline resource sheet by the appropriate date.

Final question: How effective was suffrage activity in Bristol in this period?

Resources needed:

- Enquiry 6b PowerPoint Lesson 2
 - Enquiry 6b Lesson 2 Resource Sheet p. 12
 - Lesson 1 Timeline Sheet (pp. 2–6)
 - Know Your Place online map slides 2–6
- <https://arcg.is/1rOCXq>
- Suffrage Database
- www.suffrageresources.org.uk/database

Lesson 3:

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How was the campaign re-invigorated after 1897?

Key ideas:

There was a resurgence of activity in Bristol from 1897. Both suffragists and, later, suffragettes, were busy fighting in their separate ways for votes for women. This lesson investigates both the people involved and the activities, and asks students to compare them to earlier times. The lesson also looks at

the significance of Annie Kenney and at the importance of the Blathwayt family in Bristol's suffrage story. The lesson finishes with a review activity, asking students to make a judgement about the time.

Recap and answers: (Slide 5) Use the PowerPoint to recap learning from last lesson, if required.

Starter: (Slide 6)

Use this slide as a stimulus. Ask students what they think is going on in the cartoon and why there might be an image of a pillar box. Explain that the suffrage movement became more militant after 1897 and engaged in a variety

of activities, including the haranguing of influential people (including MPs) and the vandalism of public amenities in order to disrupt service.

Activity 1: (Slides 7)

Activity: This is a simple information-gathering activity. It uses the 'Know Your Place' online map to ask students to make a list of the kinds of activities both suffragists and suffragettes were

doing after 1900. They are then asked to compare them to earlier periods they have studied. This should help students later in the lesson.

Activity 2: (Slide 8, Resources pp.13–17)

Activity: Again, this is largely an information-gathering activity to begin with. Students use the biography cards from the **resource sheets**, the Suffrage Database and the 'Know Your Place' online map to find out who was involved in all this activity. It is a great opportunity to explore how different sources of information are cross-referenced by historians and to help judge the reliability of a source.

Whole-class discussion: Are they the same people who signed the 1866 petition, or are they different people? If so, in what ways are they different? By age? By background? By occupation? Or education? This might give students some clue as to why there was more activity, and why the nature of this activity changed.

Activity 3: (Slides 9–10, Resources p. 18)

Use the PowerPoint to introduce Annie Kenney.

There is no doubt that the arrival of Annie Kenney in 1907 as organiser for the WSPU had a profound effect on Bristol. Encourage students to speculate as to her significance.

Slide 10 gives Ian Dawson's criteria for significance, which you might wish to use with the students. Or you might wish to use other criteria, or even ask the students to come up with their own criteria – by Year 9, they should be in a position to do that. As ever, there is no definitive answer to this question – it will depend on both the criteria used and the weight placed on evidence.

Students might need to spend some time researching Annie Kenney, although brief biographical details are provided on the **resource sheet**.

Lesson 3:

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How was the campaign re-invigorated after 1897?

Activity 4: (Slides 11-15)

This uses a local family – the Blathwayts – and explores other aspects of support for the 'Votes for Women' campaign in Bristol. The Blathwayts provided comfort and respite for suffragettes after they had been in prison.

The story of the Arboretum (Slide 12) is both interesting

and provides a different perspective on events. That the Arboretum was destroyed in the 1960s, and the accidental nature of the survival of the photographs, tells us a great deal about how history is recorded and remembered (Slide 13). Use Slides 13 and 14 to discuss this with students.

Plenary: (Slide 16)

This is a simple review question, asking students to make a judgement as to whether there was more activity after 1900, and how effective that activity might have been. It is only meant to be an interim judgement, as the topic is explored in more detail in Lesson 4.

Finally, students add any relevant material on Bristol to their Lesson 1 Timeline resource sheet by the appropriate date.

Final question: How much more activity was there in Bristol after 1900 and how effective was it?

Resources needed:

- Enquiry 6b PowerPoint Lesson 3
- Enquiry 6b Lesson 3 Resource Sheets pp. 13–18
- Lesson 1 Timeline Sheet (pp. 2–6)
- Know Your Place online map slides 7–15
<https://arcg.is/1rOCXq>
- Suffrage Database
www.suffrageresources.org.uk/database

Lesson 4:

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How active and successful were suffragists and suffragettes in Bristol 1897–1914?

Key ideas:

There was a resurgence of activity in Bristol from 1897. Both suffragists and, later, suffragettes, were busy fighting in their separate ways for votes for women. We look at how these activities were reported in the local papers and ask students

to make a judgement on the utility of these sources before concluding by reaching a judgement about how active and how successful the women of Bristol were at this time.

