

How did some women campaign for the vote before the First World War? (Source sheet one)

<p>Source A: From a newspaper article, 1 March 1912</p> <p>Militant suffragettes, many of them with stones and hammers hidden in their clothes, caused thousands of pounds' worth of damage by smashing windows in the West End of London today.</p>	<p>Source B: From a newspaper report about the start of a new women's group, Oct 1903</p> <p>A number of women met in Manchester today to form a new militant movement to get the vote for women. Their motto is 'Deeds not words'. Their leader is Emmeline Pankhurst who said membership is only for women who are prepared to take action.</p>
<p>Source C: From a newspaper article, 14 June 1913</p> <p>Thousands of suffragettes said a last sad farewell to the woman they see as their martyred heroine - Emily Davidson. She fell under the King's horse at the Derby 10 days ago when she ran into the path of the horse and tried to seize its reins.</p>	<p>Source D: From a newspaper report on the force feeding of suffragettes in prison, October 1909</p> <p>A full inquiry is to be held into the treatment of suffragette Laura Ainsworth, who was force fed. She said 'I was forced into a seating position and a tube about two feet long was brought out. My mouth was opened with a steel instrument. I felt as though I was going to choke and a gag was placed between my teeth to keep my mouth open.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Glossary</p> <p>Suffragettes: a group who campaigned for women to get the vote, sometimes violently.</p> <p>Suffragists: a group who campaigned peacefully for women to get the vote.</p> <p>Militant: being prepared to take direct action and sometimes to use violent tactics.</p> <p>Martyr: someone who is prepared to die to help their cause.</p> <p>Petition: a list of people who support a cause.</p> <p>WSPU: Women's Social and Political Union, a militant women's group.</p> <p>NUWSS: National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, an organisation of women which campaigned for the vote using nonviolent tactics.</p>	<p>Source E: Millicent Garrett Fawcett, a suffragist, compares the tactics of the NUWSS and the WSPU, 1911</p> <p>The NUWSS adopted a different election policy [to that of the WSPU] - that of obtaining declarations of opinion from all candidates at each election and supporting the man, independent of party, who gave the most satisfactory assurances of support.</p>

Student record sheet one

Take sources A-J in turn. Write down what each source tells you about how some women campaigned to get the vote in Britain.

Source	When written/taken?	What does it tell us about some women's tactics?
A		
B		
C		
D		
E		
F		
G		
H		
I		
J		

Student record sheet two

Look carefully at each of the eight photographs. Write down what each photograph shows women doing in the First World War and explain how this might have helped them achieve the vote. Use the table to below to record your ideas.

Picture	What does it show women doing?	How would this have persuaded politicians to allow women to vote?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

