



The National Archives  
Education Service

## Lawmakers or law-breakers?

Preparation materials for  
videoconference/virtual  
classroom (KS3)

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## Teacher's notes

This pack of documents and transcripts will allow you to prepare your students for the videoconference/virtual classroom session. It is vital that all students complete the preparatory work beforehand, so that they are fully prepared for the session.

This session helps to develop students' knowledge and understanding of campaigning methods used by the Suffragettes, the reasoning behind this militant action, and the impact it had on the campaign for women's suffrage.

### Preparation activity

Teachers should divide their class into two, with half of the class assuming the roles of journalists writing for a newspaper that supports women's suffrage, and the other half writing for a newspaper that supports the government. It is 1914 and your students are journalists attending a press conference given by Prime Minister Asquith and Mary Tranter, a Suffragette. They are here to interview both personalities in order to write an article on the controversial issue of women's suffrage. Students are welcome to 'dress up' for their roles!

Give students a copy of the document pack and worksheet. Ask them to use the worksheet to support their study of the documents. They will then need to record four potential questions that they would like to ask during the press conference. This work will help to form the basis of the session. Towards the end of the press conference, a bell will be rung to signal the final few minutes of the session.

Teachers will need to organise a running order of journalists ready to speak, ensuring that questions cover each of the four key issues listed in the preparation pack. Due to time constraints, not every student will have the opportunity to question Asquith and the Suffragette.

### Background information

In 1908, Henry Herbert Asquith became Prime Minister of the Liberal Government. He was strongly opposed to women's suffrage, and headed up a government largely unsympathetic to the Suffragette cause.

In response, the Suffragettes became increasingly militant, adopting a policy of window breaking from 1909 and frequently choosing prison sentences instead of paying fines. Demands to be treated as political offenders as opposed to criminals followed suit, and protest in the form of hunger striking was introduced.

In January 1910, the Liberals had been re-elected, but with a much smaller majority. Asquith had declared that if the Liberals were returned to power, women with property would get the franchise. As a result, the Conciliation Bill was drawn up. With a second General Election set for November, the plan was abandoned. On 18 November 1910, 300 women went to Parliament to protest, in a day of events that became known as 'Black Friday'. Women were brutally beaten by police at the order of the government.

The events of Black Friday are seen as a turning point in the campaign for women's suffrage; The Suffragettes were referred to as an 'army', the women who made up their ranks were named as 'warriors'.

## Teacher's notes

Documents used in this session have been found among Home Office files, Cabinet Papers, Prison Commission files and Metropolitan Police Reports, all of which provide a wonderful insight into the increased militancy of the Suffragette movement and the government's attempts to control it.

NB In many of these files, militant campaigners are often referred to as 'Suffragists' and 'Suffragettes'. This militant action should not be confused with the actions of the NUWSS who favoured peaceful protest.

### Useful links

Power, Politics and Protest:

[nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/politics/default.htm](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/politics/default.htm)

Britain 1906–1918:

[nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/britain1906to1918/default.htm](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/britain1906to1918/default.htm)

Archive news reel footage relating to Suffragettes:

[nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/focuson/film/film-archive/archive.asp?catID=2&subCatID=2](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/focuson/film/film-archive/archive.asp?catID=2&subCatID=2)

Britain 1906–1918: Contrast, Contradiction and Change:

[nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/britain1906to1918/default.htm](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/britain1906to1918/default.htm)

## Worksheet: lawmakers or law-breakers?

### Supporting the Suffragettes

You are journalists writing for a newspaper that supports the Suffragette cause.

In your groups, look through your document pack and write a caption for each document. This will need to reflect your newspaper's views on women's suffrage.

