



Lesson Plan 5: Later reforms (1880s)

Resources

Lesson five articles, the chronology and the glossary

The chronology of the acts

Additional information: Old Sarum (Constituency) and Pontefract (Constituency)

Key questions:

- Despite the abolition of 'rotten boroughs' in 1832, and the introduction of secret ballots how were some elections still corrupt until 1883?
- What difference does it make about the number of people in each constituency?
- What restrictions remained in place for eligibility to vote for men even after 3 Reform Bills?

Stage 1

Using the information in this section and additional information on Old Sarum (Constituency) and Pontefract (Constituency), ask the pupils to create a chart that records specifically how an election might not be considered fair and then how each of those actions e.g. only 2 people able to vote etc. were stopped and by which Act.

Stage 2

The following exercise can be quick or lengthy dependent on the ability of the pupils, it is to ensure that they understand the significance of the historic bill.

As a whole class divide the students into uneven groups and then ask them to vote on the following:

- Which of the groups should clean the classroom up at the end of the session?
- Which group should be able to leave the classroom first?
- Which group should have to stay behind after school on litter duty?

Each group has the number of votes of pupils in it and the group must vote as a block.

Did the largest group always determine the outcome of the vote? Who ended up being voted to carry out the unpopular jobs?

Now introduce the **1885 Redistribution of Seats Act**. Ask pupils to assess the accuracy of the following statements (this can be done alone or in small groups):

- The number of people living in a constituency doesn't matter as long as everyone has a vote
- New towns and cities had the same number of residents as the old towns
- All the MPs dislike the working classes so it didn't matter how many people lived in a constituency
- A city the size of Manchester did not need the same amount of votes as an historic town that was used to having MPs such as Monmouth

Higher abilities should try and find evidence to confirm or dispute these statements.

Stage 3

The limitations on how much could be spent on an election was important, combined with an attempt to stop bribery discuss what difference this would make to who could stand for election, and why people might vote for them?

Stage 4

Using the **Brief Chronology of the Acts** ask the pupils to create their own record/chart that combines that information with a short piece of information or single fact that illustrates the significance of the Act and differentiates it from the others.

Extended activities

What can you find out about PM William Gladstone and his reputation on Reform?

Find out about the post of Attorney General and how important it was in the nineteenth century.