

Title: The history of equal pay in the UK

Description

This lesson enables learners to understand the context in which events in the UK and around the world paved the way for equal pay legislation in the UK, in addition to defining what equal pay is. Students will also explore what constitutes "work of equal value" in UK law.

Age

14-18 (KS4+)

Aims:

By the end of this lesson learners will:

- Be able to outline the history of equal pay legislation in the UK
- Be able to identify key events which prompted a change in attitudes
- Be able to define the UK's legal understanding of equal pay and equal pay for work of equal value

Curriculum links

England

Learning objectives (secondary)

Citizenship | KS4 | human rights and international law

Citizenship | KS4 | the different ways in which a citizen can contribute to the improvement of their community, to include the opportunity to participate actively in community volunteering, as well as other forms of responsible activity

Citizenship | GCSE | Edexcel Paper 2, Theme D: Power and Influence (Media, The UK's role in the rest of the world, Rights and responsibilities in challenging global situations)

Citizenship | GCSE | OCR: Rights and Responsibilities (1.1);

Citizenship | A Level | Unit 4: Global Issues and Making a Difference (Human rights; Conflict and its resolution).

SMSC - Spiritual | | ability to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, that inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people's faiths, feelings and values

SMSC - Spiritual | | sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them

SMSC - Moral | | interest in investigating and offering reasoned views about moral and ethical issues and ability to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others on these issues.'

SMSC - Moral | | ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong and to readily apply this understanding in their own lives, recognise legal boundaries....

History | KS4 | engage in historical enquiry to develop as independent learners and as critical and reflective thinkers

History | KS4 | develop the ability to ask relevant questions about the past, to investigate issues critically and to make valid historical claims by using a range of sources in their historical context

History | KS4 | recognise that the discipline of history and a knowledge and understanding of the past helps them to understand their own identity and significant aspects of the world in which they live, and provides them with the basis for further wider learning and study.

History | KS4 | knowledge and understanding of the chronology, key features, individuals, events, developments and issues in the specified content

History | KS4 | understanding of the historical concepts of continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity and difference, and significance by making connections, drawing contrasts, analysing trends and framing historical questions

History | KS4 | the ability to create their own structured accounts, including written narratives, descriptions and analyses.

English Language | KS4/GCSE | OCR: Spoken Language Endorsement (03/04); Communicating Information and Ideas (01); Exploring Effects and Impact (02

Scotland

Outcome summary

Literacy | Listening and Talking: | LIT 4-04aAs I listen or watch, I can clearly state the purpose and main concerns of a text and make inferences from key statements;

Literacy | Listening and Talking: | LIT 4-04aAs I listen or watch, I can gather, link and use information from different sources and use this for different purposes.

Literacy | Listening and Talking: | LIT 4-09aWhen listening and talking with others for different purposes, I can:communicate detailed information, ideas or opinions;

Health and wellbeing | | HWB 0-09a / HWB 1-09a / HWB 2-09a / HWB 3-09a / HWB 4-09aAs I explore the rights to which I and others are entitled, I am able to exercise these rights appropriately and accept the responsibilities that go with them. I show respect for the rights of others.

Health and wellbeing | | HWB 0-13a / HWB 1-13a / HWB 2-13a / HWB 3-13a / HWB 4-13aThrough contributing my views, time and talents, I play a part in bringing about positive change in my school and wider community.

Religious and moral education | | RME 4-09bI am able to apply my understanding of a range of moral viewpoints, including those which are independent of religion, to specific moral issues and am aware of the diversity of moral viewpoints held in modern Scotland and the wider world.

Social Studies | broaden my understanding of the world by learning about human activities and achievements in the past and present.

Social Studies | develop my understanding of my own values, beliefs and cultures and those of others.

Social Studies | | SOC 3-01aI can use my knowledge of a historical period to interpret the evidence and present an informed view.

Social Studies | | SOC 4-04aBy studying groups in past societies who experienced inequality, I can explain the reasons for the inequality and evaluate how groups or individuals addressed it.

Social Studies | | SOC 4-06aHaving critically analysed a significant historical event, I can assess the relative importance of factors contributing to the event.

Social Studies | | SOC 4-17aI can critically analyse the relative importance of the contribution of individuals or groups in bringing about change in a significant political event.

Wales

Learning outcome

Welsh Baccalaureate | KS4 | Participation in a Global Challenge · Identify, consider and form a personal opinion on a global issue, e.g. equality

PSE | | Active citizenship

PSE | | Sustainable development and global citizenship

Resources

- [Slideshow](#) (plus access to the internet to show embedded videos)
- Access to approximately 6 tablets/devices connected to the internet, for group research
- Cut out [paper slips](#) with different jobs

LESSON STEPS

Starter/stimulus/warm-up (10 minutes)

Show the first slide - **ask** learners to take a few minutes filling in the [short survey](#) to test their knowledge on a range of issues relating to gender pay.

Show the next slide, which asks the learners if they believe that the scenario outlined is fair. Expect learners to suggest that it wouldn't be fair but that this doesn't regularly happen - **ask** the learners to put their hands up if they think women and men in the UK are paid the same for the same work.

