



College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences

Unit 2:

Irishwomen's Campaign for the Vote, 1870-1914

Transition Year Project Book Part 1

Contents

Introduction to the History Module

Lesson 1

Project Outline *Task 1:* Project Proposal Form

Lesson 2

Women in 19th Century Ireland	
Task 2: True or False	<u>6</u>
Documents A and B	<u>7</u>
Comprehension Questions, Docs A-B	<u>8</u>

<u>3</u>

<u>4</u>

5

Lesson 3

The Origins of the Irishwomen's Campaign for the Vote	
Documents C - E	<u>11</u>
Comprehension Questions, Docs C-E	<u>13</u>

Lesson 4	4
----------	---

The Irish Women's Franchise League	<u>14</u>
Documents F-I	<u>15</u>
Comprehension Questions, Docs F-I	<u>17</u>
Task 3: Suffragist Propaganda	<u>18</u>
Peer Assessment Sheet	<u>21</u>



Transition Year Unit: Irishwomen's Campaign for the Vote

In this unit you will examine the attempts by women in Ireland between 1870 and 1914 to challenge the laws and customs which prevented them from participating in politics, commerce and education. The lobbying and protests of several groups of women in Ireland resulted in gradual changes being introduced for women culminating in the election of Sinn Féin candidate, Countess Markievicz in 1918. She was the first was woman elected to the Westminster parliament, although she did not take her seat. Alongside the land movement and the cultural nationalism of the turn of the twentieth century in Ireland, the Irishwomen's campaign for the vote was one of the most significant movements for social reform in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in Ireland.

Even if you choose not to take the subject for Leaving Cert, an appreciation for History will stay with you forever and has benefits far beyond the realms of secondary school. You will also learn transferable skills, which you can apply to your other subjects. These include, critical thinking skills, research and presentation skills. For those of you who continue History after TY, it will offer a tremendous foundation in more advanced project work, document analysis and writing skills.

Assessment:

Continuous Assessment (10%) You will be awarded a mark for overall participation in the module. That is why you should remain focused, organised and engage with the group and individual tasks.

The Group Project (60%) Remember, you must meet the deadline for your History Project and marks will be awarded for effort, imagination and originality as well as for the quality of your work.

Presentation & Self Assessment: (30%) You will be expected to present your finished project to the class at the end of the module and complete a self assessment sheet.

REMARKABLE WOMEN: PROJECT BRIEF

The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht wishes to mark the anniversary of women being granted the right to vote in Ireland with the launch of a new website dedicated to influential Irish women, 1900-2000.

The Department has invited applications from writers, historians, graphic designers, poets, musicians, film makers and photographers to contribute a page to this website.

The webpage must include:

• The biography of *a named woman in Irish history*, 1900-2000, who has made a significant contribution in the areas of politics, art, scholarship, literature, science, education or justice



- A section of the web page devoted to an analysis of the significance of this woman's contribution
- A selection of images or drawings that encapsulate that contribution
- At least four quotations from primary or secondary sources relating to the historical character
- A piece of music or poetry that celebrates the spirit, motivations and/or legacy of the historical character **OR** a short documentary outlining the personality and achievements of the historical character.

THE PLANNING PROCESS:

Group Meeting 1. In groups of not more than five students:

- Nominate a chairperson to oversee the project and chair group discussions
- Discuss possibilities for the subject [historical personality] of your webpage
- Discuss possibilities for the content of your webpage: text, documentary, music etc.
- Identify the strengths of your group members artistic, writing, imagery, research etc and provisionally assign different elements of your webpage design to each student.
- For homework, individually conduct research into significant female personalities of the twentieth century. Each student should return to the next class with at least two suggestions about a subject for their webpage

Group Meeting 2.

- The chairperson will oversee a group discussion during which each group member will present the case for their suggested historical personality
- At the conclusion of the presentations and any questions, the group should vote on one historical personality.
- The group should nominate a scribe, who will complete *the Project Proposal Form* on the next page for submission to the teacher.
- Once your proposal has been approved, the project may proceed.

