# Topic Exploration Pack

# Representation and democracy - trade unions and other pressure groups

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## Instructions for teachers

These instructions cover the student activity section which can be found on [page 15](#_Student_Activity_section). This Topic Exploration Pack supports OCR GCSE (9‒1) Citizenship Studies.

**When distributing the activity section to the students either as a printed copy or as a Word file you will need to remove the teacher instructions section.**

### Learning outcome

This topic is part of the specification theme ‘rights and responsibilities’ but also introduces learners to aspects of the law, and democracy and government.

By studying this topic, learners will develop their knowledge and understanding of:

* Rights and responsibilities, especially as they apply to issues of representation and power.
* The importance of representation in a democracy.
* The role of the law in defining citizens’ rights.
* The development of trade unions in the United Kingdom.
* The nature and importance of sectional and promotional pressure groups.

Learners can apply their knowledge and understanding from different parts of the specification to the following citizenship questions and issues:

* What is the purpose of trade unions and other pressure groups?
* How effective are trade unions and other pressure groups in supporting the rights, equalities and freedoms of citizens?

Learners have the opportunity to develop the following skills linked to the specification’s assessment objectives:

* Applying knowledge and understanding to different contexts (AO2).
* Analysing information to help develop an understanding of citizenship issues and debates (AO3).
* Advocating a viewpoint using evidence (AO3).
* Evaluating a viewpoint to reach a reasoned conclusion (AO3).

### Introduction

This Topic Exploration Pack highlights the importance of representation in a democracy. While electoral rights are mentioned, the main focus is on citizen representation by trade unions and other pressure groups rather than through political parties – although it will be useful for learners to know the differences between political parties and pressure groups. These ideas may also be developed later in the course as part of the theme ‘democracy and government’.

The pack enables learners to differentiate between sectional pressure groups, such as trade unions, that protect the interests of a closely defined group and promotional pressure groups that advance causes popular with people from a wide range of backgrounds. Examples of promotional groups include: Shelter; Amnesty and the Child Poverty Action Group. Membership of a promotional group is open to any individual who wishes to support the group’s aims while sectional groups seek to represent a particular segment of the population.

Learners have opportunities to consider the advantages of trade union membership, and to recognise the ways in which trade union activity can have negative consequences for individuals and society. Learners are encouraged to analyse and evaluate the impact of trade unions and promotional pressure groups within the wider context of rights, equalities, freedoms and democracy.

Some learners may approach this topic with strong views either supportive of or hostile to trade unions. The material in this topic pack provides opportunities for those views to be articulated, recognised and challenged. Other learners may know little about trade unions or see unions as irrelevant to their future lives. These students may benefit from investigating the work of a trade union or professional association relevant to a possible career choice. Such research can be carried out as part of Activity 3. Trade union members or representatives can be invited to answer learners’ questions or participate in a discussion. This may be particularly useful towards the end of Activity 3 once learners have been able to develop a more rounded understanding of trade unions’ role.

### Section 1: How important is representation in a democracy?

### Teacher introduction

Rights to representation are prerequisites of democratic government. Citizens can be represented through the election of candidates to: parliaments; assemblies; local authorities and other decision making bodies. Citizens can also exert influence in a democracy by forming and joining political parties or associations such as trade unions and other pressure groups or membership organisations.

The concept of ‘representative democracy’ is central to learners’ understanding of government and politics in the United Kingdom.

Rights to representation are enshrined in international law:

* **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, article 21** – *‘Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives’* and article 20, *‘Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association’*. (‘Association’ in this context includes the right to form groups or unions to enhance power and influence.)
* **The European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR), 1950, article 11** – *‘Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests’* and protocol 1, article 3 added in 1952, *‘The High Contracting Parties undertake to hold free elections at reasonable intervals by secret ballot, under conditions which will ensure the free expression of the opinion of the people in the choice of the legislature.’*

and in UK law:

* **The Human Rights Act, 1988**, which adopts the rights to representation specified in the ECHR.
* **Representation of the People Act 1983** which sets out voting rights for UK citizens and detailed rules for the proper conduct of elections.

Learners should understand that:

* rights are guaranteed only because they are specified in international and national law
* a citizen operating alone is likely to have little power and influence
* citizens in ‘association’ are more likely to achieve power and influence.

Distinguish between rights to elect representatives and the more ‘active’ right to form or join a political party or pressure group.

