

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF PROTEST?

Lesson Two



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

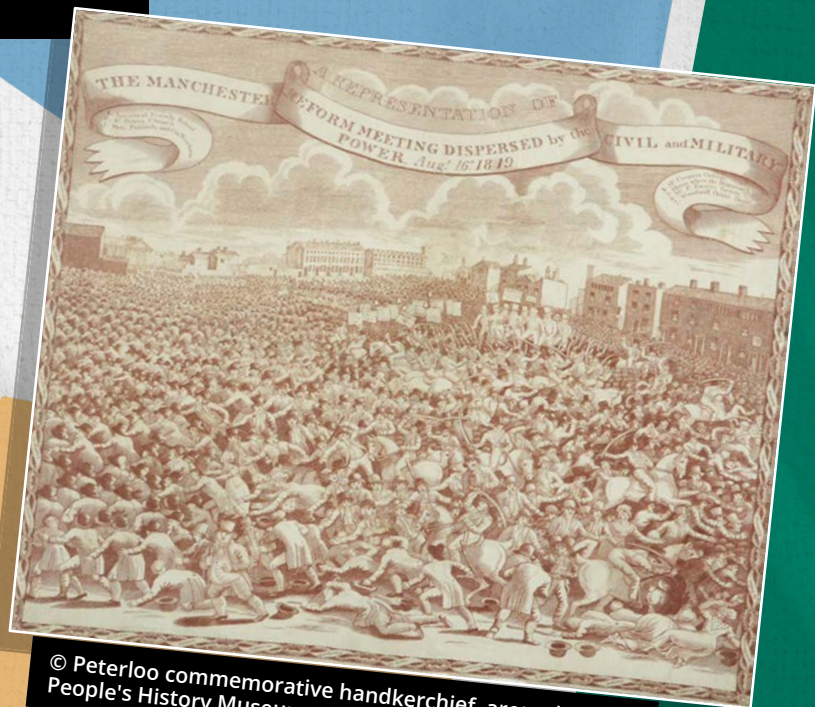
- To understand what the people who gathered at St Peter's Field were trying to achieve
- To evaluate how effective it was as a campaign

WAS IT AN EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN?

To evaluate if the protest at St Peter's Field was an effective campaign we first need to consider what it wanted to achieve. The campaigners went with a variety of demands.

Three of the campaigners' demands were:

- **Election by Ballot**
– voting in private on paper
- **Annual Parliaments**
– having an election every year
- **Universal suffrage**
– the right to vote for all men



© Peterloo commemorative handkerchief, around 1819 ©
People's History Museum

ASK 1: ELECTION BY BALLOT



© Pontefract secret ballot box,
August 1872, courtesy of
Wakefield Council

In 1819 people didn't have a secret ballot, where they voted in secret in a box. In some places they just had to put their hand up to vote.

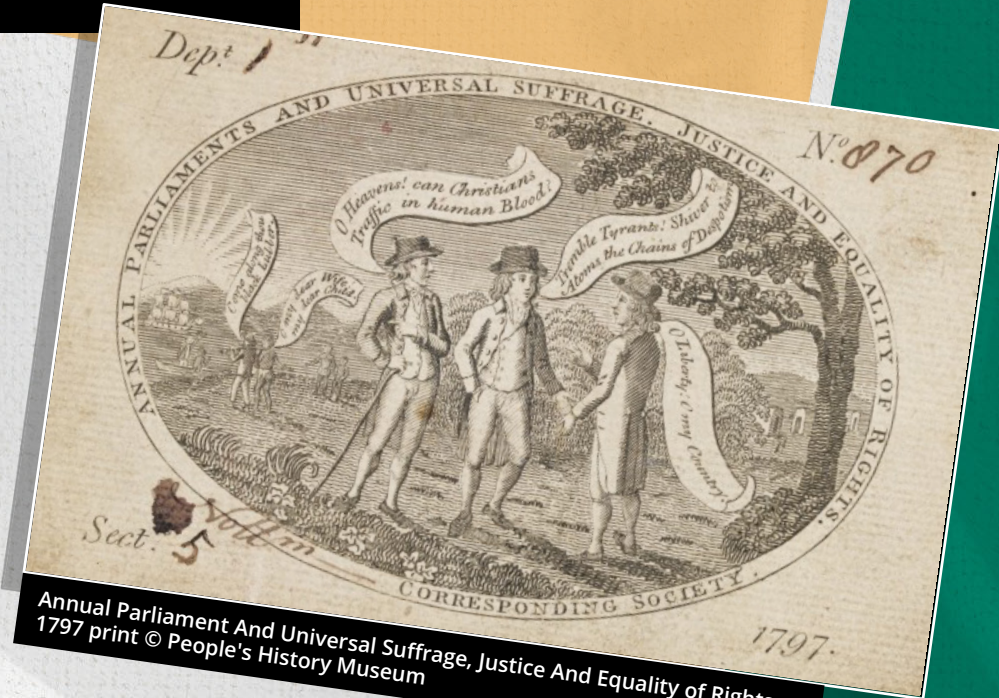
This was a problem, because it meant people could feel pressured, forced or blackmailed into voting a certain way. Some people even sold their votes!