	ject Proposal Form
To be submitted to you	<i>urteacher at the conclusion of the second project planning class</i>
osen Historical Personality:	
ovisional Web Page Title:	
ne 3 main reasons why we chos	se this historical personality are:
(1)	
(2)	
Group Members' Names:	Responsible For:
Webpage Elements: (Tick the el	lements you intend to include in your webpage)
Webpage Elements: <i>(Tick the el</i> Iusic Photography	lements you intend to include in your webpage) Maps Documentary A Timeline
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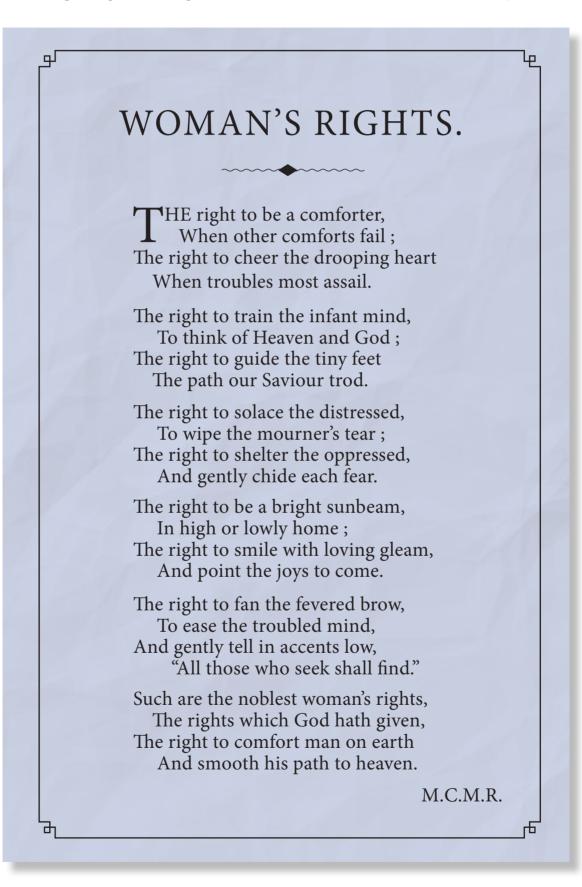
Task 1: True or False

For each of the 12 statements below about Irishwomen in the late 19th century, indicate whether you think the statement is true or false by placing a v in the relevant column on the right.

TRUE	TRUE		TRUE	FALSE
		Irishwomen had legal custody of their children only until they were seven years of age.		
		Irishwomen were permitted to attend university if their family could afford to send them.		
		When a woman got married, all of her inherited and/or earned property came under her husband's control to dispose of as he pleased.		
		In 1870, the dominant source of employment for unmarried women of the poorer classes was in domestic service.		
		In the 19th century, only men could vote in parliamentary elections and sit in the House of Commons.		
		Men and women who worked in factories and shops were paid equal wages for the same work.		
		Middle-class women were expected to remain at home or work as a governess until they married.		
		In 1870, it was not uncommon to see middle class Irishwomen working in professions such as medicine or law.		
		On average, women earned up to two-thirds less than men for work of equal value.		
		In 1871, 43 percent of all women between 15 and 45 were married.		
		According to the law, children would always be brought up in the religion of their father.	-	
		Women were permitted to be members of public boards or local authorities.		
		Women in 19th century Ireland were encouraged to study mathematics and the science subjects.		
		On the death of a parent, property and titles were divided equally between sons and daughters.		
		Divorce was considerably more difficult for a wife to obtain than it was for a husband because the law treated women as the more guilty party.	-	
		Women were considered physically and emotionally weaker yet morally superior to men, which meant that they were best suited to the domestic rather than to the political or public spheres.	-	
		To enhance the likelihood of finding a husband, middle-class women were coached in what were known as 'accomplishments': a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages		

- Document A -

'Woman's Rights', reproduction of a famous ephemeral card signed by M.C.M.R. (anonymous author) representing traditional ideas about the role of women. It was written in response to the growing women's rights movement of the latter half of the 19th century.



[Source:https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/gender-roles-in-the-19th-century]

Edited Extract from an article by Hanna Sheehy Skeffington published in *Bean na hÉireann* in 1909 in which she analyses the second-class role occupied by women within the national movement

We all, Unionists and Nationalists, live overmuch on our past in Ireland ... This tendency is nowhere more aptly illustrated then with regard to the position of Irishwomen in the Ireland of today ... It is barren comfort for us Irishwomen to know that in ancient Ireland women occupied a prouder, freer position then they now hold even in the most advanced modern states, that all professions, including that of arms, were freely open to their ambitions ... that their council was sought in all affairs of state ...

