

Name:

Date:.....

The Life of Emily Wilding Davison

Emily Wilding Davison was a well-known activist in the suffragette movement, which campaigned for women to have the right to vote.

Early life

Emily Wilding Davison was born on the 11th October 1872 in Blackheath, South-East London. She had three siblings and nine half-siblings from her father's first marriage. When she was eight years old, Emily's six-year-old sister died of diphtheria.



Emily loved reading and studied literature at Royal Holloway College and at Oxford University, where she achieved the grades needed for a first-class degree. However, Emily was not awarded the degree she had earned, as women were not allowed to receive degrees from Oxford at that time. After university Emily worked as a school teacher and as a private governess, teaching children in their own homes.

Activism

In 1906, Emily joined the Women's Social and Political Union, known as the WSPU, the suffragette organisation founded by Emmeline Pankhurst. She quickly became fully involved in the movement and within three years had given up teaching to devote herself to campaigning full-time. She wrote, in the WSPU newspaper:

"Through my humble work in this noblest of all causes, I have come into a fullness of job and an interest in living which I never before experienced."

The work Emily referred to include the writing of letters to newspapers to raise awareness and support for her cause. She wrote hundreds of letters to over 50 newspapers and many of them were published. However, her activism also took a more direct, radical form and she was arrested many times. These arrests were for incidents such as causing public disturbances, setting fire to post boxes and throwing stones. In 1909 she was sentenced to a month's hard labour in Strangeways prison, Manchester for throwing rocks at the chancellor David Lloyd George. This did not deter her though, and she continued to be "one of the most daring and reckless of the militants", according to Sylvia Pankhurst, daughter of Emmeline.

In total, Emily Davison was imprisoned nine times and each time she stood trial she took the opportunity to give speeches in court, knowing that they would be printed in newspapers and bring further awareness to the suffragette movement.

Life in prison was very difficult for the suffragettes. Like many others, Emily continued to protest whilst in prison by going on hunger-strike, which she did 49 times. Prison authorities dealt with this by force-feeding the suffragettes, with a tube down their throats, a process which Emily described as a 'hideous torture'. Emily blockaded herself in her cell to try and prevent this and so a prison guard turned a hose on her, flooding her cell in the process. On her release from prison, Emily successfully sued the prison authorities over her treatment and was awarded 40 shillings.

Emily Davison is also known for hiding overnight in the Palace of Westminster on three separate occasions, including on the night of the 1911 census, when she hid in a broom cupboard in the chapel. This meant that her address for the census was listed as The Palace of Westminster, even though she could not vote for the Members of Parliament who sat there.

Death

On the 4th June 1913, Emily Davison attended the famous horse race at Epsom, The Derby. While there she ducked under the barrier surrounding the race track and stepped in front of Anmer, the horse owned by the King, and was trampled by it. Onlookers rushed to help her and she was taken to hospital, where, four days later, she died of her injuries.



Historians cannot agree on what her intentions were when she stepped onto the track. Some believe that she intended to tie a banner in the suffragette colours of green, purple and white onto the horse's bridle, while others believe that she was happy to cause her own tragic death in order to martyr herself.

Emily's funeral procession saw 5000 suffragettes march solemnly through the streets of London, which were lined with a further 50,000 supporters. This remarkable woman is buried in her family home town of Morpeth and her grave is inscribed with the WSPU slogan "Deeds, not words".

Name: Date:.....

Emily Davison comprehension questions - set one

Learning objectives:

- I can retrieve and record information from non-fiction.
- I understand what I read independently by drawing inferences and justifying inferences with evidence.

Read the text carefully and answer the questions below.

1. When and where was Emily Davison born?

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2. Summarise Emily Davison's education.

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3. How long did work Emily Davison as a teacher for?

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4. What does Emily's quote from the WSPU newspaper tell you about her? Explain your answer.

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5. Give two examples of Emily Davison's acts as a suffragette.

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6. Who described Emily Davison as ‘daring and reckless’? Do you agree with this description?

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7. What takes place in The Palace of Westminster?

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8. When did Emily Davison die?

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9. What does the word ‘martyr’ mean?

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10. Was Emily Davison admired for her actions? Explain how you know.

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11. This text contains both facts and opinions. Find one example of a fact and one example of an opinion.

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12. Who would you recommend this text to? Why?

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Emily Davison comprehension answers - set one

1. When and where was Emily Davison born?
11th October 1872, Blackheath, South-East London
2. Summarise Emily Davison's education.
She studied literature at Royal Holloway College and Oxford University but did not receive a degree, due to university restrictions on women.
3. How long did work Emily Davison as a teacher for?
3 years
4. What does Emily's quote from the WSPU newspaper tell you about her? Explain your answer.
The suffragette movement gave her life meaning that it had previously lacked.
5. Give two examples of Emily Davison's acts as a suffragette.
Setting fire to post boxes and throwing rocks at public figures.
6. Who described Emily Davison as 'daring and reckless'? Do you agree with this description?
Sylvia Pankhurst described her as 'daring and reckless'. This is fitting, due to the number of arrests and her eventual death.
7. What takes place in The Palace of Westminster?
It is the meeting place of the Houses of Commons and Lords.
8. When did Emily Davison die?
8th June 1913
9. What does the word 'martyr' mean?
Someone who is killed because of their religion or beliefs.
10. Was Emily Davison admired for her actions? Explain how you know.
She was admired by many, as evidenced by the 55,000 mourners at her funeral procession.
11. This text contains both facts and opinions. Find one example of a fact and one example of an opinion.
Fact: Emily Davison joined the WSPU in 1906.
Opinion: She was a remarkable woman.
12. Who would you recommend this text to? Why?
This text would be suitable for those with an interest in British history or in the women's rights movement.