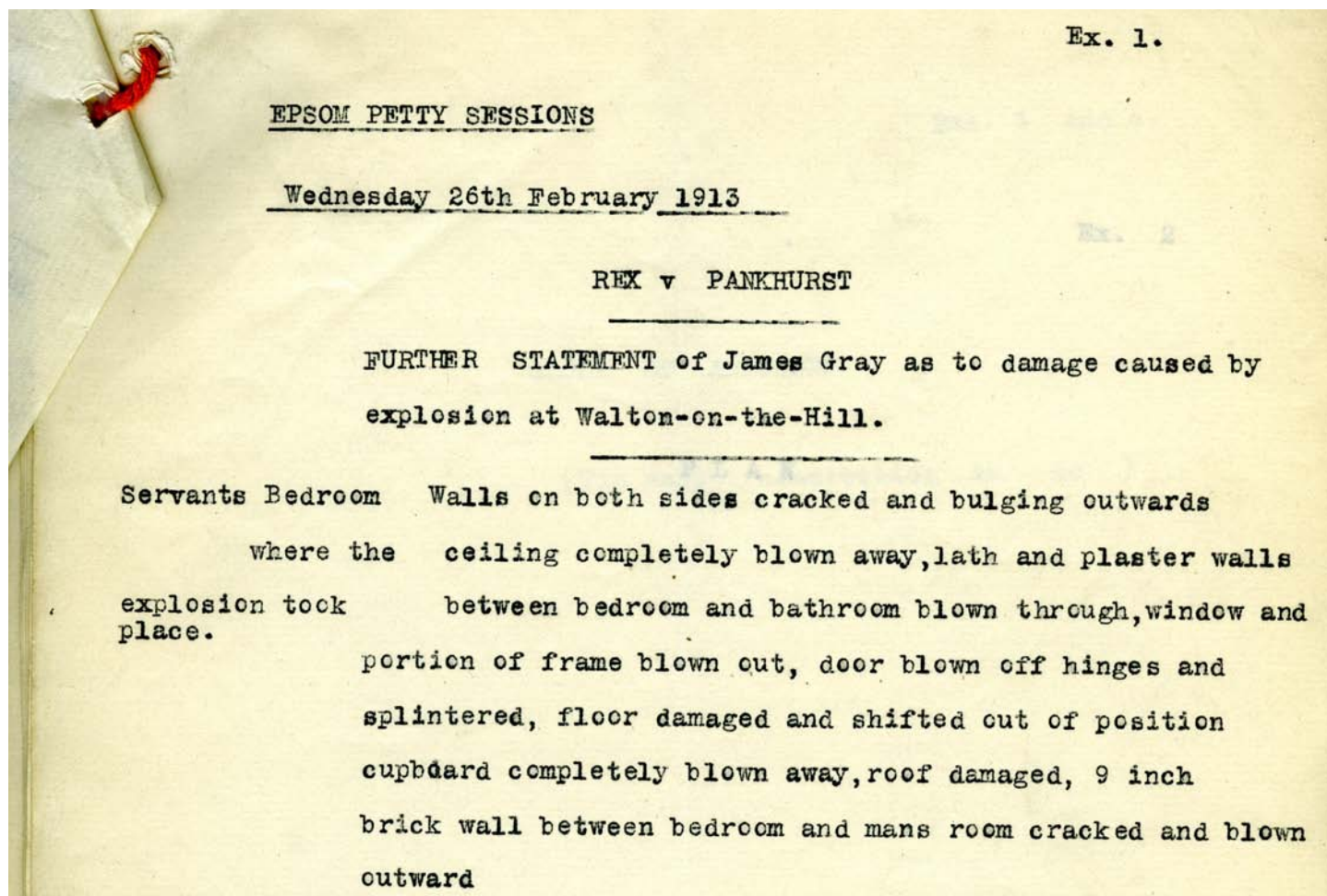
For example, a newspaper supporting the Suffragette cause might write about the document (right):

*This Suffragette shows incredible courage when force-fed. Put a stop to this torture – give women the vote!*



## Document: CRIM 1/139/2

Statement from James Gray at Epsom Petty Sessions, regarding damage caused by explosion at Walton-on-the-Hill, 26 February 1913.