Where is now the glory and the dream? Does the vision of the past mitigate the abject present? Is the degradation of the average Irishwoman the less real - her education sacrificed to give her brothers ample opportunities of having a good time, loitering through their examinations in the capital, her marriage a matter of sordid bargaining, broken maybe because an over-insistent prospective father-in-law demands a cow or a pig too much, her 'fortune' ... handed over blindly to her husband to dispose of as he may think fit ...

I have chosen but a few salient examples to illustrate the disabilities Irishwomen suffer today. The result of Anglicisation? This is but partly true ... the evil [will not] disappear, as we are assured, when Ireland comes to her own again, whenever that may be ...

Many vested interests are openly opposed to any broadening of women's horizons in Ireland. Public opinion, educational facilities, convention militates against her assuming her rightful place in public life. In the Gaelic [League] movement, in the industrial revival and in the Sinn Fein organisation she has undoubtedly made her power felt. So much the better for the movement. The reason, however, is obvious; it is not due, as many would have us believe, to a reversion to the older Irish [ways] ... but rather because of the nature of the work involved. The Gaelic League must make its final appeal to the young. Unless [children] ... take up Irish, it will surely perish. So too with the Industrial revival - it is the women who look after the domestic budget, her voice can make or mar Irish industrialism. Therefore, it is primarily in her capacity as mother and housekeeper, not as individual citizen, that these movements have, as necessity, recognised her importance. ...

Many worthy Gaelic Leaguers get [nervous] at the thought of women having places on the Executive Body. One of the leaders [of Sinn Fein] afforded an interesting object lesson to his women colleagues in the movement by founding University scholarship from which girls are expressly excluded. Irishwomen may be excused, therefore, if they distrust all parties in Ireland ...

It is for Irishwomen of every political party to adopt the principle of Sinn Fein in the true sense of the word and to refuse any longer to be the camp followers and parasites of public life It is for Irishwomen to set about working out their political salvation. Until the Parliamentarian and the Sinn Fein woman alike possesses the vote - the keystone of citizenship - she will count but little with either party, for it is through the medium of the vote alone that either party can achieve any measure of success. ...

[Source: Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, Bean na hEireann, November 1909, reproduced in Margaret Ward (ed) In Their Own Voice, (Attic Press, Cork, 1995) pp 36-38]



Comprehension Questions

Documents A - B

1.	What do you believe is the central message of this poem? Support your answer with reference to the poem. (<i>Doc A</i>)
2.	Do you think that this poem refers to women of a particular class? Support your answer with reference to the poem. <i>(Doc A)</i>
3.	Why do you think that the anonymous writer may have chosen 'Woman's Rights' as the title of the poem? (<i>Doc A</i>)
4.	What two examples does Hanna Sheehy Skeffington choose to illustrate the 'disabilities' suffered by women in 1909? <i>(Doc B)</i>
5.	Choose two words to describe the <i>tone</i> of Hanna Sheehy Skeffington's article.
6.	According to Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, why has the Gaelic League allowed women to join its ranks? <i>(Doc B)</i>
7.	Why does Hanna Sheehy Skeffington think that neither the Home Rule party (parliamentarians) nor Sinn Fein take women seriously? <i>(Doc B)</i>
8.	Imagine that you are Hanna Sheehy Skeffington. Using the results of Task 1 and Document B as inspiration write a short poem in response to Document A. Your poem will also be entitled 'Woman's Rights', but it should list the rights that Sheehy Skeffington believed belonged to - but were denied to - women in 1909.

Task 2: A Poetic Response

THE right to	
L	
The right to	
The right to	
The right to	
The right to	

- Document C -

Edited Extract from an article which appeared in the *Belfast Newsletter* on 12 November 1886. It describes an event at which Isabella Tod was presented with a portrait in recognition of her work in the area of social reform.



No. 22,272

BELFAST, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1886

PRICE ONE PENNY

A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF

ISABELLA TOD

PRESENTATION TO MISS ISABELLA M. TOD

YESTERDAY afternoon at four o'clock, a number of friends of Miss Tod, met at her residence, Prospect Terrace, to present her with her portrait as a mark of respect and esteem, and as a recognition of her labours in the field of social reform ... The work, it may be added is from the easel of Miss Rothwell, and as a likeness is truthful, and does great credit to the artist .. all the subscribers were delighted that a lady in Belfast could accomplish it so well.