ASK 2: ANNUAL PARLIAMENTS

In 1819 a government could retain power as long as there was a majority of support for them within Parliament.

This made it very difficult to replace a bad or unpopular government.

Annual Parliaments were intended to create a democracy in which MPs would have to stick to their manifestos and be re-elected annually.



Annual Parliament And Universal Suffrage, Justice And Equality of Rights
1797 print © People's History Museum

ASK 3: UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE



In 1819 around 2% of the population could vote, and the campaigners who gathered at St Peter's Field wanted 'universal suffrage'.

Strangely, at the time this term referred to the right to vote for all adult men (not women).

Later, the Suffragettes and Suffragists campaigned for the right to vote for all women. They took ownership of this term when creating the title for their campaign.

WHEN WERE THESE AIMS ACHIEVED?

The people who gathered at Peterloo went for a variety of different reasons. Three of the demands they campaigned for were:

- **Election by Ballot**
 - voting in private on paper
- **Annual Parliaments**
 - having an election every year
- **Universal Suffrage**
 - the right to vote for all men



© Polyp Schlunke Poole, Peterloo - Witness to a massacre, 2019

WHEN WERE THESE AIMS ACHIEVED?

Activity: Use the [Peterloo 1819 website](#) or the worksheets to identify whether and when these aims were achieved.



OTHER CONSEQUENCES OF PETERLOO

Often campaigns can have an impact beyond their initial aims.

Peterloo was largely responsible for:

- The founding of The Manchester Guardian
- The change in public and then political opinion that led to the 1832 Great Reform Act

The massacre was also a catalyst for subsequent generations campaigning for change. This includes the Chartists and the Suffragettes, and to those campaigning today for ideas worth fighting for such as disability and LGBT+ rights.



The original Prospectus for The Manchester Guardian, 1821.
© The Guardian

PETERLOO
PROTEST.
DEMOCRACY.
FREEDOM.

THE 1832 REFORM ACT

In 1832 Parliament voted to expand voting rights in the UK. This was known as the Great Reform Act.

Men that were small landowners, tenant farmers, and shopkeepers were given the vote along with all householders who paid a yearly rent of £10 or more and some lodgers.

It also rebalanced the constituencies, removing the MPs of 56 rotten boroughs in England and Wales and reduced another 31 to only one MP in addition to creating 67 new constituencies in places that were under-represented.



© Peterloo 2019 courtesy of TripleDotMakers

PETERLOO
PROTEST.
DEMOCRACY.
FREEDOM.

THE 1832 REFORM ACT

Women were also formally excluded from voting in Parliamentary elections, as a voter was defined in the Act as a male person.

Before 1832 there were occasional, although rare instances of women voting if they were landowners.



VOTES AT 16 - THE MODERN FIGHT FOR SUFFRAGE



Today some young people are still fighting for suffrage, campaigning for those aged 16 to 18 to be given the right to vote

Activity: Brainstorm all of the tools you could use today to make Votes at 16 happen.

Which ones do you think would be most effective?

COULD THE PETERLOO MASSACRE HAPPEN TODAY?

Today we have far more rights, including the right to vote for most people aged 18 or over and to protest in public.

Activity: In pairs discuss the following questions and feedback to the rest of the class.

- Do you think that the campaign was successful?
- Do you think it was worth it?
- Do you think that the protest would have had the same impact if it hadn't turned violent?



Axel Void, Peterloo. mural, 2018
© People's History Museum

PETERLOO 2019 AN ANIMATED FILM BY RECLAIM



© Peterloo 2019 courtesy of TripleDotMakers

This animation was made by a group of young people from Greater Manchester who are passionate about everyone having the right to representation.

They see the 200 year anniversary of the Peterloo Massacre as a chance to shout about their own experience of democracy.

Whilst planning the animation, the group discussed the issues they face today, from votes for 16 year olds to education reform.

Teacher Notes: click image for hyperlink to animation.



PETERLOO 2019 AN ANIMATED FILM BY RECLAIM

What are the things that are important to you?

Do you feel that your voice is heard?

Watch this film through clicking on the image and then spend a few minutes discussing this together.

Teacher Notes: click image for hyperlink to animation.



© Peterloo 2019 courtesy of TripleDotMakers

PETERLOO
PROTEST.
DEMOCRACY.
FREEDOM.

PETERLOO

PROTEST.
DEMOCRACY.
FREEDOM.

This learning programme for young people has been created by Manchester Histories and People's History Museum. The programme is supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Historic England and UK Parliament Education and has been co-designed with The Politics Project.