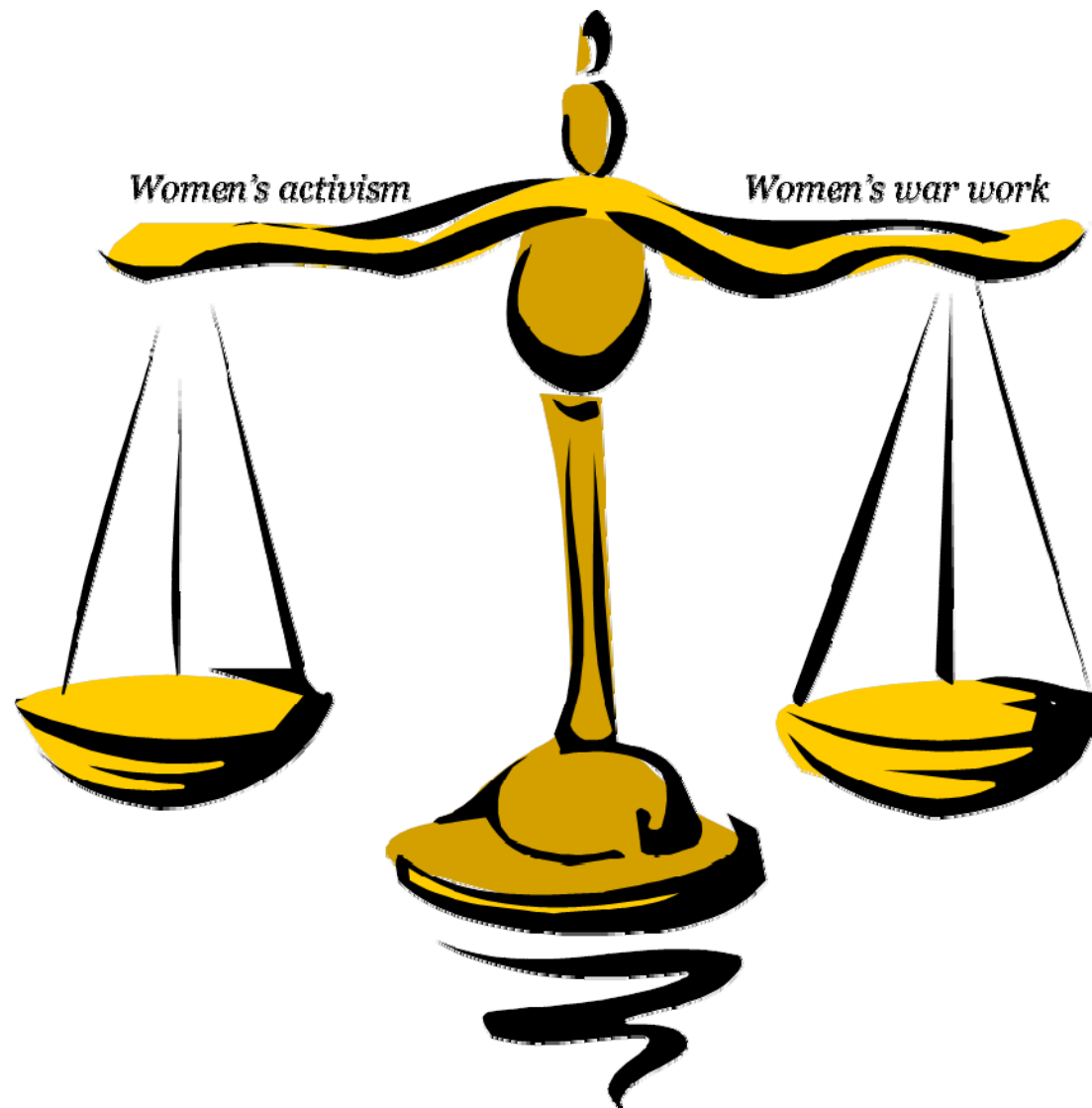
The vote is given!

In 1918 a law was passed which finally gave women the right to vote (although only to women over 30 who owned property). The Prime Minister at the time, Herbert Asquith, who had refused to allow this to happen before the war, explained why his attitude had changed. He said:

'How could we have carried on the war without them? Short of actually bearing arms in the field, there is hardly a service ... which women have not been active in ... I find it impossible to withhold from women the power and the right of making their voices directly heard.'

Concluding tasks

1. Review the reasons women eventually gained the vote in 1918 which you have recorded on your tables. Choose five examples of women's activism and five examples of women's war work and record these using key words on the scales.
2. Which side of the scales do you think is heavier? What do you think was the most important factor in bringing about the change?



Teaching notes

The aim of these tasks is to encourage students to engage with the debate over which was more responsible for the achievement of women's suffrage in 1918 - women's activism prior to the First World War, or women's contributions to the war effort itself.

Some prior consideration of why it is important to be able to vote and the status which having the vote implies might help students to understand the significance of women having been denied the vote prior to 1918.

Tasks:

1. Use source sheets 1-3 to review the actions taken by suffragettes and suffragists in the first part of the 20th century. Source sheets 2 and 3 are included within a separate PDF file of all the images needed for the tasks in this resource. Reviewing the sources could be organised in a number of ways to suit your class - individually, in small groups or even as a carousel. **Student record sheet one** can be used to summarise and record ideas.
2. Use the pictures on source sheets 4-5 (included within the separate PDF of images) to review the work which women contributed during the First World War and to consider the impact that this might have had on their demand for the vote. Once again this could be completed individually or in groups, as appropriate to your class, and ideas could be recorded on **Student record sheet two**.
3. As a class, read through the information on p.8 and discuss the reasons which Asquith stated publicly for having finally agreed to give some women the right to vote. Ask the class to consider whether they agree that this was the only reason or even if it was the most important? Might Asquith have wanted to play down the pressure which male politicians felt from the actions of suffrage groups? The weighing scales activity outlined on this page might help students to understand the process which historians undergo when coming to an interpretation of the past.