

Enquiry Question: Did the Suffragettes help or hinder the

Key dates:

1897 - NUWSS formed. Millicent Fawcett is leader.	1903 - WSPU is formed by Emmeline Pankhurst and daughters.	1905 - Militant Campaign begins - Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney arrested	1908 - Mass rally in London - 300,000 to 500,000 activists attend. Window smashing using stones with written pleas on them.	1909 - Hunger strike and force feeding starts.	1913 - Cat and Mouse" Act introduced.	1913 - Emily Davison killed at Epsom Derby.	1914 - WWI starts.	1918 - The Representation of the People Act is passed,.
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Key word	Definition
arson	The act of deliberately setting fire to property with a view to causing extensive damage.
Cat and Mouse Act	Permitted suffragettes on hunger strike to be released but re-arrested once well again to complete their sentences.
Franchise/Suffrage	The right to vote
militant	Aggressive and violent behaviour in pursuit of a political cause, favouring extreme or confrontational campaign methods.
Martyr	Someone who dies for their beliefs.
NUWSS	The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) was formed in 1897 and brought together many smaller suffrage organisations. The NUWSS's method was non-confrontational and constitutional.
petition	A formal written request or application, especially one signed by many people, to a particular individual or group, for example, a government.
Representation of the People Act	In 1918, the Representation of the People Act granted the vote to women over 30 who were also householders, the wives of householders, owners of property worth over £5 or university graduates. The Act also granted the franchise to all men over the age of 21.
suffragette	A campaigner for women's suffrage willing to undertake militant action or to break the law.
suffragist	A campaigner for women's suffrage who believes in constitutional methods of campaigning.
Terrorist	a person who uses unlawful violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims.
WSPU	Women's Social and Political Union was formed when Emmeline Pankhurst found disillusionment with the progress of NUWSS. Deeds not Words was their slogan.

What do I need to know? (Linked to PLC statements)

Life for women at the start of the 20th century	At the beginning of the 20th century, women faced significant gender inequalities. They were primarily expected to fulfil domestic roles as wives and mothers, with limited access to education, employment opportunities, and political rights. Women were often confined to the private sphere and had few legal rights.
Suffragettes and Suffragists	The suffrage movement was divided into two main groups: suffragettes and suffragists. Suffragettes, led by organisations like the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), adopted more militant tactics to secure women's right to vote. Suffragists, such as the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), pursued a more peaceful and legalistic approach. Interpretations of the suffrage movement vary, with some viewing suffragettes as courageous activists and others criticising their radical methods.
Hunger strikes and force-feeding	Suffragettes employed various forms of protest to draw attention to their cause. Hunger strikes were a common tactic used by suffragettes during their imprisonment. In response, the government implemented the Cat and Mouse Act, which allowed hunger-striking suffragettes to be temporarily released until they regained their strength, only to be re-arrested later.
Emily Davison	Emily Davison, a suffragette, is well-known for her activism and ultimate sacrifice. In 1913, she famously stepped in front of King George V's horse during the Epsom Derby, resulting in her tragic death. Davison's actions have been interpreted as a dramatic statement and a symbol of the suffragette movement's dedication.
Interpretations	Some view suffragettes as pioneering activists who fought tirelessly for women's rights and forced the issue of suffrage into the public consciousness. Others criticise their militant tactics as disruptive and damaging to the cause. It is important for students to analyse different perspectives and evaluate the suffragette movement within its historical context.
Revisionist history	Many revisionist historians have looked back to the Suffragists and re-evaluated their importance to the female suffrage movement. Selina Cooper was a working-class activist who worked together with socialist movements to further the cause of women gaining the vote.

Skills focus:

An historical interpretation is:

- ✓ Someone's view of the past...
- ✓ Created deliberately...
- ✓ After the event(s)...
- ✓ By someone who wasn't there...

Every piece of historical writing is an **interpretation** of some sort. The past is not fixed but **CONSTRUCTED** through interpretations.