

## **The Life and Legacy of Sir Winston Churchill**

### **What did Churchill do for the British people in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century?**

#### **Guidance notes and Lesson Plan**

##### **Lesson Objectives**

- To understand the position of ordinary people in Britain in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century
- To assess the impact of Churchill on Social Policy during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century

##### **Introduction**

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Britain was in a state of flux. Following the industrial revolution, a period of change in which the population had grown rapidly and moved from rural to urban centres with living conditions and standards low and representation minimal, the British people were demanding changes. Workers were not satisfied with their pay and conditions and were unionising and demanding better treatment. Women were demanding the vote, having never been able to participate in national elections. People wanted their government to represent them and their interests more than ever before and the government was beginning to accept the need to look after the work force in ways not yet seen in this country. This was also the period in which Sir Winston Churchill entered politics and began to make waves in government. In this lesson students will explore what life in Britain was like for ordinary people at the turn of the century, and assess a range of ways in which Churchill, through his government positions, would impact the everyday lives of the public. They will identify ways in which Churchill and the policies he supported or stood against affected the British public, and their responses to his and the government's actions.

This lesson gives students an opportunity to take a deep dive into one aspect of Churchill's legacy, that of his impact on social policy, in order to broaden their understanding of his politics, but moreover to understand the struggles of the British people in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Students may also recognise some of the issues people faced over a century ago and identify similar issues in present day society.

## Key Information

This lesson is designed for students aged 12 and above. It is devised for History classes.

Timings are suggested on the basis of a one hour lesson, and may need adapting based on circumstances.

Prior knowledge is not needed. However, recognising that students may arrive with knowledge, ideas and preconceptions is embraced and should be utilised to explore and resolve misconceptions.

This lesson can be taught in isolation as a study of Churchill and early 20<sup>th</sup> century social policy, but it's recommended that this follow the first two lessons of the Churchill Scheme of Work. Utilising the prior learning and understanding of Churchill and British history gained from these lessons will assist student understanding and enable them to reach more nuanced judgements.

## Resources:

- Guidance Notes and Lesson Plan
- PowerPoint
- [Film on Britain in the 19th Century](#)
- Britain in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century handout
  - Slide 4
- Case study packs and handout
  - To be printed from Slides 6-9

## Lesson Plan

### Starter: Britain in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century (10 minutes)

Having written the lesson title (Slide 1) and explained that this lesson will give the students' knowledge on a specific area of Churchill's life and work, (Slide 2) invite students to watch the first film clip '[Britain in in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century](#)' (Slide 3). As they watch students should add details to the prompts on their handout to build a picture of life in Britain at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Having watched the film, give students a minute to discuss their findings and be ready to discuss what it suggests about life in Britain at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century,

using the handout to guide questioning (you may want to add notes to the slide on the board). To summarise, ask students how they might characterise Britain at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Students should recognise that whilst Britain was a wealthy and important global power, with the might of its empire, industry and naval force, for normal people life was a struggle and there was growing tension on the domestic front related to living standards, public health, voting and workers rights.

### **Activity: Case study research. Home | Expert (35 minutes)**

Having watched the film and discussed how Britain was changing, introduce this activity by drawing students' thoughts back to Churchill and explain that they will now assess his role in public life in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Explain that, as a member of the Government, Churchill had responsibilities which meant he could impact the lives of ordinary people. This activity will give students an opportunity to assess what Churchill did, and how it affected peoples lives. Outline the three areas that they will look at: Social Reforms, Women's Suffrage, and Workers' Rights (Slide 6).

Organise students into three groups and provide each group with one set of case studies.

- Group A – Social Reforms
- Group B – Women's Suffrage
- Group C – Industrial Action

Explain to the students that they will look at each pack and have approximately 10 minutes to read, analyse and complete a note taking sheet for each case study. Once they have completed their case study in their 'home' group they will select a member of the group to be the 'expert' to exchange their learning with two other groups in carousel. (Expert A to Group B, Expert B to Group C, Expert C to Group A and so on). Give students 5 minutes to exchange learning and complete the relevant summary sheets, then the 'experts' move to the next group.

Once students have exchanged notes on each case study, bring the group together as a whole class to hold a discussion summarising the key points from each case study (Slide 11). Give particular focus to the question of what each case suggests about life in Britain in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century using follow-up questions such as:

- What do the case studies tell us about public attitudes and values at the time?

- What do the case studies tell us about Churchill and the government's actions?
  - Were Churchill's responses always consistent?
  - Were they always popular?

### Plenary (15 minutes)

Bring the class together to hold a final discussion (Slide 12). Ask students to discuss How Churchill shaped modern Britain in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. They should consider:

- What do the case studies tell us about Britain in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century?
  - Draw out from students that Britain was in a time of change, with more people seeking participation in how the country is run and greater rights for workers. Encourage students to use the different case studies they've looked at to evidence their views and give support to their ideas.
- What did Churchill do for the British people in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century?
  - In addressing the second question it is important to draw out the different responses to different issues, and also the way Churchill's apparent views and actions did not always seem to agree with one another. Use this to help unpack how political decisions are not simply made in isolation or individually. Churchill was accountable to a Prime Minister, a Political Party, the voting public, his conscience, and his loved ones. Moreover, Churchill could not act entirely alone as he was part of a government. With this in mind, students may wish to challenge the question or rephrase it to focus on government responses rather than just Churchill. Do encourage this critical engagement.

Finally, in reaching a judgement, encourage reasoned conclusions, weighing the evidence and drawing complex judgements which don't have to be entirely positive or entirely negative.

As a final question, ask students to consider how far these issues are still present in society today with the question: Can you connect the examples and themes we have looked at in this lesson to the present day?

You might want to prompt with supplementary questions related to workers' rights and strike action that they are aware of, or how far women have achieved equality in British society. Use this discussion to help students recognise the ongoing nature of these issues, and that what they have studied in this lesson are issues that have not been resolved fully, and that this demonstrates how social change often takes generations to achieve and is an ongoing

process. Remind students that the last lesson of the unit will be focussed on how the history they have learned is connected to the present day, and they will be able to return to these questions then.