Recap and answers: (Slides 5–9)

Use the PowerPoint to recap learning from last lesson, if required.

Activity 1: (Slides 10–14, Resources pp.19–20)

Activity: This activity asks students to look at how the local press reported events. An annotated example of a story about window smashing is used to model the following activity to help students grapple with both the language and bias of the report.

Activity: Another report of the same incident – this time from

the WSPU journal *Votes for Women* – gives a contrasting view. Students are encouraged to reach a conclusion about the veracity of newspaper reports of suffragette activity.

Students write a short letter to a local newspaper, responding to one of the reports they have studied.

Activity 2: (Slides 15–19, Resources pp.21–23)

Activity: This repeats the previous activity, using three other local stories, which could be worked through as a class or in groups, then reported back to the group as a whole. Students might annotate the source, as in the modelled activity, or they might underline/highlight or just make notes.

Pulling this together, students write a short letter to a local newspaper, responding to one of the reports they have studied.

Activity 3: (Slide 20)

Whole-class discussion: Slide 20 asks a series of questions designed to help students decide on the utility of sources and how we might use them to build up a 'Big Picture' of events in Bristol. It seeks to round off the work they have done in Activity 1 and 2. There are no definite answers to many of these questions – the questions are designed to provoke lots of debate and discussion in the classroom about the nature of history and the nature of evidence.

Activity 4: (Slide 21, Resources pp.24–25)

Activity: (Slide 21) The **resource sheets** provide some activities and a framework with which to assess them. It provides 16 exemplar events in Bristol and asks students to place them on three separate scales: peaceful to violent, degree of media interest likely to be generated, and effectiveness in changing minds about the 'cause' of giving women the vote. This could, if you wished, be done as a 'card

sort' activity if all 16 events were printed out and given to groups, along with three A3 versions of the scales, or you might do it as a discussion activity or a combination of both of these ideas.

As ever, this is a discussion activity with few definitive answers – it is designed to generate discussion and debate about suffragette and suffragist activity.

Lesson 4:

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How active and successful were suffragists and suffragettes in Bristol 1897–1914?

Plenary: (Slide 22, Resources p.26)

This asks students, in the light of their work during this lesson, to make a judgement – if they can – on ‘How active and successful were suffragists and suffragettes in Bristol 1897–1914?’ There is a tick list on the **resource sheet**. It is easy to see that there is much more activity, but is it effective? It should also allow you to see whether

students can really differentiate between the activities of the suffragists and suffragettes.

Finally, students add any relevant material on Bristol to their Lesson 1 Timeline **resource sheet** by the appropriate date.

Final question: How active and successful were suffragists and suffragettes in Bristol 1897–1914?

Resources needed:

- Enquiry 6b PowerPoint Lesson 4
- Enquiry 6b Lesson 4 Resource Sheets pp. 19–29
- Lesson 1 Timeline Sheet (pp. 2–6)
- Know Your Place online map slides 7–15 <https://arcg.is/1rOCXq>

Outcome activity:

This can be tackled as a separate lesson if required.

- (a) How similar and how different was the campaign in Bristol to that in the rest of the country?
- (b) What was the impact of the campaign on Bristol?

This enquiry has asked students to explore the ‘Votes for Women’ campaign in one specific city – Bristol. Students have looked at the types of activity carried out; the people involved in those activities; and how the local press and others reported these activities. Now it is time to try to pull all this together, using the work carried out in the previous four lessons.

Throughout all their lessons, students should have been completing their Lesson 1 Timeline resource sheet, building up a detailed picture of events in Bristol in order to compare these with the national picture. They should now be able to see at a glance the kinds of things that were happening, both in Bristol and across the country. They might use the Outcome Activity

resource sheet as a tool to help them spot similarities and differences between the two. Or you might have a class discussion, drawing out similarities and differences from students’ work. Any differences should be immediately obvious from the Timeline resource sheet.

Don’t forget to encourage students to make their own judgement on how effective they now think the actions of the suffragists and suffragettes in Bristol were.

Finally, to pull this all together, you might get the students to think about how a study of Bristol adds to our understanding of the ‘Votes for Women’ campaign. By looking in detail at one specific area, we can develop a greater understanding of the impact of both the

suffragists and suffragettes. We might even be able to make a judgement about the effectiveness of some actions as opposed to others. By comparing a detailed study of Bristol with Enquiry Question 5, for example, or with ‘suffrage’ sections in textbooks or online, you can see how local detail and examples can either add to our understanding or even perhaps contradict some of the generalisations used by textbook authors.

Resources needed:

- Enquiry 6b PowerPoint Lesson 4 Slide 23
- Enquiry 6b completed **Resource Sheets**
- Enquiry 6b Outcome Activity **Resource Sheet** p. 27