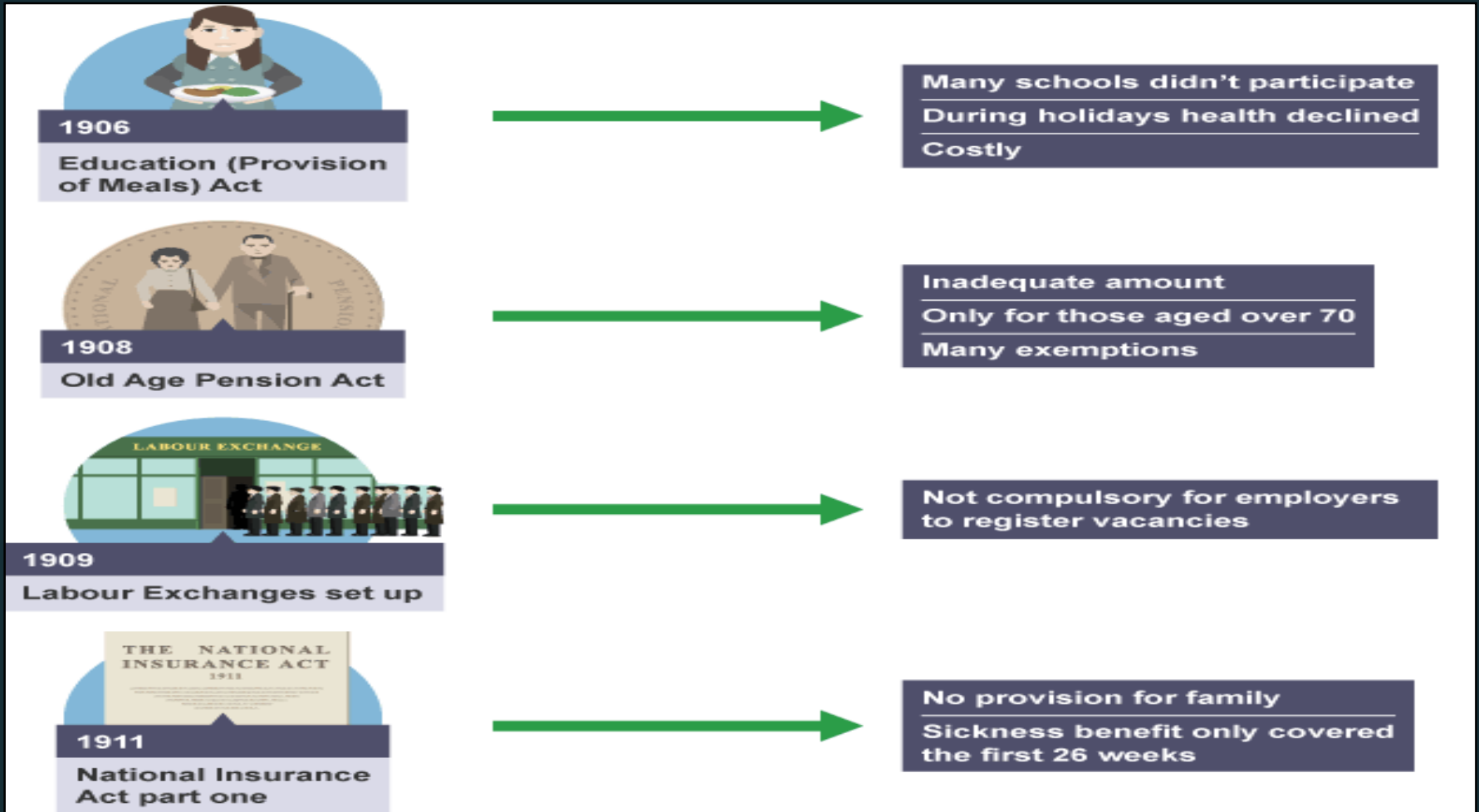


# How Successful were the Liberal Reforms?

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# Collect copy of image to stick in jotter





# Winston Churchill

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*“If we see a drowning man we do  
not drag him to the shore.*