### Activities

Introduce learners to the concept of ‘representative democracy’ and explain that power for citizens depends on their rights to:

* elect representatives to decision making bodies
* form and join political parties and pressure groups, including trade unions, to promote their interests. (Differentiate between political parties and pressure groups.)

Learners will need access to summaries or full copies of:

* The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948. <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>
* The European Convention on Human Rights, 1950 (together with the protocol added in 1952 on human rights and freedoms.) <http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf> or the UK Human Rights Act, 1988 <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/your-rights/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/human-rights-act>
* The Representation of the People Act, 1983, particularly the first section – ‘parliamentary electors’. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1983/2>
* The Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, particularly chapter 1, paragraph 3 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/52/pdfs/ukpga_19920052_en.pdf> (This is a more challenging source but more able learners may find it interesting to scan the whole document to identify some of the legal safeguards to protect trade union members. Chapter 1, paragraph 3, sets out the conditions according to which new trade unions can be registered.)
* Ask learners to identify provisions in national and / or international law that confer rights to association and to the election of representatives. Learners can use [**Resource 1** (page 17)](#_Resource_1:_Rights) to record their findings.
* Discuss with learners the reasons why effective democracy depends on both of the rights below:

1. the rights of citizens to elect representatives regularly
2. the rights of citizens to form and join their own political parties and pressure groups.

### Section 2: How and why have trade unions developed in the UK?

### Teacher introduction

The ‘industrial revolution’ in Britain disrupted patterns of working life unchanged for generations. In 1750 most workers were employed on the land or in jobs related to agriculture. By 1850, the majority lived in rapidly expanding towns and worked in industry.

The disruption to society caused by industrialisation was made worse by war with France (1803-1815) and huge rises in food prices. All this led to workers banding together to campaign for higher wages and better conditions. (At this time most working people did not have the right to vote.) The Government banned such ‘combinations’ fearing that they might lead to a revolution similar to the one in France.

The relaxation of the Combination Acts in 1824 led to a substantial growth in trade unionism but the unions were not given legal protection until the Trade Union Act of 1871. This new law gave workers the rights to support each other’s interests in the workplace and to elect representatives to speak with employers on their behalf.

By 1884, most men (but no women) were given the right to vote and this prompted the unions to form their own political party (The Labour Party). Their aim was to get workers’ representatives elected to Parliament.

Trade unions continued to increase their membership throughout the 20th century. The unions were increasingly influential, especially when the Labour Party formed a government but by the end of the century, laws were passed to reduce trade union power. This trend has continued and by 2015, the Government was making plans to make it more difficult for unions to organise strike action.

During the late 20th century there was another ‘revolution’ in employment which led to far fewer people working in factories and the majority being employed in technology, services and the public sector. Today’s employees, in contrast to their parents’ and grandparents’ generations, are much more likely to change their jobs or be self-employed. Fewer people work in large businesses and, even if they do, workplaces are smaller and it is more difficult for employees to organise trade union activity. Trade union membership has fallen dramatically and tends to be concentrated in public sector employment such as the health service, transport and education. However, this fall in membership can only partly be explained by structural changes in the economy. Since 1980 it has become less likely for smaller employers to ‘recognise’ trade unions for negotiating purposes unless their employees exert pressure for recognition. While employees have a legal right to join a trade union, employers do not have a legal duty to recognise trade unions. For further details on recent trends in trade union membership refer to the Government’s annual statistical bulletin on trade unions <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/trade-union-statistics-2014> and to Bryson, A. and Blanchflower, D. (2008). The end of trade unionism as we know it? London: London School of Economics, downloadable here: <http://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/cp268.pdf>

View the Trades Union Congress’s very detailed annotated timeline of UK trade union history 1815 – 2000 at <http://unionhistory.info/timeline/timeline.php>

### Activities

Ask learners to construct their own chart showing trade unions’ changing fortunes.

Introduce learners to an appropriate summary of trade union history and encourage further independent research, perhaps using the Trade Union Congress’s history pages <http://www.unionhistory.info/siteinformation.php>

[**Resource 2** (page 18)](#_Resource_2:_Events) includes a selection of information on UK trade unions and a chart which learners can use to organise their information.

### Section 3: How effective are trade unions in supporting the rights, equalities and freedoms of citizens?

### Teacher introduction

Trade unions were set up by groups of employees to protect their rights, and to campaign for fair wages and safe working conditions. Trade union members who have been treated unfairly by their employers, can ask their union for advice and help.

