

Lesson Plan 4: 1867 Reform Act and 1872 Ballot Act

Resources

Lesson four articles, the chronology and the glossary

Key questions:

- Why did the Conservative leader Benjamin Disraeli introduce a Reform Bill?
- How important was the Reform League?
- What one group continued to be denied access to the Parliamentary process irrespective of class or wealth?
- Why would voting in secret make a difference to an election outcome?

Stage 1

Read the 1865-68 Parliament information. Ask students if they can add to the grid from Lesson two on how the different reforms changed the status or MPs, constituencies, voting etc.

Stage 2

In pairs ask the pupils to discuss why Disraeli introduced a Reform Bill – write a pros and cons list for him as to why he should introduce reform at that time. What difference did it make to his career at the time?

Stage 3

Ask each pupil to read the different pieces of information in this section and write a description of the Reform League, list its main activities and achievements in the build up to the 1867 Reform Act.

John Stuart Mill was a leading political thinker – what was the one radical idea he had that was dismissed by all politicians?

Stage 4

Using the information on John Bright and on Pontefract ask the class to explore what difference voting in secret makes. What are the arguments for and against the secret ballot in the information (you may wish to refer to previous pieces of information as well). When the pupils have recorded their arguments ask them to consider if they can think of any reasons for or against voting in secret.



If the pupils were taking part in a vote, what difference would it make if the following people could always see how they voted:

- Their best friends
- Other people in the class
- Their parents
- All their teachers
- Their wider family
- People in their street that they don't know

Considering this and the information they know about voting from the information can they deduce if the secret ballot made a difference to how people voted or not?

Ask each pupil to list the key achievement of the 1867 Reform Act and what people said about it.

Extended Activities

Find out more about John Stuart Mill.

Write a comparison between the events and responses of Peterloo and Marylebone demonstrations.