*Instead, we provide help to allow him  
to swim ashore.”*



# 1906 General Election

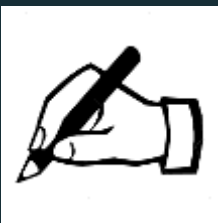


**LANDSLIDE  
VICTORY**

Henry Campbell-Bannerman  
(Liberal Party)  
397 seats



Arthur Balfour  
(Conservative Party)  
156 seats



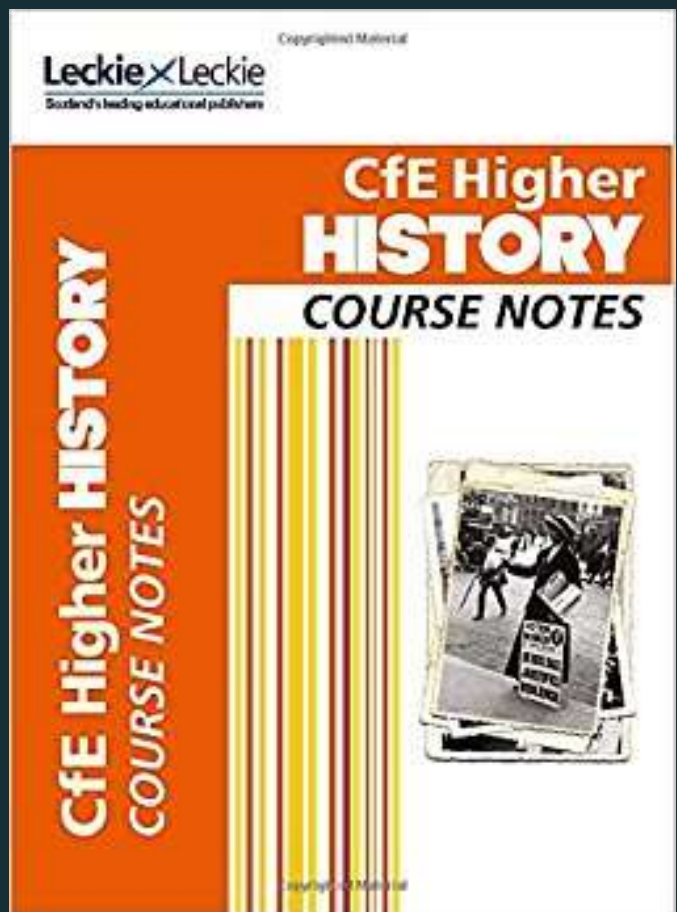
# Background Information

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The Liberal social welfare reforms of 1906-14 saw the most significant intervention of a British government into the lives of its citizens. They were designed to help the poorest in society find a way to escape poverty and improve their lives. As one of the architects of the reforms, Winston Churchill, said “If we see a drowning man we do not drag him to the shore. Instead, we provide help to allow him to swim ashore.” The reforms focused on four main groups that the investigations of Booth and Rowntree had identified as being particularly vulnerable and that the Liberals felt were most in need of assistance to escape poverty; the young, the old, the sick and the unemployed. These reforms were the first established move away from the Government’s previous policy of laissez-faire and met with varied degrees of success.



# Collect copy of textbook



Over a double page create 4 columns with the following headings

\* Old \* Young

\* Sick \* Unemployed

Read pages 127 to 132 and list a series of bullet points under each heading with factual information about what was introduced

# The Young

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## Before

- Children caught in cycle of 30% poverty
- 1870 compulsory education but children were wage earners
- Those attending school were too tired or hungry to learn (50,000 London)

## During

- School Meals Act 1906
  - 9m by 1910, 14m by 1914
- Education Act 1907
  - 3 school medical inspections
- Children's Act 1908
  - parents prosecuted for neglect
  - juvenile courts
  - remand homes
  - sale of alcohol, cigarettes, street begging banned for under 16s
  - probation officers appointed

## After

- School Meals Act
  - Not compulsory until 1914
  - Children's growth declined during holidays
- Education Act
  - inspection but no treatment!
  - e.g. Glasgow 55% defects, 85% teeth
  - compulsory treatment 1912
- Children's Act
  - ineffective, poor parental engagement, scrapped 1914
- First major intervention in children's lives



**Welcome to the History Helper  
Liberal Government Reforms  
revision guide**

**[www.historyhelper.co.uk](http://www.historyhelper.co.uk)**

# The Elderly

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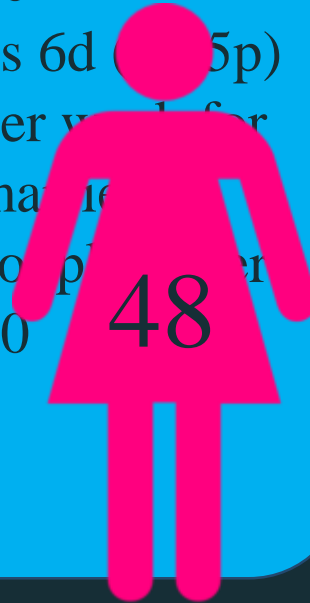


## Before

- Booth & Rowntree
  - poverty line
  - primary and secondary poverty
- Life expectancy?

