This week in Year 9 Citizenship we will explore workers’ rights and trade unions.

• First of all, look back at the work you did last week. On the next slide there is a Wagoll which will help you to annotate your work with further ideas, and a feedback clip. The most effective way to use the Wagoll is to read it alongside your own work from last week, comparing and making notes (in a different colour pen if you have one) as you go.

• Don’t forget, you can also use your Q4K to support you in your work.

Complete the activities on the following slides. Where possible, use lined paper and a biro to complete your answers.

Please date your work and title with “Citizenship - Week Commencing 13th July 2020 - Year 9” – this will help you to keep your work organised. Once completed, send your work via your Q3 email to your Citizenship Learning Consultant.
How far have LGBT rights in the UK developed over the last hundred years?

Over the last hundred years, there have been big steps forward for LGBT rights (lesbians, gay men, bisexual people and transgender people) in the UK, yet neither progress nor discrimination have affected equally all groups within the LGBT community. In the mid-twentieth century men who had relationships with men, whether gay or bisexual, faced significant discrimination, as all such relationships were illegal. This eased in 1967 with the Sexual Offences Act, although even then same-sex relationships between men were still subject to a higher age of consent than heterosexual relationships (a situation that persisted until 2001). Fear and prejudice over HIV contributed to further discrimination in the 1980s, but since then public attitudes have become more accepting. By 2010, only 20% of people had the view that same-sex relationships were always wrong, down from 64% in the mid 1980s. Although lesbians were not as affected by discriminatory laws as gay and bisexual men, all same sex couples were disadvantaged by the fact that, until the 21st century, there was no way of them having their relationship recognised by law. This changed in the UK in 2004, when same-sex couples were able to form a civil partnership, which gave them broadly the same rights as married couples. However, they were still not able to get married, in the strict sense of that term. This changed in England and Wales in 2013 with the Marriage Act. Scotland extended marriage to same-sex couples in 2014, with Northern Ireland following in 2020. Despite this progress for the LGBT community as a whole, transgender people particularly still face significant discrimination. Research published by the LGBT organisation Stonewall in 2017 showed that 40% of transgender people had experienced a hate crime or incident because of their gender identity in the previous twelve months. This was double the rate of hate crimes or incidents experienced by the LGBT community as a whole. Moreover, while since 2004 transgender people have been able to have their change of gender legally recognised, and the whole LGBT community was protected from discrimination by the 2010 Equality Act, gender recognition remains a controversial political question.
What is a trade union?
What do they do?
Who can join them?
Why do people join them?
Background to Trade Unions

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a combination of urbanisation (more people living in towns and cities) and industrialisation (more people working together in factories, rather than in their own homes) meant that workers had more contact with each other than ever before. Before this, the typical worker had worked in farming, and may have seen little of workers in the same job. The change in how people lived and worked supported the development of trade unions – organisations of workers that are able to negotiate with employers (bosses) on behalf of their members. This helped to protect workers’ wages (the money they got paid for their work), as well as protecting their rights at work.

The influence of trade unions was not simply economic (to do with jobs and money). During the twentieth century, unions were important in UK politics, too. Unions were vital to setting up the Labour Party in 1900, as a political party focused on representing workers in Parliament. Many leading politicians also became powerful through the union movement (a term referring to all the unions and their members in the country). Ernest Bevin, for example, a famous Foreign Secretary during the late 1940s, was leader of the powerful Transport and General Workers’ Union until 1940. They were also important social organisations (to do with everyday life). It would have been a normal, even expected, thing to be part of a trade union, attending local meetings and taking part in activities.

Today, unions provide a range of services to their members, including legal advice, support and representation when there are problems at work, and negotiations over matters like wages and health and safety issues. The Trades Union Congress (TUC) brings together different unions in a single umbrella (overall) organisation, and is currently made up of 48 different unions. As a mirror to trade unions, employers’ (bosses) associations provide a similar function for their members, negotiating with unions where necessary.

One common misunderstanding for students – trade unions have nothing to do with the European Union (EU). The EU is a group of different countries, joining together and trading (buying and selling) between themselves. Trade unions are groups of workers, often doing similar jobs or working in similar industries.
Trade Union Membership

Trade Union membership (the number or proportion of workers who are in a trade union) has changed a great deal in the last fifty years (see chart). Numbers hit an all-time high in the early 1980s, and have broadly been in decline (going down) ever since.

Today, around 23% of workers are members of a trade union. However, membership changes a lot depending on what area of the economy someone works in. For the private sector (businesses, like shops, banks and factories), only around 13% of workers are members of a union. For public sector workers (government-funded jobs, such as nurses, teachers, police officers and civil servants), the figure is around 53%. For some specific jobs, the numbers are even higher. In 2013, figures suggested that 97% of teachers were in a union. The biggest union for teachers is the National Education Union (NEU).
The Right to Strike

In extreme situations, trade unions may decide to call a strike (where workers refuse to do their jobs, because they are in some kind of dispute, or disagreement, with their employers).

Strikes are measured in ‘working days lost’ – one worker, going on strike for one day, would count as one working day lost. As you can see from the chart, strikes were very common in the 1970s and 1980s, with some years seeing tens of millions of working days being lost. These numbers have fallen dramatically since the 1980s.

Also since the 1980s, and particularly during the Conservative Governments of Margaret Thatcher (1979-1990), the rights of unions to call a strike have been dramatically curtailed (reduced). Mrs Thatcher saw unions as too powerful and disruptive. While strikes are still allowed under law, a union has to meet strict conditions for them to be legal. For example, union members must vote beforehand on whether or not to support a strike, and if 50% of all union members don’t take part in that decision, the strike cannot go ahead.

Falling union membership, tighter laws on strike action, and fewer days being lost to strikes are all linked together. As unions have become less powerful, fewer people have decided to join them, in a self-reinforcing cycle.
Think back over the previous slides. What can you remember about trade unions? What specific detail can you recall?

If you are able to, tell a member of your household what you have learned so far.
In full sentences, answer the following questions on this week’s material, to show your understanding. Remember, the slides are there to support you, but there is very little point in just copying information out. Read it, pick out key points and then put these together in your own way.

1. What is a trade union?
2. Explain why trade unions are not connected to the European Union.
3. What has happened to membership of trade unions over the last 40 years?
4. What are strikes, and how have they changed over the last 50 years?
5. What was Mrs Thatcher’s view on strikes, and what changes were made as a result?

Remember to include specific examples (facts and figures) in your work, as well as clear and detailed explanations. Both of these are needed for a strong answer.
That is the end of our Citizenship course. Congratulations! The knowledge and understanding you now have about how our country is run, goes far, far beyond that of most adults. Together, you have also raised thousands of pounds and literally tonnes of food for charity, making a huge different to people living in our area.

If you still want to be a really active citizen, this course has just been the start. There is so much to learn about the decisions that affect all of us and knowledge, as they say, is power. The very best thing to do, in order to keep your knowledge up to scratch, is to become a regular follower of the news. At no cost to you, you can watch BBC News and follow the latest stories on the BBC website. Newspapers are also published online, and some, such as The Guardian, are free to access. Keep following the stories that matter to you, and let us know what you find out!

We look forward to seeing you in August for GCSE results day!