Professional associations aim to safeguard the interests of people engaged in a particular profession. For example, the British Medical Association, promotes doctors’ interests and helps to ensure that people practicing medicine have appropriate qualifications.

Trade unions’ main role is to negotiate with employers over pay and conditions. However, trade union leaders also discuss more general employment and social issues with members of the Government so as to gain better rights for all employees and their families.

If an employer needs to make workers redundant, the appropriate trade unions and professional associations must be consulted by law. This enables representations to be made on behalf of the affected workers and alternatives to job losses to be discussed.

Some trade unions support and donate money to the Labour Party. Many Labour MPs are supported by trade unions. In this way the unions seek to influence national decision making.

During the second half of the 20th century, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) developed a stronger focus on promoting social, political and employment rights both nationally and internationally. By 2016, the TUC was supporting campaigns on such issues as: voting rights for young people; disability rights; support for the unemployed; more affordable housing and further government support for green energy. Trade unions are concerned about the massive decline in their membership and are now trying hard to convince young people that it is worth joining a union. It will be difficult to reverse the trend; in 1981, 50% of UK employees belonged to a union but now just 26.6% do.

The TUC’s website makes a strong case for the relevance of trade unions. Their leaflet ‘the union advantage’ makes a clear and convincing case for union membership: <http://www.strongerunions.org/theunionadvantage/>

Aimed at potential members, ‘the union advantage’ is also very accessible for GCSE students. Claiming that ‘unions make work better and society fairer’, the TUC points to three particular benefits of joining a union:

* You earn more and learn more in your career.
* You and your employer work more effectively and safely.
* You are part of a tradition of social justice in the workplace and the wider community.

Most trade union websites include more specific references to the union’s aims and to membership benefits additional to potential improvements to pay and conditions. Such benefits include such things as: consumer discounts; insurance and personal legal advice. Unite’s website includes a ‘member services’ section that provides a particularly accessible insight into the services and offers available to members <http://www.unitetheunion.org/>

Trade unions have been criticised as selfish, sectional pressure groups that threaten, rather than enhance, citizens’ rights, equalities and freedoms. Five of the most common criticisms are outlined below.

* Members are not always well supported by their unions. Union officials have been accused of preferring to seek convenient compromises with employers rather than fully representing their members’ interests. Firms of solicitors specialise in supporting those who feel that their trade union has provided inappropriate advice and support. <http://www.smithpartnership.co.uk/negligence-claims-against-a-trade-union.aspx>
* Unions in the UK now tend to support workers in well-established areas of employment and rarely represent vulnerable, low paid workers on temporary contracts in such areas as catering, social care, agriculture and call centre work. As ‘sectional pressure groups’, unions represent workers in one sector of employment but tend to ignore the interests of other workers. This point is well argued by David Goodhart in Prospect magazine. (Goodhart, D. 2013.) <http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/features/low-skilled-jobs-trade-unions-david-goodhart>, Goodhart, D. (2013). *Unions are doing a bad job for Britain.* London: Prospect magazine – June 2013.
* Unions will defend their members’ jobs no matter what. In 2016, leader of the GMB Trade union Paul Kenny argued that the UK should replace its aging nuclear submarines and not abandon nuclear weapons as Jeremy Corbyn, Labour Party leader, had been suggesting. One of Kenny’s main arguments was that shipbuilders’ jobs should not be put at risk. Opponents of nuclear weapons saw this as a very selfish and narrow argument. In their view, more important moral arguments apply to the issue of whether the UK should renew its nuclear defence. An interview with Paul Kenny is on <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p03f5y68>
* Jeremy Corbyn tried to placate Kenny by suggesting that new submarines could be built but not supplied with nuclear weapons. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-35337432>
* When a union takes ‘action’ to promote its members’ interests, it is often widely criticised for inconveniencing the general public or even putting lives at risk. Those opposed to the junior doctors’ strike of January 2016 argued that patients’ lives were in danger as a result of the doctors’ walk out. For a comprehensive analysis of this strike see <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/nhs/12005176/Striking-junior-doctors-will-put-lives-at-risk-and-heres-why.html>
* UK unions have been seen as ‘backward’ compared with trade unions in Germany. According to Jum Ratcliffe, Chairman of oil company INEOS, the German unions work with employers to support new business ideas and back increased investment for the benefit for all whereas UK unions are more likely to act as a block to development and change. Ratcliffe calls for unions that are ‘fit for the 21st century’ at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/industry/10899951/Jim-Ratcliffe-we-need-unions-fit-for-the-21st-century.html>

### Activities

1. Start with coverage of the junior doctors’ strike in January 2016. A short TV extract (2 minutes) shows striking doctors speaking for themselves <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GkktxDlGSz8>. (Explain that the British Medical Association [BMA] is the doctors’ professional association and that they had arranged the strike after a breakdown of their talks with the Government over new contracts.)