Then, **ask** them to discuss with the person next to them what they know about this - is it illegal to pay men and women differently, and has this always been the case?

Ask learners to put their hands up if they think Steph Houghton and Harry Kane (both England football captains) earn the same amount for their roles.

Explain that football is an extreme example, but not the only one.

Ask the learners if they can think of any examples they can think of where men and women are paid differently (or have been paid differently) for the same work (e.g. BBC Broadcasters, film/TV actors)? **Note** that since 2007-08, employment tribunals in England and Wales have received more than 368,000 complaints relating to equal pay, an average of almost 29,000 complaints a year,¹ and that it has been unlawful to pay men and women differently for equal work for over 50 years.

Main activity (20 minutes)

Show slide 6 outlining a basic timeline of events.

Split learners into 6 groups:

1. Industrial revolution (1760-1840)
2. Match Women's Strike (1888)
3. World War I (1914-1918)
4. Equal pay for teachers and civil servants (1955)
5. Dagenham Ford workers' strike (1965)
6. Equal Pay Act (1970)

Groups should use the internet to **research** their event, and discuss what impact the event may have had on women's roles and experiences in the labour market.

After 10 minutes, **run through** the timeline slides, calling on one learner from the relevant group to present an overview of the event and how it impacted on women's role and experiences at work.

Add any additional information on the event not covered by the groups (outlined below), and briefly highlight some of the additional moments in the slides (e.g. Civil Rights Movement, Poplar Council).²

Industrial Revolution (1760-1840)

Work moved out of the home and off the land into factories – this required a greater workforce and women started to enter factories and begin to work alongside men.

Match Women's Strike (1888)

In 1888, 200 girls and women went on a strike to protest exploitative working conditions at Bryant & May Match factory in East London.

¹ The Guardian (2020) [29,000 claims a year despite 50 years since Equal Pay Act](#)

² All information for the timeline taken from: The Equality Trust (2020) [#EqualPay50 Briefing for Campaigners](#)

TUC resolution (1888)

Clementina Black, Chair of the Women's Trade Association, won a resolution at the Trades Union Congress (an umbrella federation of the UK's biggest trade unions) calling for women to be paid at the same rate as men for the same work.

World War 1 (1914-1918)

The involvement of women in the workplace during WWI changed perceptions of the role of women in society. During the war years, women undertook jobs normally carried out by men and proved they could do the work just as well.

An estimated two million women replaced men in employment and even post war many women had to continue to work as a result of their husbands / fathers / brothers being killed in the war. Post war, there was a recognition that society had changed forever and a need for social change.

Poplar Council programme of reform (1919)

Despite some progressive change in attitudes towards women in work, equality between women and men was still considered a radical idea by many people 100 years ago. Poplar Borough Council (East London) undertook a comprehensive programme of social reform and poor relief, including passing a budget that awarded equal pay for women and men. The budget was ruled unlawful by the courts, with the judges deciding that the councillors had allowed themselves to be guided "*by some eccentric principles of socialistic philanthropy, or a feminist ambition to secure the equality of the sexes in the matter of wages in the world of labour*".

US Civil Rights Movement (1954-1968)

Rosa Parks' act of defiance and push back against racism in the American South, alongside other mass demonstrations and protests, signified that society globally was questioning the embedded inequalities born of discrimination in all its forms.

Civil service and teachers' equal pay (1955)

After mass public campaigning, a scheme was established to secure equal rates of pay for men and women doing the same job in the non industrial civil service. As a result, women teachers were also given equal pay in 1961.

Flower Power / Summer of Love (1967)

For the first time, young people had no memories of war and the sixties as a decade are known for the spirit of freedom, love, equality and peace that defined the “hippie movement”.

Ford workers’ strike (1968)

A key turning point – strike action undertaken by women sewing machinists at Ford’s Dagenham plant. Ford had graded the machinists as “unskilled” workers and therefore at a lower grade than similar men’s roles, and they were even paid 15% less than men in the same grading. The women in Dagenham, London walked out, followed later by machinists at Ford’s Halewood Body & Assembly plant. The machinists made car seat covers and as stocks ran out, the strike eventually brought a halt to car production.

After three weeks of action their wages, the strike ended, with the women accepting an offer of 92% of the men’s pay. Despite only being a partial success, the strike was a landmark win for pay equality in the UK and a key driver for the passage of the Equal Pay Act 1970, which was finally passed on 29th May 1970 (now over 50 years ago!). It took until 1984, and a second strike, before the machinists at Ford actually received equal pay (and to be classed as “skilled” workers).

Play Stylist’s [short interview](#) with some of the Ford women.

The Equal Pay Act (1970)

The Equal Pay Act outlawed pay discrimination on the basis of sex, and enshrined in law the duty of employers to award men and women equal pay for equal work. The Act has since been overtaken by the more comprehensive Equality Act 2010.

Show slide 18, and **outline** the legal definition of equal pay.

