

The Representation of the People Act (1918)

On 6 February 1918, a very important law called the **Representation of the People Act** was passed in Britain. This law changed who was allowed to vote in elections and was a huge step toward making the country more equal.

Before 1918, many people were not allowed to vote, especially if they were poor or if they were women. The new Act changed this with these main rules:

- **Men:** All men over the age of **21** could now vote, even if they didn't own property. Also, men who had served in **World War I** could vote from the age of **19**.
- **Women:** For the first time, some women were given the right to vote in national elections. However, they had to be over **30 years old** and meet certain **property rules**, such as owning a home or being married to someone who did. Women who were university graduates could also vote.

This law was important because it **tripled the number of voters** in Britain, growing from 7.7 million to **21.4 million** people. About **8.4 million women** gained the right to vote because of this Act.

Why did the law change?

There were three main reasons why the government finally agreed to let women vote. Each one was just as important as the others.

1. The Work of the Suffragists (NUWSS) The **Suffragists**, led by **Millicent Fawcett**, believed in using **peaceful methods** to win the vote. They wrote letters to politicians, signed petitions, and held meetings to argue their case using logic. Because they followed the law, they showed the government that women were **responsible and sensible** citizens who could be trusted with the vote. Their steady campaigning over many years built a strong foundation of support in Parliament.

2. The Actions of the Suffragettes (WSPU) The **Suffragettes**, led by **Emmeline Pankhurst**, were frustrated that peaceful methods were taking too long. Their motto was "**Deeds, not words**". They used **militant tactics** to get attention, such as smashing windows, chaining themselves to railings, and going on hunger strikes in prison. While these actions were controversial, they were vital because they **raised the profile** of the cause. They made it impossible for the government to ignore the issue of women's rights.

3. Women's Work in World War I When World War I broke out in 1914, millions of men went away to fight. Around **five million women** stepped in to do "men's jobs" to keep the country running. They worked in **munitions factories** making weapons, joined the **Land Army** to grow food on farms, and worked as police officers and bus drivers. This war work was a massive turning point because it **proved that women were just as capable as men**. The government admitted that the Act was a way to recognise the incredible **contribution** women had made to winning the war.

In conclusion, the 1918 Act was a major victory for democracy. It happened because of a "perfect storm" of factors: the **Suffragists** proved women were ready, the **Suffragettes** made sure everyone was listening, and **World War I** proved that women were essential to the nation. While women didn't get full equality until **1928**, this Act was the moment the door to equality finally opened.

Answer the following questions in full sentences

1. In which year did the representation of the people act become law?
2. Under the terms of the representation of the people act, on what conditions were men allowed to vote?
3. Under the terms of the representation of the people act, on what conditions were women allowed to vote?
4. In what ways was the Representation of the People Act progress towards the goal of equality?
5. In what ways did the Representation of the People act fall short of the goal of equality?
6. Historians agree that there were three main causes of the Representation of the People act; what were they?
7. What do you think the main reason for this change to the franchise was, and why?
(Give a paragraph with reasons for your opinion)

Task: Answer the following questions using the information on the other side



1. When exactly did Storm Dennis arrive in the UK, and which storm had hit the country just one week earlier?
2. Why did the rain from Storm Dennis cause such immediate and severe problems for the ground?
3. What was the highest wind gust recorded in North Wales during the peak of the storm?
4. Which specific region was issued a Red Warning for rain, and why was this particular warning so significant?
5. Besides South Wales, name three other areas in England that were badly affected by the storm.
6. How many homes and businesses were flooded across the country?
7. Which two major rivers reached the highest water levels ever recorded in their history?
8. How many landslides were triggered by the heavy rainfall, and where was one of the most dramatic ones filmed?
9. Give three different examples of how travel was disrupted for people trying to move around the UK or go on holiday.
10. What specific financial support did the government offer to homeowners to help them protect their properties from future flooding?
11. "Storm Dennis arrived just one week after Storm Ciara. Why do you think having two massive storms hit so close together made the situation so much harder for both the environment and the people living there?"

Storm Dennis



Storm Dennis was one of the most powerful and destructive storms to ever hit the UK. It arrived in **mid-February 2020**, just one week after the country had been battered by Storm Ciara. Because the ground was already soaked from the previous storm, the massive amount of rain brought by Storm Dennis caused immediate and severe problems.

The storm was described as a "**bomb cyclone**" because it underwent "explosive cyclogenesis". This happens when the central pressure of a storm drops very quickly—in this case, it fell by **84 millibars in just 54 hours**, making it one of the most intense North Atlantic storms on record. At its peak, the storm produced a wind gust of **91 mph** in North Wales.

Where did it hit?

The entire UK felt the effects of the storm, but some areas were hit much harder than others. The **Met Office issued a Red Warning**—the highest level, meaning a "danger to life"—for parts of **South Wales**. This was the first red warning for rain issued in the UK since 2015. Other badly affected areas included **Herefordshire, Worcestershire, and Shropshire** in the English Midlands, as well as parts of **Northern England** like Yorkshire and Lancashire.

What were the impacts?

The impacts of Storm Dennis were widespread and affected people's lives, the environment, and the economy:

- **Flooding:** Over **1,400 homes and businesses** were flooded. Major rivers like the **Wye and Severn** reached their highest levels ever recorded. In some places, a whole month's worth of rain fell in just 24 hours.
- **Landslides:** The heavy rain made the ground unstable, triggering **32 landslides** across the country. A dramatic landslide was filmed tearing down a mountain in **Tylorstown**, South Wales.
- **Travel Chaos:** More than **170 flights** were cancelled, affecting 25,000 passengers, and **19 different train companies** had to stop or delay services. Major bridges, like the Forth and Tay road bridges in Scotland, were closed to traffic.
- **Loss of Life:** Sadly, at least **five people lost their lives** due to the extreme weather conditions.

What help was provided?

As the storm hit, a massive rescue and recovery effort began. The **British Army** was deployed to help the Environment Agency build flood defences and protect communities in places like West Yorkshire. Emergency "rest centres" were set up for people who had to be evacuated from their homes.

The UK government activated the **Bellwin Scheme** to help local councils pay for the immediate costs of the clean-up. They also set up a **Flood Recovery Framework**, which provided hardship payments and **grants of up to £5,000** for homeowners and businesses to help them protect their properties from future floods. In the long term, the government promised to invest billions of pounds into better flood defences across the country.