Ask learners to note the three points doctors give for going on strike and to link these points to rights, freedoms and equalities ([**Resource 3**, page 19](#_Resource_3:_Junior)).

Consider viewpoints against the junior doctors’ strike. Ask learners to note the three points against the strike and to link these points to rights, freedoms and equalities ([**Resource 3**, page 19](#_Resource_3:_Junior)).

Organise a debriefing session on learners’ analysis of the sources and their conclusions about the strike.

* Did it seem necessary?
* Did it seem fair?

1. Use a selection of video and text-based material from the Telegraph’s comprehensive analysis of the strike to enable learners to develop and refine their views. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/nhs/12005176/Striking-junior-doctors-will-put-lives-at-risk-and-heres-why.html> Learners could be divided into groups to develop arguments to support or oppose the strike.
2. Ask learners to carry out independent research on the aftermath of the January 2016 strike to find out:

* whether doctors took further action
* how the differences were resolved
* what the longer-term impacts of the dispute were.

1. Ask students to evaluate the view that trade unions are important in safeguarding citizens’ rights, equalities and freedoms. Use points and materials selected from the Teacher introduction above.

Some of the points and evidence linked to this evaluation present learners with different levels of challenge. One way to support learners is to use a home group / expert group strategy as described below:

* Allocate learners to home groups (maximum of four learners in each group). There should be equal numbers of home groups supporting and opposing the viewpoint that trade unions are important in safeguarding citizens’ rights, equalities and freedoms.
* Give each learner the role of ‘expert’ in one aspect their case supporting or opposing the viewpoint. Learners should join their ‘expert’ group to research, and become experts in, an aspect of their case. Expert groups can be organised according to the chart below.

| **Viewpoint: Unions are important in safeguarding  citizens’ rights, equalities and freedoms** | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Expert group specialism** | | **Resources for the expert group** | **Level of difficulty** |
| **Support** | TUC’s case for joining a trade union | <http://www.strongerunions.org/theunionadvantage/> | | Simple |
| Services provided to members by the Unite union | Member services page of the Unite website  http://www.unitetheunion.org/  or the website of any trade union or professional association relevant to a learner’s career interests | | Medium |
| Public opinion on trade unions | Results of a public opinion poll on trade unions  <https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3236/Trade-Unions-Poll.aspx> | | Medium / High |
| Unions’ relationship with the Labour Party | The website of fourteen trade unions that make donations to the Labour Party  <http://www.unionstogether.org.uk/> | | High |
| **Oppose** | Strikes put the public at risk | <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/nhs/12005176/Striking-junior-doctors-will-put-lives-at-risk-and-heres-why.html> | | Simple |
| Unions don’t always represent their members properly | <http://www.scottishlegal.com/2015/10/01/gmb-trade-union-facing-negligence-action-from-own-members/>  and  <http://www.consumeractiongroup.co.uk/forum/showthread.php?314174-Taking-action-against-Trade-Union> | | Medium |
| UK unions are ‘backward’ in comparison with those in Germany | <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/industry/10899951/Jim-Ratcliffe-we-need-unions-fit-for-the-21st-century.html> | | Medium / high |
| UK unions do not represent some types of employee | <http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/features/low-skilled-jobs-trade-unions-david-goodhart> | | High |

* Experts should rejoin their ‘home groups’ to help construct a group case supporting or opposing the viewpoint. (Make sure each home group has a chairperson and secretary with clear role descriptions.)
* Home groups should present their case using a range of media reflecting learners’ presentational skills.

### Section 4: Evaluating the effectiveness of other membership organisations

### Teacher introduction

Trade unions are ‘sectional’ pressure groups that specialise in representing particular groups of employees. Another type of pressure group promotes viewpoints and policies decided by their founders and members. These are known as ‘promotional’ pressure groups. Members and supporters of promotional pressure have a shared interest in a particular cause but may come from a variety of backgrounds.