Name: Date:.....

Emily Davison comprehension questions - set two

Learning objectives:

- I can retrieve and record information from non-fiction.
- I understand what I read independently by drawing inferences and justifying inferences with evidence.

Read the text carefully and answer the questions below.

1. When and where was Emily Davison born?

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2. What did Emily Davison do as a private governess?

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3. What does the WSPU stand for? Who founded the organisation?

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4. Rewrite this phrase, using your own words:

‘However, her activism also took a more direct, radical form.’

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5. Give two examples of Emily Davison’s acts as a suffragette.

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6. Who described Emily Davison as ‘daring and reckless’? Do you agree with this description? Explain your answer.

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7. Where did Emily Davison hide in The Palace of Westminster?

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8. What does the word ‘martyr’ mean? Use a dictionary to help you.

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9. Was Emily Davison admired for her actions? Explain how you know.

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10. Number these events from 1-5, in the order in which they happened:

Emily joined the WSPU.	
Emily studied at Oxford University.	
She stood in front of the King’s horse at Epsom.	
Emily’s sister died of diphtheria.	
Emily hid in The Palace of Westminster during the census.	

Emily Davison comprehension answers - set two

1. When and where was Emily Davison born?
11th October 1872, Blackheath, South-East London
2. What did Emily Davison do as a private governess?
She taught children in their own homes.
3. What does the WSPU stand for? Who founded the organisation?
The Women's Social and Political Union was founded by Emmeline Pankhurst.
4. Rewrite this phrase, using your own words:
'However, her activism also took a more direct, radical form'
Personal response e.g. she also deliberately broke the law when campaigning.
5. Give two examples of Emily Davison's acts as a suffragette.
Setting fire to post boxes and throwing rocks at public figures.
6. Who described Emily Davison as 'daring and reckless'? Do you agree with this description? Explain your answer.
Sylvia Pankhurst described her as 'daring and reckless'. This is fitting, due to the number of arrests and her eventual death.
7. Where did Emily Davison hide in The Palace of Westminster?
In a broom cupboard in the chapel.
8. What does the word 'martyr' mean? Use a dictionary to help you.
Someone who is killed because of their religion or beliefs.
9. Was Emily Davison admired for her actions? Explain how you know.
She was admired by many, as evidenced by the 55,000 mourners at her funeral procession.

10. Number these events from 1-5, in the order in which they happened:

Emily joined the WSPU.

3

Emily studied at Oxford University.

2

She stood in front of the King's horse at Epsom.

5

Emily's sister died of diphtheria.

1

Emily hid in The Palace of Westminster during the census.

4

Name:

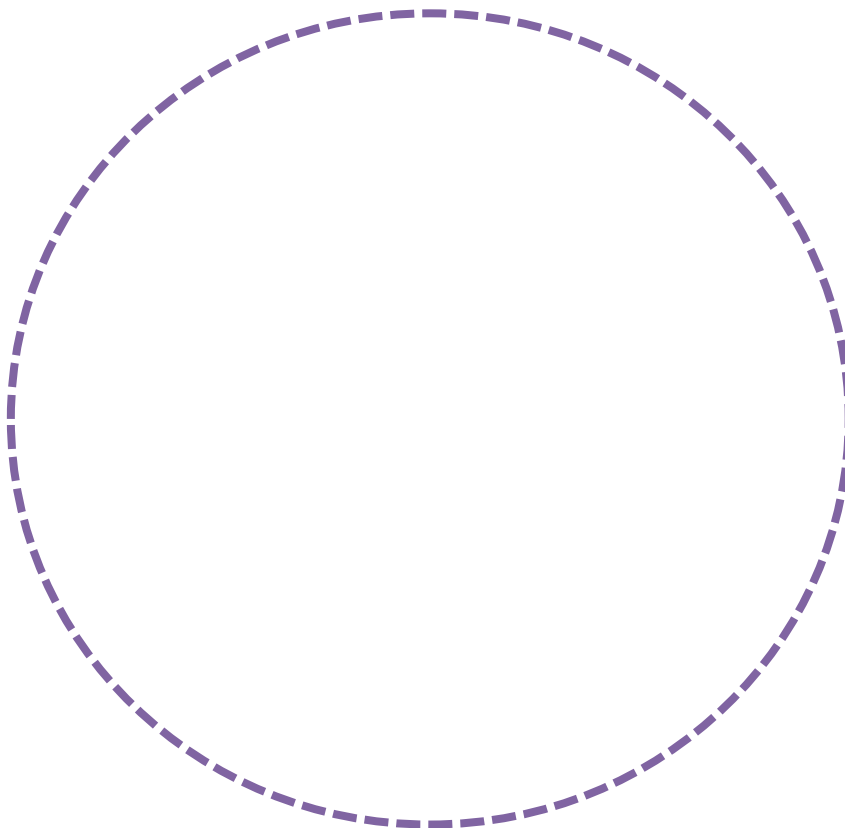
Date:.....

Suffragette badges and buttons

Badges and buttons were an important campaigning tool for the suffragettes and often displayed the WSPU slogans 'Votes for Women' and 'Deeds not Words'.



Use the template below to design a slogan badge for something that you feel passionate about.



Why I created this badge ...

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Name:

Date:.....

Emily Wilding Davison - writing task

Despite achieving the grades needed for a first-class degree, Emily Davison was not allowed to graduate from Oxford University because the university would only allow men to graduate.

Do you think this was a good policy? Write a letter to the Chancellor of Oxford University, supporting or challenging this policy and explaining your reasons why.

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