Under the Equality Act, equal pay is defined to mean that everyone receives the same pay for:

- the same or similar jobs (e.g. two GCSE-level English teachers)
- work of equal value (e.g. as in Julie’s case - the work of the shipyard painters and cooks)
- work rated as equivalent (e.g. through a formal job evaluation exercise - they don’t need to be similar jobs)

Note that it wasn’t until 1982, when a judgement by the European Court of Justice led to the UK amending the Equal Pay Act (in 1983) in order to incorporate the concept of *equal value*.

Run through the following key cases in the ongoing battle for equal pay:

The story does not end there – ~~THE END~~

The fight for equal pay continues and countless cases have been brought involving reputable British brands and employers.

Cammell Laird (1988)

Julie Hayward's landmark case was the first significant challenge to the Equal Pay Act 1970. Julie had worked as an apprentice cook in the Cammell Laird Shipyard in Birkenhead. When all of the apprentices had completed their training, the three men were deemed "craftsmen" and received a pay rise and Julie was deemed a "labourer" and given no pay rise. After a 10 year battle and three industrial tribunals she finally won an appeal in the House of Lords.

Cleveland dinner ladies (1996)

A group of "dinner ladies" working in Cleveland (NE England) kick-started a wave of settlements and equal-pay cases against public sector employers being brought through the courts. In the Cleveland case, 1,500 women received a £5 million payout.³

The present day

Show the slide with different company/employer logos. **Explain** that many high-profile (and expensive) equal pay cases have been taken by women working for the employers on the slide (and many more).

Just at the BBC, a host of women TV broadcasters and radio presenters have won large settlements in court against the corporation - e.g. in 2020, Samira Ahmed won her case against the BBC. She claimed she was underpaid by £700,000 for hosting audience feedback show Newswatch compared with Jeremy Vine's salary for Points of View.

Final plenary (15 minutes)

Divide the class to be divided into small groups (4 or 5) and give each group a set of [paper slips](#) cards with a range of jobs. Ask them to "rank" the jobs from high to low value, or at equal value. The cards will be jumbled up and there will be some "wild cards".

Show the slide that notes that learners can consider the following justifications for how they choose to value the work:

- knowledge required to do the job;
- experience and training required for the role;
- responsibility for health and safety;
- security and confidentiality;
- level of decision-making;

³ Red Pepper (2010) [Mind the gap](#)

- mental or physical effort;
- responsibility for others;
- emotional demands.

Circulate and identify some of the themes coming up. After 5-10 minutes, ask a couple of the groups to share their “ranking”, and ask them to explain why they ranked jobs as they did (e.g. why is X more valuable than Y? Why do you think A and B are of equal value?). **Share** the correct answers with the class.

Jobs deemed of equal value include:

- School cook, carer, cleaner, refuse/recycling collector, street sweeper, gravedigger⁴
- Cook and painter⁵
- Electrician and nurse⁶
- Teaching assistant and road (construction) worker⁷
- Warehouse operative and cleaner⁸
- Warehouse operative and checkout staff [**note** that thousands of staff at Asda and Tesco are currently battling for pay rises based on this comparison being recognised in a 2019 ruling]⁹

Ask the learners what they thought of the task - was it difficult or easy to compare the value of such different jobs? Were there any other factors they considered when thinking about the value of a job, or any assumptions or biases that might have played a part in the decisions (introduce ideas/thinking about gender/race/nationality and bias)?

Ask learners to go to the [link](#) shown on the final slide (or hand out [paper forms](#)) and fill in a short feedback form on how they found the lesson today.

Follow-up ideas

Read

- [#EqualPay50 briefing for campaigners](#) (The Equality Trust)
- [A history of equal pay](#) (Pay Justice)
- [50 women, 50 years](#) – read historical and present day stories/comments from 50 women to mark the 50th anniversary of the Equal Pay Act (the Equality Trust)

Watch

- *Made In Dagenham* – a feature film about the 1968 Ford sewing machinists’ strike, available on [Netflix](#). Rated: 15.

⁴ BBC News (2016) [Important moments in the fight for equal pay](#)

⁵ BBC News (2009) [One woman's fight for equal pay](#)

⁶ Action 4 Equality Scotland (2017) [FAQs, Glasgow and Equal Pay](#)

⁷ Martin Searle Solicitors: [Factsheet: Equal Pay](#)

⁸ Martin Searle Solicitors: [Factsheet: Equal Pay](#)

⁹ People Management (2019) [Asda shop workers win landmark equal pay battle](#)

- A [short video](#) on the Dagenham Women's strike (Trades Union Congress)
- [A five-minute history of equal pay](#) (History Hub)

Take action

- Organise a lunchtime or afterschool event to watch *Made In Dagenham* and discuss the key themes in the film
- Discuss how equal pay might be investigated within the school context and plan campaigning activity around this

Homework

Research and write a short overview (less than 400 words) of one of the UK's equal pay cases, including the companies/organisations/trade unions involved, the details of the case (i.e. which jobs were discussed?) and the outcome(s).

Sources:

- [Successful equal pay cases](#) (Pay Justice)
- [Case law on equal pay](#) (CIPD) - access is restricted, but learners can search the names of equal pay cases
- [Samira Ahmed case: what is equal pay?](#) (BBC News)