Promotional pressure groups take different forms. Some, like the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), are well-established and may even have royal patronage. They are consulted regularly by MPs and parliamentary committees. A major part of their work is to issue information and advice to decision-makers (lobbying). In order to increase their influence and credibility, such groups are keen to recruit and engage new members. These groups are sometimes known as ‘insider’ pressure groups.

Other promotional pressure groups are less well integrated into established decision making processes. Such groups are sometimes known as ‘outsider’ pressure groups. A group may have ‘outsider’ status if it is small or relatively new. Some groups achieve ‘outsider’ status by engaging in direct, disruptive action and sometimes unlawful action to challenge decision-makers. Such groups are likely to have a relatively small membership of activists but may have the potential to call on potential supporters at short notice using social media. Some of these groups may be transient; disbanding and reforming as key members move on or are arrested. An example of such a group is the Animal Liberation Front.

### Activities

1. Ask learners to brainstorm how they might evaluate the influence and effectiveness of promotional pressure groups.

* Record their findings and use these as a basis for designing an evaluation tool. ([**Resource 4** on page 21](#_Resource_4:_Promotional) could be used as a template for the evaluation tool.)
* Relevant evaluation criteria might include the:
* clarity and relevance of the group’s principles and aims (and the extent to which these are reflected by the group’s actions)
* size and engagement of membership (how to join, membership criteria and members’ rights)
* effectiveness and inclusiveness of decision making within the group
* success of current and past campaigns
* extent of their influence on decision-makers in the UK and elsewhere
* effectiveness of their work in promoting rights, equalities and freedoms.

1. Ask learners to choose a promotional pressure group with a sufficiently comprehensive but accessible online profile to enable evaluation.

* Good examples include:
* Amnesty <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/>
* Countryside Alliance <http://www.countryside-alliance.org/>
* National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>
* Vegetarian Society <https://www.vegsoc.org/>

### Suggested answers to worksheet questions for teachers

### Resource 1: Rights to representation for UK citizens

| **International or national law** | **Reference – state the relevant articles, chapters or paragraphs** | **Provisions – what rights are specified?** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948**  [**http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html**](http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html) | Article 20 | Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association |
| Article 21 | Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.  The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures. |
| Article 23 | Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests. |
| **European Convention on Human Rights, 1950 (including the protocol added in 1952 on human rights and freedoms)**  [**http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention\_ENG.pdf**](http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf)  **OR**  **UK Human Rights Act, 1988**  [**http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/your-rights/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/human-rights-act**](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/your-rights/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/human-rights-act) | ECHR Article 11 | Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests |
| EHCR Article 3 of the 1952 protocol | The High Contracting Parties undertake to hold free elections at reasonable intervals by secret ballot, under conditions which will ensure the free expression of the opinion of the people in the choice of the legislature. |
| Human Rights Act, Article 11  Human Rights Act, protocol 1, article 3 | Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.  The High Contracting Parties undertake to hold free elections at reasonable intervals by secret ballot, under conditions which will ensure the free expression of the opinion of the people in the choice of the legislature. |
| **Representation of the People Act, 1983**  [**http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1983/2**](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1983/2) | Part 1 ‘parliamentary electors’ | A person is entitled to vote as an elector at a parliamentary election in any constituency if on the date of the poll he:  (a) is registered in the register of parliamentary electors for that constituency;  (b) is not subject to any legal incapacity to vote (age apart);  (c) is either a Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of the Republic of Ireland; and  (d) is of voting age (that is, 18 years or over). |
| **Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, particularly chapter 1, paragraph 3**  [**http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/52/pdfs/ukpga\_19920052\_en.pdf**](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/52/pdfs/ukpga_19920052_en.pdf) | Chapter 1, paragraph 3 | 3. (1) An organisation of workers, whenever formed, whose name is  not entered in the list of trade unions may apply to the Certification Officer to have its name entered in the list.  (2) The application shall be made in such form and manner as the Certification Officer may require and shall be accompanied by—  (a) a copy of the rules of the organisation,  (b) a list of its officers,  (c) the address of its head or main office, and  (d) the name under which it is or is to be known, and by the prescribed fee.  (3) If the Certification Officer is satisfied—  (a) that the organisation is a trade union,  (b) that subsection (2) has been complied with, and  (c) that entry of the name in the list is not prohibited by subsection (4),  he shall enter the name of the organisation in the list of trade unions. |

