Aims and Objectives

1. To begin to understand how universal suffrage developed in England?
2. To begin to understand how protest movements can change government policy?
3. To begin to understand the importance of the right to vote?
4. To develop an understanding of chronology and change and continuity over centuries.

Resources

- Magna Carta worksheet
- Types of government diagram
- Political objects worksheet
- Radio show worksheet
- Protest pitch worksheet
- Safety pins, card, pens/paints and sticky tape

Teaching and learning activities

Introduction

1. Start with a show of hands vote for register monitor/class rep/someone to tidy up on that day.
2. Ask pupils to discuss why this type of vote is different from the way we vote in an election.
3. Ask how they would feel if they had no choice in an appointment and the teacher picked.
4. Do the vote again and let only half the class vote and ask how they felt. Introduce the idea that the people who are able to vote has changed over the centuries.

One

1. Hand out the Magna Carta worksheet. Split the class into pairs and ask them to discuss the ideas. Feedback and discuss as a class what they could learn about people in medieval England from this source. Then discuss what extra information they would need to discover more about this object.
2. As a class read the article and complete the quiz on the Primary History website. (http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/british_history/magna_carta/)
3. Split the class into pairs and ask them to discuss what they could learn about how medieval society was divided, who was in control, what technologies they had available and how educated were people in medieval society from the Magna Carta.
4. Discuss why the Magna Carta was so important in the development of electoral reform and democratic government in England.
Teaching and learning activities

Two

1. Ask the class what they think are the differences in terms of government at the time of the Magna Carta when compared with today.
2. Split the class into groups of 3-4 pupils. Hand out the types of government diagram
3. Ask the groups to make a list of differences
4. Ask each group to feedback their ideas.
5. Assess and discuss the differences. The aim is to point out that at the time of the Magna Carta no one really had a say in how the country was run and today every adult has the right to vote.

Three

1. Split the class into 5 groups and hand out the political objects worksheet.
2. Ask the class to match the object to the description.
3. Check they have the objects and cards matched correctly.
4. As a class discuss the changes they can see between the time periods.

Four

1. Give each group one object from the political objects worksheet and the radio show worksheet
2. Ask them to prepare a radio show to explain to the rest of the class why their object was more or less important than the others in the development of democracy. Explain that in writing the show they have to be clear and concise but use persuasive language.
Teaching and learning activities

Five

As a class compile a list of all the ways in which people gained their democratic rights such as marches, petitions and acts of parliament and discuss which were the most successful. They are looking at the debate over peaceful protest verses militant campaigns.

Six

1. Ask the class to suggest things in society and/or select a local policy that they wish to change.
2. Hand out the protest pitch worksheet. Split the class into groups of 3-4 pupils and get each group to plan a peaceful campaign to try to change a policy. For example: They could design posters, collect petitions, go on a march, and write to their member of parliament.
3. Each group should feedback their ideas to the class.
4. As a class vote for the campaign they think would be most effective.

If part of the world-class programme you could do this with your partner school or if not you could join http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldclass/. You could swap these presentations to see what political issues are prominent in other countries.

Seven

1. Discuss how the idea of democracy has spread around the world. Ask the class to think about places in the world where democracy and the right to vote is a very new activity. You could link to South Africa or Afghanistan.
2. Explain the value of educating people about the importance of voting without giving them lots of things to read and/or telling them what they should do. When the suffragettes were campaigning there were a number of protest plays written and in the 1960s when people wanted to protest and/or inform people why it was important to vote they wrote protest songs. (Protest songs had been written for many years – an early protest song was ‘Sing a song of sixpence’ which was written to protest about the taxes of Henry VII)
3. Split the class into groups of 4-5 pupils and ask them to produce a protest play or sing a protest song about a world political issue that they want to change and/or educate people about the importance of democratic action.
4. Perform the plays and songs.

If part of the world-class programme you could do this with your partner school.
Plenary

Discuss why it is important to vote and take an active part in a democratic society? Then look at an example of a suffragette badge. Students design their own badge/broach that they can all wear and keep to remind them of the importance of voting. They will need to cut out a circle of card and decorate it with their design and then stick a safety pin to the back so that they can wear this badge.

Extension or homework

1. Find other examples of protest badges on the A History of the world website and find out why they were made.
2. Research or visit the Houses of Parliament.
3. Find out how a coalition government works.
4. Research and do a presentation on the Suffragettes.
5. Conduct research on a local protest movement. For example, Peterloo Massacre in Manchester, Tolpuddle Martyrs in Dorset, Peasants Revolt in Kent, Miners strike in Yorkshire.
6. Prepare a presentation for your world class school on how democracy has developed in England and they could do the same for their country and you could swap.