

Pressure Groups

TASK 1

Your task today is to undertake some independent research on a number of different pressure groups. For each group you should find out information about the following:

1. The aims of the group.
2. The tactics used by the group – be specific.
3. The location of the group in terms of where they conduct campaigns/protests etc
4. How the group is funded.
5. How many members the group has.
6. Influential supporters – groups of professionals/celebrities etc
7. Significant campaigns that the group has been involved in in the last 5 years.
8. Whether the group consults the UK government (an insider group) or whether the group is an outsider group and not consulted by the UK government.
9. Any support individual backing of the pressure group & its campaigns by MPs and MSPs
10. Any involvement by the group in illegal activities.
11. Any important work by the group that has led to a change in the law or discussions in Parliament.
12. The ways in which the pressure group uses of social media and internet.

The groups that you will research today include:

- Extinction Rebellion
- British Medical Association
- National Farmers' Union
- Fathers4Justice
- Stonewall

You can set out your notes as you wish – a table, mind map, subheadings etc would all work well.

These links will help you get started:

<https://t.co/HYNPAAk5wH?amp=1>

<https://t.co/M5cysQJPT0?amp=1>

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/our-work/campaigns/get-over-it/celebrity-support>

<https://www.bma.org.uk/collective-voice/influence/key-negotiations/nhs-funding/2019-spending-round>

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/get-involved/get-involved-fundraise-us/grant-funding>

https://www.theguardian.com/environment/georgemonbiot/2013/jul/08/national-farmers-union-public?CMP=share_btn_tw

<https://www.wired.co.uk/article/extinction-rebellion-london-protest>

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TASK 2:

The 2019 Past Paper Question

Some pressure groups, and the methods they use, are more successful than others.

Discuss. (20 marks)

You should refer to Scotland or the United Kingdom or both in your answer.

This essay is asking you to analyse the success of pressure groups. Although the question does not directly mention it, success could relate to the groups' ability to impact government decision-making. It could also relate to the groups' ability to boost democracy, public engagement or the ability to impact voting behaviour.

There are a number of ways to approach this essay:

Option 1: The main body of the essay will include three paragraphs, each focused a different pressure group. You will outline their tactics and analyse the effectiveness of the group in relation to their ability to impact government decision-making and whether they are able to enhance the democratic process.

Option 2: The main body of the essay will include three or four paragraphs, each focused on a different method (lobbying, letter writing, protesting, celebrity endorsements, funding, membership numbers etc) Your examples (K points) will be illustrations or examples of each of these methods in action.

You will need an introduction outlining your main points, 8 knowledge points, 6 analysis points, 4 evaluation points which can appear in a conclusion or as mini conclusions at the end of each paragraph.

Here are some examples of ways to approach this essay:

*Pressure groups can inform and mobilise popular support through activities such as petitions on social media. These 'new media' outlets can provide an easily accessible method of informing the public about a cause. Pressure groups such as Greenpeace's Facebook petitions which inform citizens about issues such as deforestation and other environmental issues, while also encouraging citizens to sign said petitions to show their support. Pressure groups can also use promotional films, literature and use news footage of their protest or other activity to help to inform citizens. **This is of critical importance in helping to inform citizens about the political process because this pressure group offers an easily accessible visual representation of their issues and this can result in greater engagement with the public and therefore, support. This could be argued to be a more successful pressure group than the BMA because the BMA offer statistical scientific data and sometimes complex language in medical reports. This could mean that the BMA would face a lack of meaningful engagement with a large section of society which can, in turn, limit its success in relation to public accessibility.***

Oxfam is an example of a successful pressure group that in March 2013 persuaded the UK government to keep its promise to spend 0.7% of national income on aid for third world countries. This pressure group educates the public on poverty and how the government should best deal with this. Many of their campaigns include people emailing MPs in order to lobby them for a change in government policy. **Therefore, pressure groups can be successful because they can strengthen democracy and inform citizens about the political process. The consequence of this is that they create better educated citizens which can have an impact on voting behaviour.**