

# THE 1866 SUFFRAGE PETITION IN LONDON

Although in small numbers, women from all areas of the country signed the 1866 suffrage petition. Out of approximately 1,500 women who signed, 424 were from London.

In November 1865 a group of women in London who called themselves The Kensington Society met to discuss the following subject:

*Is the extension of the Parliamentary suffrage to women desirable, and if so, under what conditions?*

It was this discussion that prompted the Kensington Society women to start the 1866 petition which subsequently sparked the long campaign for women to have the right to vote.

## THE SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT IN LONDON

As the political heart of the country, London became the focal point of the suffrage movement. Women from all over the United Kingdom would visit London to attend suffrage marches and demonstrations. Some of the most iconic moments in the history of women's suffrage occurred on the streets of London.



**ACTIVITY 1**

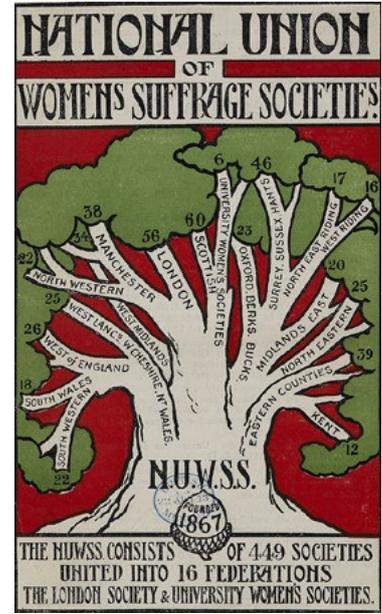
Use the sources and your own knowledge to answer the questions.

**Source 1**

A poster from 1913 promoting the suffragist campaign groups: The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.

**Q: Analyse the suffragist poster and describe three things it suggests about the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



**Source 2**

Photograph of a suffrage procession in London in 1911.

**Q: Looking at the photograph, what can you infer about suffrage processions at the time?**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



**Source 2**

Photograph showing suffragette leader Emmeline Pankhurst being arrested outside Buckingham Palace in 1914.

**Q: How do you think the arrests of prominent suffragettes would have impacted public opinion about the women's suffrage cause?**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_




**ACTIVITY 2**

**Louisa Drewry was one of the women from London who signed the petition in 1866. Using the information about her and the prompts provided, write a speech from the perspective of Louisa in 1910, persuading women in London to campaign for the right to vote.**

**Biography of Louisa Drewry (1835-1916), London – 1866 suffrage petition signee**

Louisa was born in 1835 in London and together with her sister, Ellen, she committed much of her life to campaigning for gender equality.

Louisa worked as a private tutor specialising in a wide variety of subjects including Greek, Latin, History, English Literature and Science. The education of adults was a key part of Louisa's life both as a private tutor and as a teacher at the Working Women's College in Bloomsbury.

In the 1860s, the Working Women's College was established after efforts failed to allow women to enter the already established Working Men's College. The Working Men's College was designed to open education up to men who might not have had access to education previously. The Working Women's College, established by another 1866 petition signee, Elizabeth Malleon, had a similar goal in mind for women.

Unfortunately, Louisa died in 1916, just two years before the Representation of the People Act was passed. This Act of Parliament gave the vote for the first time to women who were over the age of 30 and met the minimum property qualifications.

**From my experience as a tutor there are many women across London who are keen to learn but don't have the means to do so. Allowing these women to study at the college would...**




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**I urge you to consider the arguments I have made today. This is not a political issue, it is a moral issue. Consider how you would feel if....**




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**Thank you for listening**

### List of sources

**Source 1** – National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies Poster showing the reach of its organisation across the country – Image courtesy of the London School of Economics.

**Source 2** – A suffrage procession, London, 1911 – Image courtesy of the London School of Economics.

**Source 3** – Emmeline Pankhurst arrested outside Buckingham Palace, 1914 – © Imperial War Museum [www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205022259](http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205022259)