



BRITAIN IN THE 20th CENTURY

A Social Study:



What will this Social Study focus on?



The changing role of women in Britain across the 20th Century

The changing position of Teenagers in Britain across the 20th Century



Education and schooling and how it has changed over the 20th Century

Government Reforms: Poverty, the Welfare State and the creation of the NHS



Migration, Racism, Politics and Riots! How Britain became multicultural



How far have the lives of women in society changed from 1900 - 1939

Aim: To acquire a chronological understanding of how far the lives and roles of women in society have changed in the early 20th Century and the contributing factors.



What is a Social Study?

A study of SOCIETY, everything and everyone in a society and how that society functions together.



Recap:

Create a mind map with as much information as you can remember from our earlier topic on the Suffragettes.

You should include:

- The position of women in society 1900
- Their role at home
- What women wanted
- How they attempted to get it
- Anything else about women in the early 20th Century...

Women in 1900

True or False:

1. Husbands could divorce their wives for adultery, but wives couldn't divorce husbands for adultery

TRUE

2. Women could not study at top universities

FALSE

3. Women could not receive degrees from top universities

TRUE

4. Women weren't allowed to become architects

FALSE

5. A woman invented over-arm bowling in cricket

TRUE

6. Women weren't allowed to become lawyers

TRUE

7. $\frac{1}{4}$ of all working-class women were servants at some point

FALSE [1/3]

8. Women got paid $\frac{1}{2}$ as much (or worse) as men for the same job

TRUE

As we know, most Victorians believed that a woman's role in life was as a wife and mother, even promoted by Queen Victoria herself. A woman's role was to **obey** her husband and do everything she could to make his life as easy as possible. The education that girls received reinforced this view.

Before 1870, most working class girls did not go to school. In 1870 the government set up a new system of state schools in the Education Act. In 1880 school was made compulsory for all children aged 5-10. By 1900, 97% of children could read and write – a massive success...



What are your thoughts on this statement?

Why do we not have this view today, do you think?



Part of our study will be to compare what has CHANGED and what has CONTINUED throughout the period c.1900 - Today



"In every excellent characteristic, whether mental or physical, the average woman is inferior to the average man. Even in physical beauty the man is superior"

Who do you think might have said this?

One of the most respected 19th Century scientists!





“A girl is not necessarily a better woman because she knows the heights of all the mountains in Europe, and can work a fraction in her head; but she is better fitted for the duties she will be called upon to perform if she knows how to wash and tend a child, cook simple food well and thoroughly clean a house”

School inspector 1874

From this source, answer the following questions (with evidence / quotes)

1. What is the inspector's view of a girl's role in society when she leaves school
2. What does this inspector think about girls' education?
3. What does he not think girls should be learning in school?

Most women had to go out to work to support their families. As 1900 began, there were new jobs opening up that women could do.

- Telephone switchboards
- Typists
- Shops

Only the luckiest would get these jobs and they still had to work 80 hours a week. They also had to give up their jobs when they got married and were paid a great deal less than the men in similar jobs!

More common jobs

- Domestic servant
- Textile factories
- Sewing workshops
- Matchboxes workshops
- Candle workshops



Middle and upper-class girls were educated at home by a governess where they too learnt to be a good wife and mother. They were also taught singing, drawing and music - things that would make them interesting to their future husband. Some women were able to go University but many refused to award them their degree; Sophia Jex-Blake completed her course to become a doctor but Edinburgh University refused to give her her degree!

Jobs available to these women: (Women were paid up to ½ less than men for similar jobs)

- Teaching (but had to be single)
- Nursing (had to give up when married)
- Typists and clerical roles

Based on what we've done so far on women, complete this table showing differences and similarities of girls / women from different 'classes' at the start of the 20th Century (1900).

Class	Similar	Different
Working Class		
Middle / Upper class		



Key ideas to think about:

- **Jobs**
- **Education**
- **Role in society**

Marriage by the end of 1800s

When a woman married, her property passed to their husband

Women also, themselves, became the property of their husband

The husband could physically abuse his wife and yet she was unable to get a divorce!



Marriage early 20th Century

After some campaigning at the start of the 20th Century, there had been some improvements

Women, if they could afford it and face the shame, could ask for a divorce for cruelty, desertion and bigamy but they had to **PROVE** it!

Women could keep their own property after they married

A woman no longer had to stay in her husband's home against her will

However...

- Wife-battering and marital assault were still legal
- Husbands could easily divorce their wives
- In a divorce, the woman would lose all rights to her children

Checkpoint:

So, women at the start of the 20th Century were seeking change in society.
Give 2 examples that show this:

What happened in 1914 that brought a catastrophic halt to these protests?

WWI and its impact on women

WWI interrupted the Suffragette Movement, but it has been argued by historians that the war actually changed the view on women more than anything the Suffragettes could have done in protest.

Write 3-5 ideas how WWI might have changed the view of women in society

Copy these roles the women took up during WWI

- Step up and run the family businesses while the men were away at war
- Munitions factories (paid the same as the men but only until they returned)
- Food and clothing factories for the soldiers
- Transport (buses, trams and trains etc)
- Nurses
- Lab technicians
- Dentists
- Agricultural roles (Women's Land Army)
- Government clerical jobs
- Women's Army Auxiliary Corps
(Supporting the troops abroad – (cooking, driving, nursing & mechanics))
- Basically, anything that had a vacancy



Women tar sprayers resurfacing a road

WWI and its impact on women

Write a paragraph arguing why women should be viewed more equally in society following WWI



Government posters encouraging the women to join the 'land army' to provide food for the nation and the soldiers

Women took over the factories making munitions for the war effort



Women police officers, commonly made up from the Suffragettes



Consequences of WWI on the lives of women

- Mother's Day was introduced in 1916 to emphasise the value to the nation of its mothers
- An acceptance that without the women 'stepping up' we wouldn't have coped with WWI
- Women over 30 were given the vote (Feb 1918) (progress but still not equal)
- More social freedom as they had their own wages; Women began going to restaurants, bars and pubs, shortening their hair, smoking and sex!
 - This caused some issues though with the rise of STDs! The government passed Regulation 40D which put a woman in prison if she gave a serviceman an STD, no punishment if it was the other way around!
- Following WW1, the vast majority of women had to give up their jobs when the men returned



Imagine you are a young woman, write a diary with entries from 1905, 1914 and 1918 making it clear how things have changed...

Attitudes were indeed starting to change towards women...

As we go through the following photo album from the 1920s/30s, make a list of ideas you have about the lives and roles of women. We'll have a discussion at the end to see what you think...







WE WANT
AN
EQUAL FRANCHISE
VOTES for WOMEN
FROM 21 YEARS.













What are your impressions of the 1920s and 1930s for women?

How different are they from our knowledge of women in 1900?