### Transcript: CRIM 1/139/2

EPSOM PETTY SESSIONS

Wednesday 26th February 1913

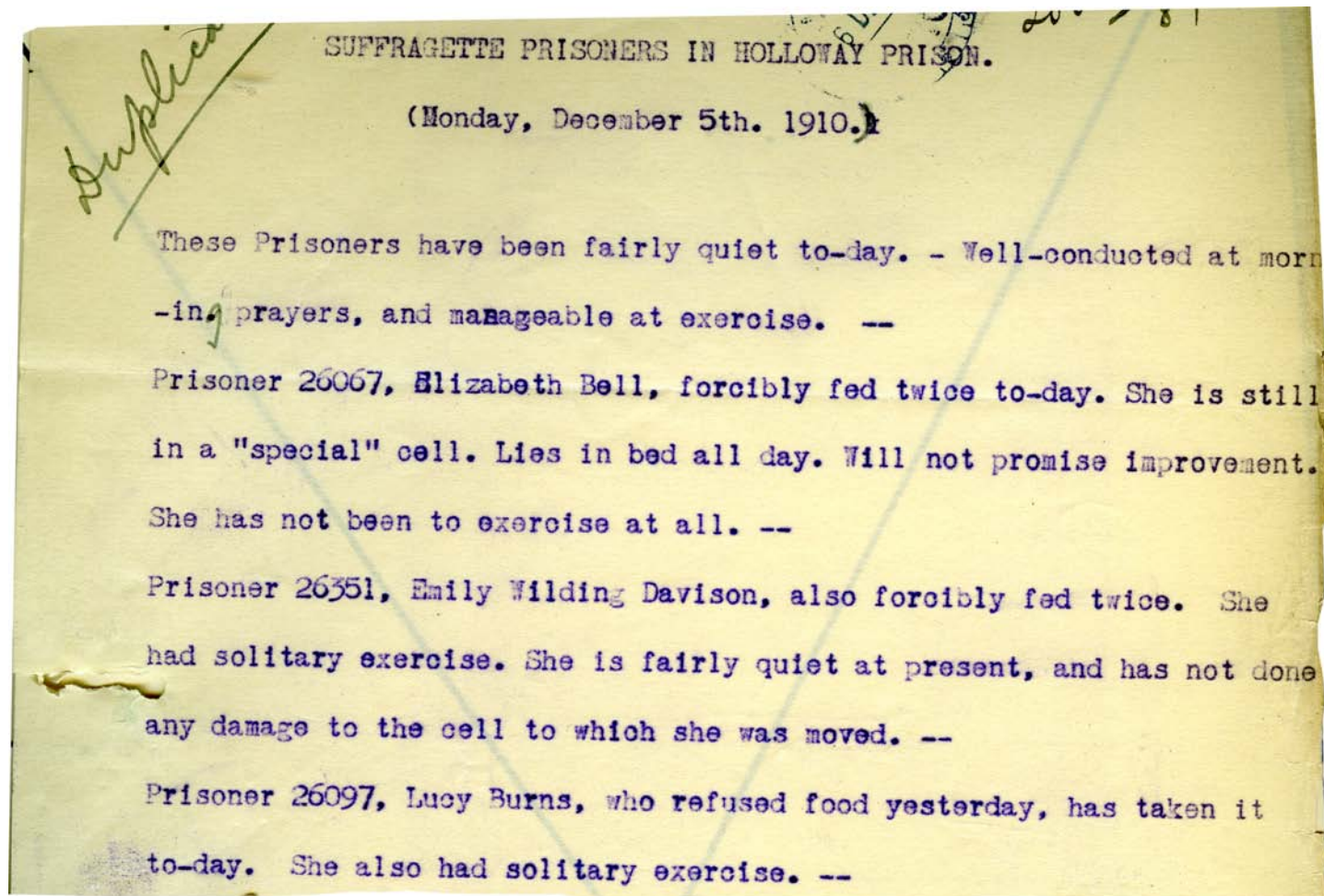
REX v PANKHURST

FURTHER STATEMENT of James Gray as to damage caused by  
explosion at Walton-on-the-Hill