### Resource 2: Events

| **Trade unionism in the UK** | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Event** | **Effect on trade unions** | **Increase or decline in influence?** |
| **1803–1815** | Napoleonic wars with France | Trade unions were outlawed as the government was worried about possible revolution in Britain | Decline |
| **1824** | Combination Acts repealed | Trade unions could be established legally but there were still restrictions on what they could do. | Increase |
| **1834** | Tolpuddle ‘martyrs’ deported to Australia | Six farmworkers were found guilty of making an illegal promise to support one another. Massive public demonstrations were held in their support. | Increase |
| **1868** | Trades Union Congress (TUC) formed | The TUC represented the different trade unions and so was more easily able to promote their interests by lobbying parliament | Increase |
| **1871** | Trade Union Act | Increased legal powers for trade unions to represent their members | Increase |
| **1884** | Most men given the right to vote | Made it worthwhile for the trade unions to campaign for the election of their candidates to parliament. | Increase |
| **1888** | The match girls’ strike | Led to huge publicity for the matchgirls’ very poor working conditions and sympathy for their strike | Increase |
| **1889** | London dockworkers’ strike | Helped promote trade unions for unskilled workers | Increase |
| **1926** | General Strike | A strike by a powerful alliance of the miners’, transport and railway workers brought the UK to a standstill. After ten days, the TUC called off the strike fearing violence. | Decrease |
| **1945** | Labour Party forms its first majority government | Trade unions have a greater influence on national decision making | Increase |
| **1970 - 2000** | Decline of large factories | Trade union membership falls as fewer workers are employed in manufacturing | Decline |
| **1970** | Equal Pay Act 1970 | Unequal treatment of women and minority groups was a focus of government legislation during the 1960s and 70s. Trade unions usually supported people in their campaigns for equal treatment | Increase |
| **1979** | National Pensions Convention | Trade unions extend their support for retired people | Increase |
| **1985** | Coal miners’ strike fails after 56 weeks | Showed trade unions as potentially violent and unable to compromise | Decline |
| **1990** | Employment Act | Restricted trade union action. For example, it became illegal for trade unions to strike in support of another union’s dispute | Decline |
| **2015** | Government proposes that strikes will be illegal unless half of a trade union’s members support it | Will make strike action less likely and may reduce trade unions’ ability to put pressure on employers and government | Decline |

### Resource 3: Junior doctors’ strike 2016

| **Points made by doctors for going on strike** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Points** | **Further details to explain the points** | **Links with rights, equalities and freedoms\*** |
| **Contract and pay** | There is no real pay rise in spite of what the Government has said. Doctors are being asked to work over a longer period of time (more days) for a pay cut. | ECHR article 21  UDHR articles 19, 20, 23 and 24 |
| **The National Heath Service (NHS)** | The Government is trying to dismantle how the NHS works and to privatise it. People should have access to a free NHS whenever they need it. |
| **Patient safety** | We need adequately trained and well-rested doctors on the hospital wards throughout the day and across the whole week. This will ensure patient safety. |

| **Points made against the junior doctors’ strike** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Points** | **Further details to explain the points** | **Links with rights, equalities and freedoms\*** |
| **Contract and pay** | The Government wants to increase doctors’ basic pay in return for them working more weekend shifts and without extra payment for working at those times. It is claimed that most doctors will be better off. | UDHR articles 19, 21 and 25 |
| **Mandate to govern** | The Government has responsibility for the NHS. The Government was elected democratically and had promised to make improvements to patient care in hospitals at weekends. It should now be allowed to get on with putting its election promise into operation without interference from the trade unions. |
| **Patient safety** | Although doctors provided ‘emergency cover’, the strike put patients’ lives at risk. Operations have been cancelled and patients will have to wait while their condition may become more serious. |

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Bryson, A. and Blanchflower, D. (2008). *The end of trade unionism as we know it?* London: London School of Economics. <http://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/cp268.pdf>

Goodhart, D. (2013). *Unions are doing a bad job for Britain*. London: Prospect magazine – June 2013 <http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/features/low-skilled-jobs-trade-unions-david-goodhart>

