Citizenship

How can we improve democracy in the UK?

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What is democracy?

Recap of some key points:

- Democracy is a system of government in which power is given to citizens (people). 'Rule by the people'.

- A healthy democracy has: free and fair elections; more than one political party; encourages the active participation of citizens; protects human rights; has a separation of powers; and the rule of law.

- Democracy is not static and evolves (changes) over time.

What are the different ways to improve democracy?

1. Representation

How:

through electing House of Lords members.
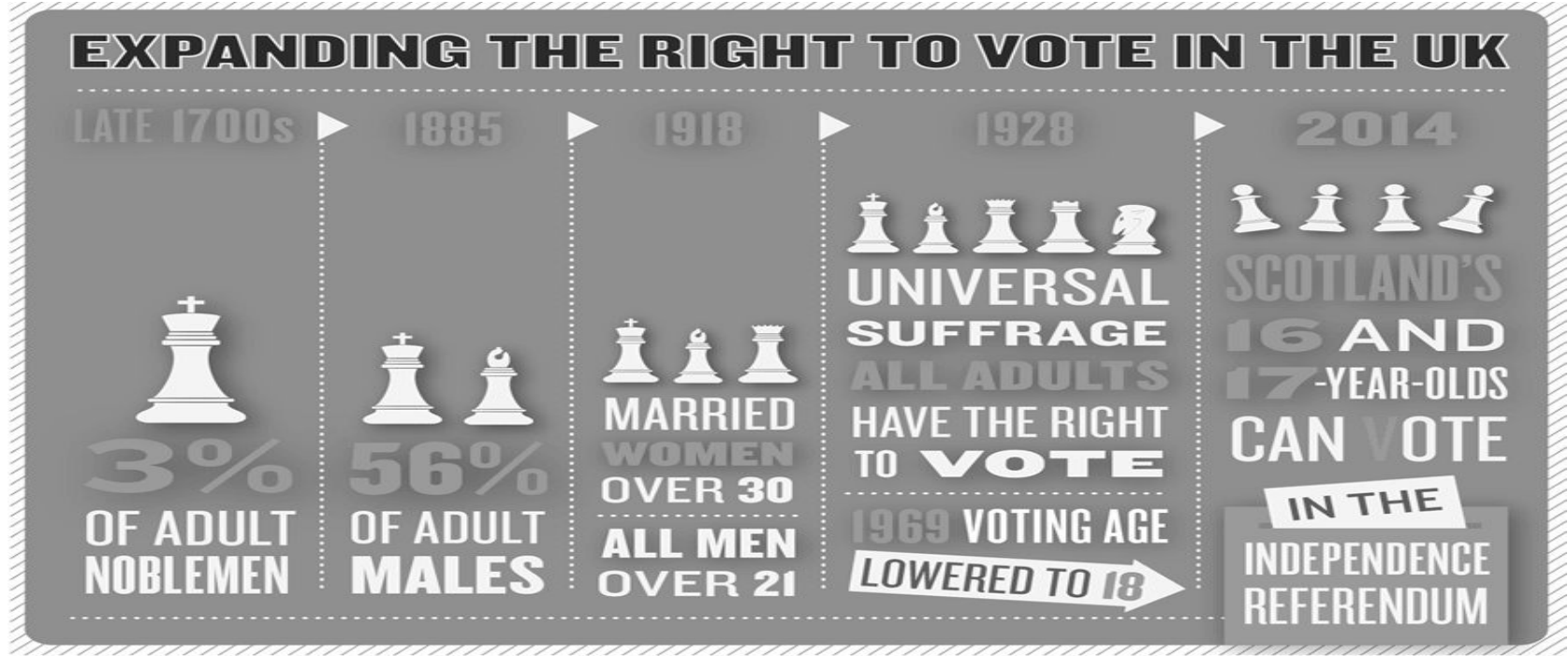
2. Participation

How:
lowering the voting age, or making voting compulsory.

3. Electoral reform

How:
using proportional representation voting system and/or increasing the use of referendums.

Source: Image from The Day

What is this image showing?
How might this link to today's lesson?
What can we learn from this image?

Task 2: Should the voting age be lowered? For or Against

Voting at 16 would match other aspects of citizenship available at that age. 16-year-olds can marry, join the armed forces and consent to medical treatment.	16 is too young; most are in full-time education and living with their parents. Parents, teachers or college lecturers may easily influence them.	People legally become adults at 18. Many of the things that 16-year-olds can do are still restricted, for example; they can join the armed forces but not in frontline service and only with the permission of their parents.
Young people may well have a better knowledge of issues than some older people as they are more likely to have studied citizenship.	Young voters are less likely to vote than any other age group, and this will result in a decline in turnout.	The needs, views, concerns and interest of 16-17-year-olds are somewhat marginalised. A wide range of political decisions affects them, such as university fees and public transport. Politicians would be more likely to act on these if young people could vote.

Task 3: Comprehension Questions

Instruction

- Answer the two questions to check what you have learnt from today's lesson.
- Ensure you use the question at the start of your sentence.

Questions:

- **Should the voting age be lowered?**

Some would argue that the voting age should/should not be lowered… this is because…. For example…

- **How might lowering the voting age improve democracy?**

Lowering the voting age can improve democracy because…. For example…

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