Mr. R. W. Murray, having taken the chair, expressed the pleasure it gave him to be present on such an occasion ... They were all familiar with the labours of Miss Tod, and it was not necessary, therefore, that, he should sound her praises. They knew that on questions of social reform, questions of religion, and questions of education, as well as politics, she had not only distinguished herself among her own people but had really acquired a national influence for good. (Applause.) He differed with Miss Tod on the question of female suffrage, but he must confess that if the positions she claimed for her sex were filled by ladies of her type they would incur but little risk.

PRESENTATION BY REV. JOHN KINCHAN

Rev. John Kinchan in making the presentation, [said...] had known Miss Tod since she came to Belfast, and the more he had known her, he had admired her and her great work ... Last season she took a very active an influential part in bringing about a change in the laws for the protection of girls. She had also given a good deal of her time to pushing



forward the higher education of women, and her efforts in this direction had met with considerable success.

The Rev. gentleman then proceeded to refer to the considerable part she took in the advancement of women's rights, and in opposing the Home Rule Bill. He was in full sympathy with the idea of perpetuating the memory of such a lady...

Miss Tod, in returning thanks, said she could scarcely thank them adequately for such kindness as this. ... If anyone had loved Ireland she had done so, and she was glad that her very imperfect labours had been appreciated. Her first work in Belfast was in connection with the temperance cause. She then turned her attention to the protection of the property of married women, the higher education of females, and the protection of young girls. All this work was surrounded by much difficulty - in fact, they had to make the roads whereon they walked. She, however, intended to go on labouring as she had done, and all she would, ask was the support of her many friends. (Hear, hear.)

- Document D -

The objectives of the Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association (IWSLGA) Founded in 1876 by Thomas and Anna Haslam as the Dublin Women's Suffrage Association, the organisation changed its name in 1901 to reflect its success in achieving a vote for women in the Local Government Act.

Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association $c \approx 1 \approx 0$ **OBJECTIVES** 1. To promote the extension of the Parliamentary 5. To promote the formation of Women's Suffrage Franchise to all qualified women on the same terms and kindred Associations in all the leading towns as men of Ireland 2. To promote the extension of all qualified women The Association seeks to achieve these objects electors under the Local Government Act by means of Drawing-room and Public Meetings; Petitions to the House of Commons; Letters to 3. To promote the election of suitable women as Poor our Parliamentary Representatives; to the heads Law Guardians and Rural and Urban Councilors of Public Departments, and to the Press; the distribution of appropriate Literature, etc. 4. To promote the appointment of women as School and Sanitary Inspectors, and to all other public offices for which they are eligible under the Local Government

Subscribers of 1s and upwards will receive all publications issued by the Association

- Document E -

A list of elected female Poor Law Guardians published in the annual report of the IWSLGA 1898

List of Unions in Ireland for which Lady Guardians were returned in 1898

Ballymena, Co. Antrim	Mrs. L. A. Barr	Kilkeel, Co Down	,	Countess of Kilmorey
Belfast, do.*	Miss K Megahey	Killala, Co, Mayo		Miss Susan Pringle.
Do. do.	Mrs. H. Thompson	Kilarney, Co Kerry		Lady Castleross
Do. do.	Miss F. F. Clarke	Do. do.		Mrs Theresa Leonard
Carrick-on-Suir, Co. Tipperary	Miss Curtis	Limavady, Co Derry		Mrs Jane Ritter
Castlblayney, Co. Monaghan	Mrs. Cooney	Lisnaskea, Co Fermanagh		Lady Brooke
Noth Dublin, Co. Dublin	Mrs MacDowel Cosgrave	Milford, Co. Donegal		Countess of Leitrim
Do. do.	Miss Rathborne	Rathdown, Co. Dublin		Miss K. J. Burton.
South Dublin, Co. Dublin	Mr Eliza Brown.	Do. do.		Mrs. Lawrenson
Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath	Mrs Leonard.	Tralee, Co Kerry		Miss F. M. P. Donovan
Edgeworthstown, Co. Longford	Mrs Edgeworth			1.10.20

p. 12

* do.(ditto) means, "the same as above"