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# Topic Exploration Pack

# Representation and democracy - trade unions and other pressure groups

## Student activity section

### Resource 1: Rights to representation for UK citizens

Complete the chart below to show how international and national law guarantees the rights of UK citizens to:

* elect representatives
* form or join associations to increase their influence with employers and decision-makers.

| **International or national law** | **Reference – state the relevant articles, chapters or paragraphs** | **Provisions – what rights are specified?** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948**  [**http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html**](http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html) |  |  |
| **European Convention on Human Rights, 1950 (including the protocol added in 1952 on human rights and freedoms)**  [**http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention\_ENG.pdf**](http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf)  **OR**  **UK Human Rights Act, 1988**  [**http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/your-rights/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/human-rights-act**](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/your-rights/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/human-rights-act) |  |  |
| **Representation of the People Act, 1983**  [**http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1983/2**](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1983/2) |  |  |
| **Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, particularly chapter 1, paragraph 3**  [**http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/52/pdfs/ukpga\_19920052\_en.pdf**](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/52/pdfs/ukpga_19920052_en.pdf) |  |  |

### Resource 2: Events

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Napoleonic wars with France | Decline of large factories | Labour Party forms its first majority government | Coal miners’ national strike fails after 56 weeks |
| General Strike | Government proposes that strikes will be illegal unless half of a trade union’s members vote in favour | National Pensioners’ Convention formed by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) | London dockworkers strike for six pence an hour |
| Equal Pay Act | Trade Union Act | Combination Acts repealed | Most men given the right to vote |
| Tolpuddle ‘martyrs’ deported to Australia | Trades Union Congress (TUC) formed | Matchgirls’ strike | Employment Act |

Match the events above with the dates on the chart below. For each event, describe its effects on trade unions and indicate whether it led to an increase or decline in the influence of trade unions.

| **Trade unionism in the UK** | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Event** | **Effect on trade unions** | **Increase or decline in influence?** |
| **1803-1815** |  |  |  |
| **1824** |  |  |  |
| **1834** |  |  |  |
| **1868** |  |  |  |
| **1871** |  |  |  |
| **1884** |  |  |  |
| **1888** |  |  |  |
| **1889** |  |  |  |
| **1926** |  |  |  |
| **1945** |  |  |  |
| **1970 - 2000** |  |  |  |
| **1970** |  |  |  |
| **1979** |  |  |  |
| **1985** |  |  |  |
| **1990** |  |  |  |
| **2015** |  |  |  |

### Resource 3: Junior doctors’ strike 2016

| **Points made by doctors for going on strike** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Points** | **Further details to explain the points** | **Links with rights, equalities and freedoms\*** |
| **Contract and pay** |  |  |
| **The National Health Service (NHS)** |  |  |
| **Patient safety** |  |  |

| **Points made against the junior doctors’ strike** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Points** | **Further details to explain the points** | **Links with rights, equalities and freedoms\*** |
| **Contract and pay** |  |  |
| **Mandate to govern** |  |  |
| **Patient safety** |  |  |

### Sources - use with Resource 3

Doctors giving reasons for their strike

1. The Ruptly TV (2 minutes) extract shows striking doctors speaking for themselves <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GkktxDlGSz8>.

Points made against the strike

1. Katherine Murphy, the Patient’s Association

“The problem is that when (patients’) operations are cancelled they aren’t given a new date. This causes uncertainty and distress. They just have to wait. It could be weeks, it could be months. These are cataracts, knee operations, that all have huge impact on quality of life.”

1. Russell Hopkins, former hospital consultant and former chairman of the British Medical Association’s Welsh Council

“The BMA should remember that the Conservatives have a democratic mandate to govern Britain. Reform of the NHS, including weekend working, was a key part of their election-winning manifesto last year.”

1. Jeremy Hunt MP, government minister responsible for the National Health Service (NHS) –

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/nhs/12082044/Junior-doctors-strike-BMA-talks-lasted-an-hour.html>

Rights, equalities and freedoms to consider

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, articles 19, 20, 21, 23, 24 and 25

European Convention on Human Rights, article 11

### Resource 4: Promotional pressure group – evaluation tool

Record criteria for evaluating a promotional pressure group in the first column of the chart below.

Describe your findings in the second column. (Describe what the promotional pressure groups does and how successful it is.)

In the final column, make your recommendations about how the group could extend its influence.

| **Name of promotional pressure group:** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Evaluation criteria** | **Findings** | **Recommendations for improvement** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |