

Comprehension – Emmeline Pankhurst

Emmeline Pankhurst is remembered for her hard work with the WSPU in the fight to help get British women the right to vote.

Early Life

Emmeline Pankhurst was born on 14 July 1858 in Moss Side, Manchester. Her family were wealthy and her parents were politically active; they wanted to make the world a better place. She had nine brothers and sisters and got married to her husband, Richard, when she was 21. Together, Emmeline and Richard had five children.

Rights for Women

As she grew older, Emmeline noticed that women were treated differently to men and became motivated to help change that. In 1903 she, along with her daughters Sylvia and Christabel, founded the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). This group's main aim was to gain equal voting rights for women; they were known as 'Suffragettes'.

At the time, the WSPU became known as a 'radical party'. Emmeline gave powerful speeches and women were urged to take action. Sometimes these actions were violent; members smashed windows and damaged public property. This upset those in power. Many Suffragettes were imprisoned; they were seen as criminals instead of protestors. Some were treated very badly; they were hurt and some even died.

World War One

When World War One started in 1914, Emmeline told members of the WSPU to stop protesting in order to help with the war effort. Members worked in factories, taking the jobs of men who had left to go and fight in the war.

Change

Over time, more and more people started to listen to the Suffragettes. Eventually, laws started to change. In 1918, the 'Representation of the People Act' was introduced, giving women over the age of 30, who owned property, the right to vote.

More could be done. A few weeks after Emmeline died, on June 14th 1928, the 'Equal Franchise Act' was passed enabling women over the age of 21 to vote; this meant that 15 million women were now eligible (able) to vote.

Questions

1. When and where was Emmeline Pankhurst born?
2. Is this a *formal text*? How do you know?
3. Could Emmeline be described as 'passionate'? Use the text to support your answer.
4. Find a *powerful* vocabulary choice within the text. *Explain how* it has an impact on the reader.
5. How were men and women treated differently at the time?
6. Name the group that Emmeline set up.
7. Why do you think some people thought Emmeline was '*radical*'?
8. What was the WSPU's main aim?
9. How did the WSPU help with the war effort? *Use the text to explain your answer*
10. What actions upset those in power?
11. What major change in the law happened first?
12. What happened shortly after Emmeline's death?
13. Would you agree that Emmeline's work was a success? Explain your answer.
14. How many women were able to vote after the 'Equal Franchise Act' was passed?



*Remember...
Look for the V.I.W
(very important word)
in the question.
Then, use your scanning
skills to find that word
(or one similar) in the
text!*