and other Statues

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Documents C -E

1. According to the <i>Belfast Telegraph</i> , in what areas did	Isabella lod campaign for social reform? (Doc C)
2. On what issue did Mr. R. W. Murray disagree with Isa	
 What do you think Isabella Tod meant when she sai (Doc C) 	d, they 'had to make the roads whereon they walked'?
4. Who founded the Irish Women's Suffrage and Local	Government Association (IWSLGA)? <i>(Doc D)</i>
5. In your own words explain the main objective (<i>no 1</i>	.) of the IWSLGA ? <i>(Doc D)</i>
6. What methods did the IWSLGA propose to use in or	der to achieve their objectives ? <i>(Doc D</i>)
7. Based on Document E, which of the IWSLGA objectiv	ves was achieved in 1898? (Doc D & E)
3. How many female Poor Law Guardians were elected	d in 1898? <i>(Doc E)</i>
9. Based on an examination of the names in Documer belonged? <i>(Doc E)</i>	nt E, to what social class do you think they
10. Using the article in the <i>Belfast Telegraph</i> as a starting point, research the biography of Isabella Tod (1836-1896) and summarise the main points in the empty right-hand column of the newspaper. (<i>Doc C</i>)	Research

- Document F-

Edited extract from the joint biography of Margaret and James Cousins, *We Two Together (1950)*, which provides an account of the foundation of the Irish Women's Franchise League in 1908

While we were entirely in sympathy with the British women ... we had no desire to work under English women leaders: we could lead ourselves. So, a group of us went in November to the dear old leader of the constitutional suffragists, Mrs Anna Haslam, to inform her that we younger women were ready to start a new suffrage society on militant lines. She regretted what she felt to be a duplication of effort. She was also congenitally a person of peace, non-violent, law-abiding to the finger tips. But she sensed the Time Spirit, and we parted as friends, agreeing to differ on means, though united in aim and ideals.

On November 11 the new society which was named "The Irish Women's Franchise League was founded. The aim ... was to obtain the parliamentary vote for the women of Ireland on the same terms as men then had it ... Its policy was to educate by all forms of propaganda, the men, women and children of Ireland to understand and support the members of the League in their demand for votes for women, and to obtain the pledge from every Irish Member of Parliament to vote for Women Suffrage Bills introduced in the British House of Parliament, and to include Women's Suffrage in any Home Rule Bill.

The forms of propaganda ... were to be constitutional and non-constitutional, as directed by political circumstances ... Only women could be members [and] the League would cooperate where possible with the suffrage societies of Great Britain and other countries, especially with the militant suffrage organisations.

[Source: James and Margaret Cousins, We Two Together, (Madras, 1950), pps.164-165) https://archive.org/details/WeTwoTogether

- Document G -The Constitution of the Irish Women's Franchise League 1908

CONSTITUTION

Name - The name of the Society shall be 'The Irish Women's Franchise League.'

Object - To obtain for women the Parliamentary Franchise on the same terms as it is, or may be granted to men.

Methods - The object of the League shall be to promote by

- 1. Action entirely independent of all political parties
- 2. Vigorous agitation upon lines justified by the fact that women have at present no voice in the making of laws under which they live
- 3. The organising or Irishwomen to enable them to give full expression to their desire for political freedom
- Education of public opinion by public meetings, debates, demonstrations, distribution of literature, deputations to public representatives, and such other methods as may appear necessary

Members - Women of all shades of political opinion, who approve of the principle, object and methods of the League shall be eligible as members.

No member can support any candidate at Parliamentary Election who is opposed to Women's Suffrage.

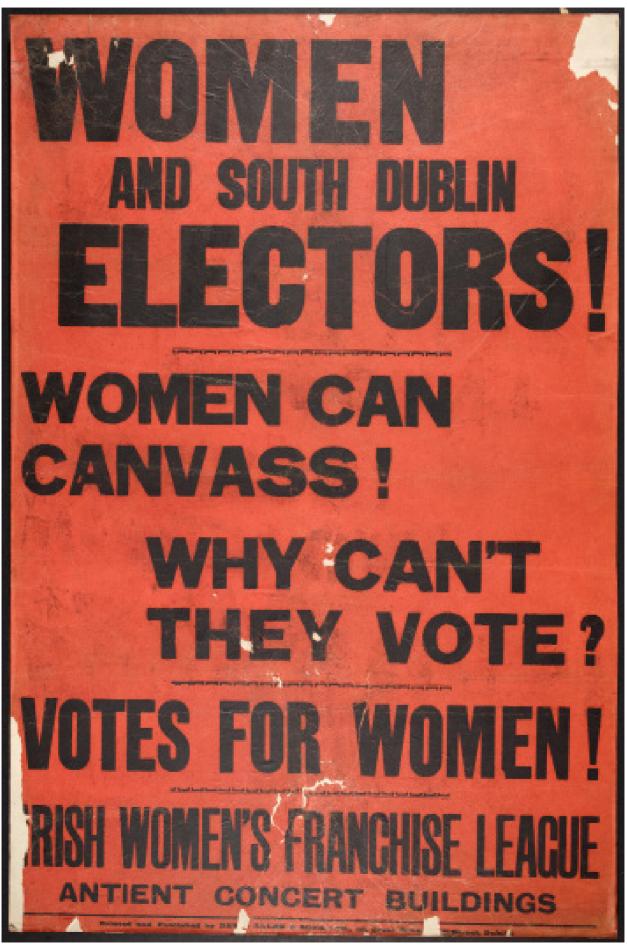
Associates - Men who approve of the principle, object and methods of the League shall be eligible as Associates.

Subscription - The minimum annual subscription for both members and associates shall be One Shilling, due on January 1st.

Government - The League shall be governed by a Committee elected annually by ballot of all members.

The Committee has power to remove the name of any member or associate from the register without assigning any reason; subscription of said member or associate being duly returned.

- Document H -



Irish Women's Franchise League poster appealing to electors in South Dublin

[[]Source: National Library of Ireland, EPH L7]

- Document I -

Edited Extract from Margaret Cousins' recollections of the early days of the IWFL

We became quite attached to our Headquarters Office and committee Room in the Ancient Concert Rooms building. There were planned speakers for meetings. From its door issued poster parades and special processions. There our large green and white flag hung out; and the weekly contents poster of 'Votes for Women' and later our own weekly paper, The Irish Citizen. It was not an impressive building, but its location was central. It became the hub of our activity. Starting with a dozen enthusiasts, we grew to about fifty women whose hearts were in the movement, and who could be relied upon to take the share in every kind of propaganda.

We were a very mixed lot, a cross-section of all classes, political parties, religious groups ... open to women in those days [1908–1914]. The cause broke down all social barriers. For each of us the cause was a whole-time job, without pay, demanding all kinds of sacrifice, forcing us to do things for which we had no training, pushing us into dreaded and undesired publicity, bringing a ridicule, scorn, misapprehension. But also times of affluence, of a sense of great blessing, an expansion of capabilities, the happiness of great friendships, a widening of contacts with our kind of all degrees, a greater understanding of the difficulties of social living, an enlarged experience, of the inequalities of opportunity imposed on women, an increasing sense of protest against the injustices under which women live, most of all women of the working classes.

Some of our members embroidered our green silk flag with 'Irish Women's Franchise League' and 'Votes for Women'. I remember rehearsing open-air speaking in a field behind our house, with only one ass as my audience. Later, I found it easier to speak out of doors than in halls. Experience had taught the English suffragettes the convenience, economy, mobility and reliability of speaking from four-wheeled lorries without horses. We adopted the same technique. The lorry made a strong, raised, steady, dignified platform. We always had two women speakers (one seated while the other one spoke) and one man We had the lorry placed where the people themselves were accustomed to gather, and they never failed to come and listen and ask questions at the end of the hour.

We never knew how a meeting would go. At Castlebar, in Country Mayo, a band of irresponsible men tried to ruin our meeting by singing songs to drown our voices. But after regaling us with "Put me on an island where the girls are few," there was a moment's quiet, and Meg Connery asked them if they would really like such an island. They were so pleased with her repartee and her plucky spirit that they quieted down and became quite sensible. At another country meeting rowdies brought flour with them and threw it towards us on the platform. Commotion ensued among the audience. We could not make ourselves heard. One of the elders of the town chided them with," Can you not give the young girls a chance to spake? "We won them round; but we found "apple-pie beds" laid out for us in the hotel.



Documents F - I

1. According to Margaret Cousins, in what ways were the ideas of the 'younger women' different to those of Anna Halsam? (Doc F) 2. What was the aim of the Irish Women's Franchise League (IWFL)? (Doc D) 3. What pledge did the IWFL hope to get from the Irish members of Parliament? (Doc F) 4. What methods would the IWFL use to educate public opinion about their cause? (Doc G) 5. Compare the language used in the Doc G, The IWFL Constitution and Doc D, The Objectives of the Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association. What differences do you notice? 6. In your own words, list 3 positive things and 3 negative things about being involved in the Irish Women's Franchise League. (Doc I) 7. Describe two methods that were used to disrupt suffrage speeches at country meetings (Doc I)

SUFFRAGIST PROPAGANDA

randing, slogans, imagery and symbolism played a key role in the international women's suffrage movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The mass production of promotional memorabilia and collectibles such as pins, sashes, placards, flags and banners served to actively publicise their aim of votes for women. Irish suffragists also produced a range of printed material including postcards, flyers, short stories, poems

and songs. The involvement of many Irish suffragists in organisations such as the Irish Women Worker's Union, the Gaelic League, Sinn Fein and Inghindhe na hÉireann also influenced the choice of imagery and language in their propaganda. Speaking about some of the propaganda strategies used by IWFL, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington said



"We held parades, processions, pageants ... We had colours (orange and green), a Votes for Women badge, slogans; we made use with feminine ingenuity of many good publicity devices and stunts ... and became a picturesque element in Irish life ... women speakers who could hold their own ... meeting hecklers on their own ground, being good-humoured and capable of keeping their temper under bombardments of rotten eggs, overripe tomatoes, bags of flour, stinking chemicals, gradually earned respect and due attention: Suffs were good sports."

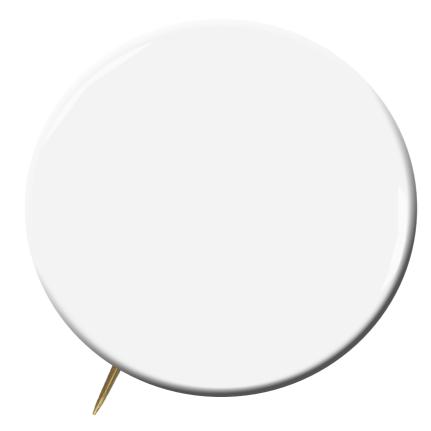
[Hanna Sheehy Skeffington quoted in Rosemary Cullen Owens, Smashing Times. p. 66.]

TASK 3. VISUAL PROPAGANDA

- Step 1: Your teacher will divide the class into groups of four. Each team represents a design team appointed by the Committee of the Irish Women's Franchise League. Each design team must create:
 - A sash for members to wear at the next open-air meeting
 - A lapel pin for distribution to the public
 - A placard for use during a protest meeting outside Government Building ${}^{ extsf{s}}$ ${}^{ extsf{s}}$
 - An eye-catching advertisement for a suffrage meeting at the offices of the IWFL at 42, Great Brunswick Street every Tuesday at 8:00 p.m. This will feature in the Irish Citizen
- Step 2: Each group should agree on a slogan which will appear on the memorabilia and in the advertisement. The slogan should be short, memorable and raise awareness about the objectives of the IWFL. (Docs F & G)
- Step 3: Once the slogan has been agreed, each group member should choose one of the design tasks and create preliminary designs to bring back to the group
- Step 4: When the group has examined all of the designs, and is happy that the four design tasks share a similar theme, style and message, the individual members should complete their designs for presentation to the IWFA Committee in the next class

Your Name: SASH DESIGN Describe and Justify Describe and Justify

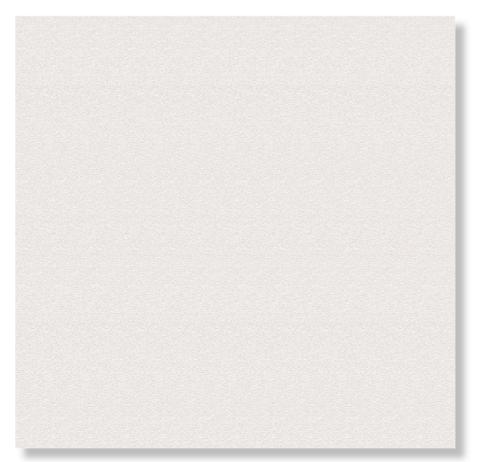
SUFFRAGE BADGE DESIGN



SUFFRAGE PLACARD DESIGN



SUFFRAGE ADVERTISEMENT DESIGN



Describe and Justify

Describe and Justify



Group Members'	
Group Slogan:	

Evaluation Criteria	Comment	Mark
Clarity of the central message		/
Level of persuasiveness		/
Evidence of effective group work		/
Presentation skills		

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Clarity of the central message		/
Level of persuasiveness		/
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Presentation skills		/

Group Members'	
Group Slogan:	

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Clarity of the central message		/
Level of persuasiveness		/
Evidence of effective group work		/
Presentation skills		/

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Group Slogan:

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