<p>Servants Bedroom where the explosion took place.</p>	<p>Walls on both sides cracked and bulging outwards ceiling completely blown away, lath and plaster walls between bedroom and bathroom blown through, window and portion of frame blown out, door blown off hinges and splintered, floor damaged and shifted out of position cupboard completely blown away, roof damaged, 9 inch brick wall between bedroom and mans room cracked and blown outward</p>
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## Document: HO 45/10338/13919

Daily report on Suffragette prisoners in Holloway Prison, 5 December 1910.



### Transcript: HO 45/ 10338/13919

SUFFRAGETTE PRISONERS IN HOLLOWAY PRISON  
(Monday, December 5th, 1910)

These Prisoners have been fairly quiet today. Well conducted at morning prayers, and manageable at exercises. --

Prisoner 26067, Elizabeth Bell, forcibly fed twice to-day. She is still in a "special" cell. Lies in bed all day. Will not promise improvement. She has not been to exercise at all. --

Prisoner 26351, Emily Wilding Davison, also forcibly fed twice. She had solitary exercise. She is fairly quiet at present, and has not done any damage to the cell in which she was moved. --

Prisoner 26097, Lucy Burns, who refused food yesterday, has taken it today. She also had solitary exercise. --

## Document: HO 144/1107/2006

List of Suffragettes arrested for various offences, 1910.

At 2.30.a.m., 23rd instant, the following were arrested at  
Downing Street for Wilful Damage at the residences of No's 10 & 11  
Downing Street. -

---

Name.	Offence.	Result.
Sanders Beatrice.	Wilful Damage.	£5 & 3/6 or 1 mth.
Kelly Anna.	"	£5 & 1/- or 1 mth.
Cousins Margaret.	"	"
Allen Margaret.	"	"
Jones Winifred.	"	£5 & 3/6 or 1 mth.

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# Document: HO 144/1255/234788

Daily Report on Lillian Lenton, 14 October 1913.

In 33412  
515 AR

Halloway Prison.  
14.10.1913

PRISON COMMISSION  
15 OCT. 1913

Daily Report on

1824 Lillian Lenton

(1) What is the physical and mental condition of the prisoner?  
*Refuses examination*

(2) Is the prisoner taking food voluntarily? *No*

(3) If not, is the prisoner refusing both (a) food (b) water, and what sorts of food have been offered to the prisoner with a view to inducing a different attitude?  
*(a) & (b) Yes; various appetising foods*

(4) General Conduct? *Indifferent.*

(5) General Remarks in the case of a prisoner refusing food, particularly as to the physical effect of the refusal, and the length of time that it can be continued without serious risk. Also, whether the prisoner could, if necessary, be fed forcibly?  
*Refuses to answer questions about herself. Does not appear appreciably weaker. No report symptoms of any kind but as he has had practically no food since Tuesday last & no water since Friday, the question of his release must shortly arise.*

*Allan Pearson* Medical Officer.

# Transcript: HO 144/1255/234788

*Daily Report on Lillian Lenton, 14 October 1913.*

Holloway Prison

14.10.1913

Daily Report on  
1824 Lillian Lenton

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Indifferent

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No urgent symptoms of any kind but as she has had practically no food since Tuesday last and no water since Friday the question of her release must shortly arise.

Allan C Pearson Medical Officer

# Document: COPY 1/264/201

Proposed advert for Bovril.



**Transcript: HO 144/1107/2006**

Bovril for Strength

Before taking Bovril I was easily arrested by one policeman, but since taking it six, at least...

## Document: COPY 1/286/362

*Image of a Suffragette being force-fed.*



**Transcript: COPY 1/286/362**

Votes for Women

## Document: COPY 1/551/264

*Photograph taken outside Parliament on 18 November 1910.*

