Knowledge Organiser – *The development of democracy*

Year 8
Half-term 6

Before 1832, very few people had the right to vote and have a say in how the country was governed. This changed very slowly over the course of nearly 100 years. It was only in 1928 that all men and women gained the equal right to vote in elections and have a say in how the country was run.

Key terms:

Democracy: A system of government where everyone has a say in how the country is run through elections

Constituency: An area of the country where the people vote in elections for their MP. The Isle of Wight is a constituency

MP: Member of Parliament. MPs are elected by people in a constituency to represent them in Parliament.

Parliament: The place where MPs work. Together, MPs decide on how the country is run by passing laws and deciding on things like taxes, how hospitals are run and what happens in schools. **The Houses of Parliament** are in London

Borough: A town or city which had its own council to run it

Rotten Borough: The nickname for a place before 1832 that elected 2 MPs but only had a few voters

Pocket Borough: The nickname for a place before 1832 where a rich landowner could choose the MPs by bribing or bullying their voters

Franchise: The right to vote in elections

Chartists: Protesters who wanted all men over the age of 21 to vote, secret voting and for MPs to be paid so ordinary people could afford to do the job

Suffragists/Suffragettes: Women's campaign groups demanding the right to vote for women. They used tactics that many people thought were very extreme

The journey to democracy was long and complicated.

- **Before 1832** – Only a handful of wealthy men could vote. Voting was unfair and very undemocratic
- **1832** – The Great Reform Act got rid of rotten boroughs and pocket boroughs and gave MPs to large industrial towns and cities, like Manchester, for the first time. More men were given the vote for the first time
- **1839-1848** – Protest groups like the **Chartists** demanded the vote for everyman over the age of 21 and the right to voting in secret. Although the **Chartists** failed to achieve their demands immediately, by 1872 secret voting was introduced and by 1884 most men had gained the vote
- **1918** – After years of campaigning, including by groups such as the **Suffragists** and the **Suffragettes**, women over the age of 30 gained the right to vote
- **1928** – All men and women over the age of 21 were given the right to vote

There were many reasons why the journey to democracy took so long. These included:

- Wealthy people not wanting to give up the power they had for hundreds of years
- A belief that the wealthy were the 'best' people to make decisions about how the country should be run
- A belief that women were not capable of making important decisions like who to vote for and running the country should be left to men!