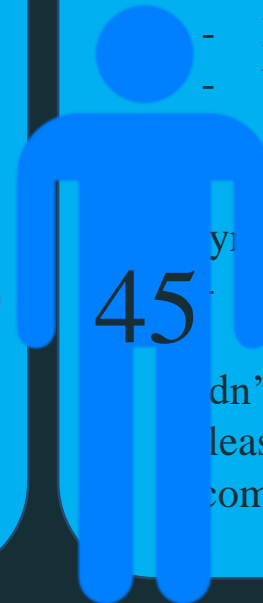
## During

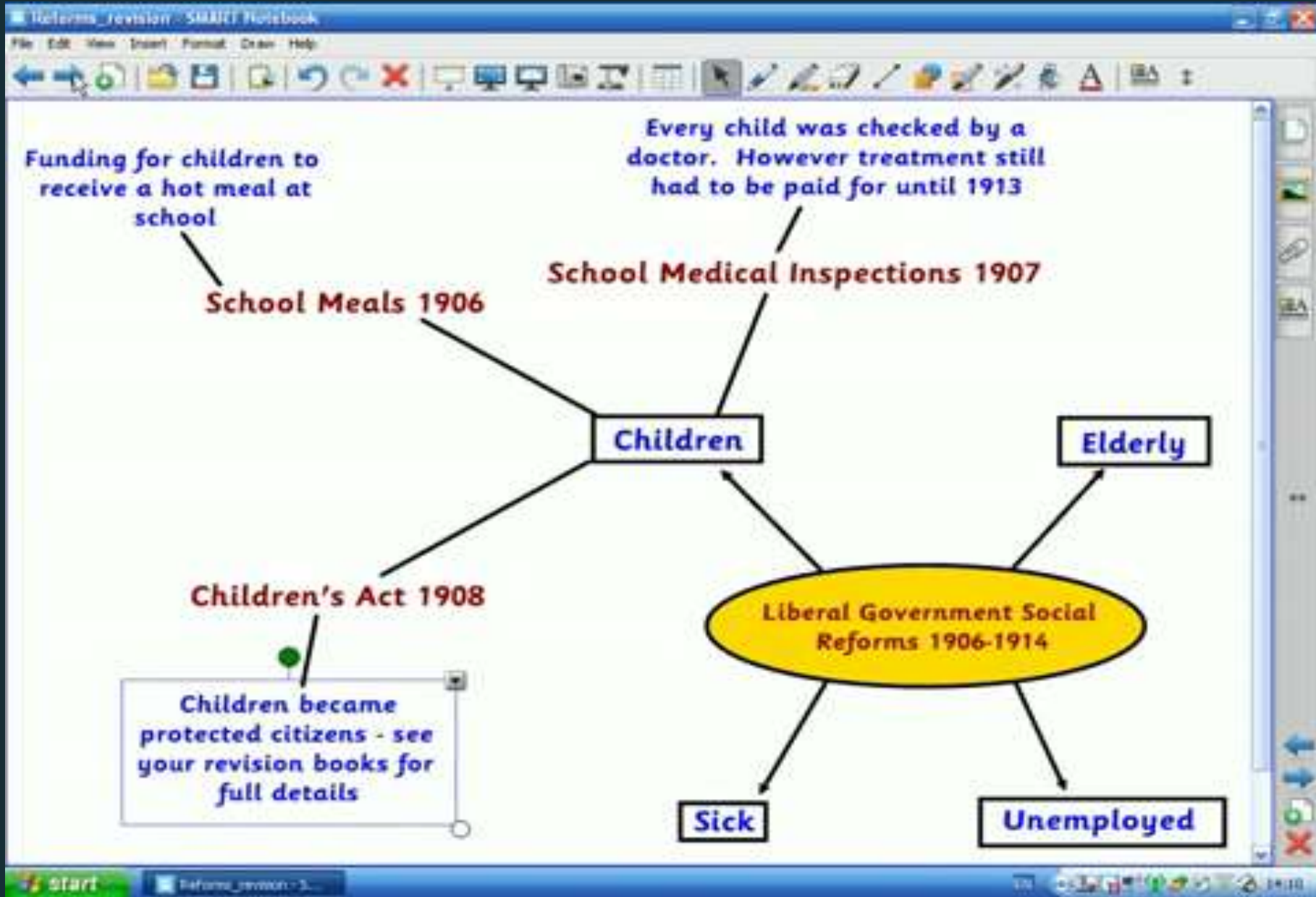
- Old Age Pensions Act 1908
  - 5s (25p) per week for singles over 70
  - 7s 6d (37p) per week for married couples over 70



## After

- Hugely popular
  - 1m claimants by 1914
  - no contributions
  - Post Office collection
- Many exclusions
  - poor relief
  - prison
  - 20 years residency
  - life expectancy?
  - birth certificates?
  - 12s income threshold
  - payment too small
  - poverty line 35p/58p
- didn't solve poverty but at least a guaranteed income





# The Sick

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## Before

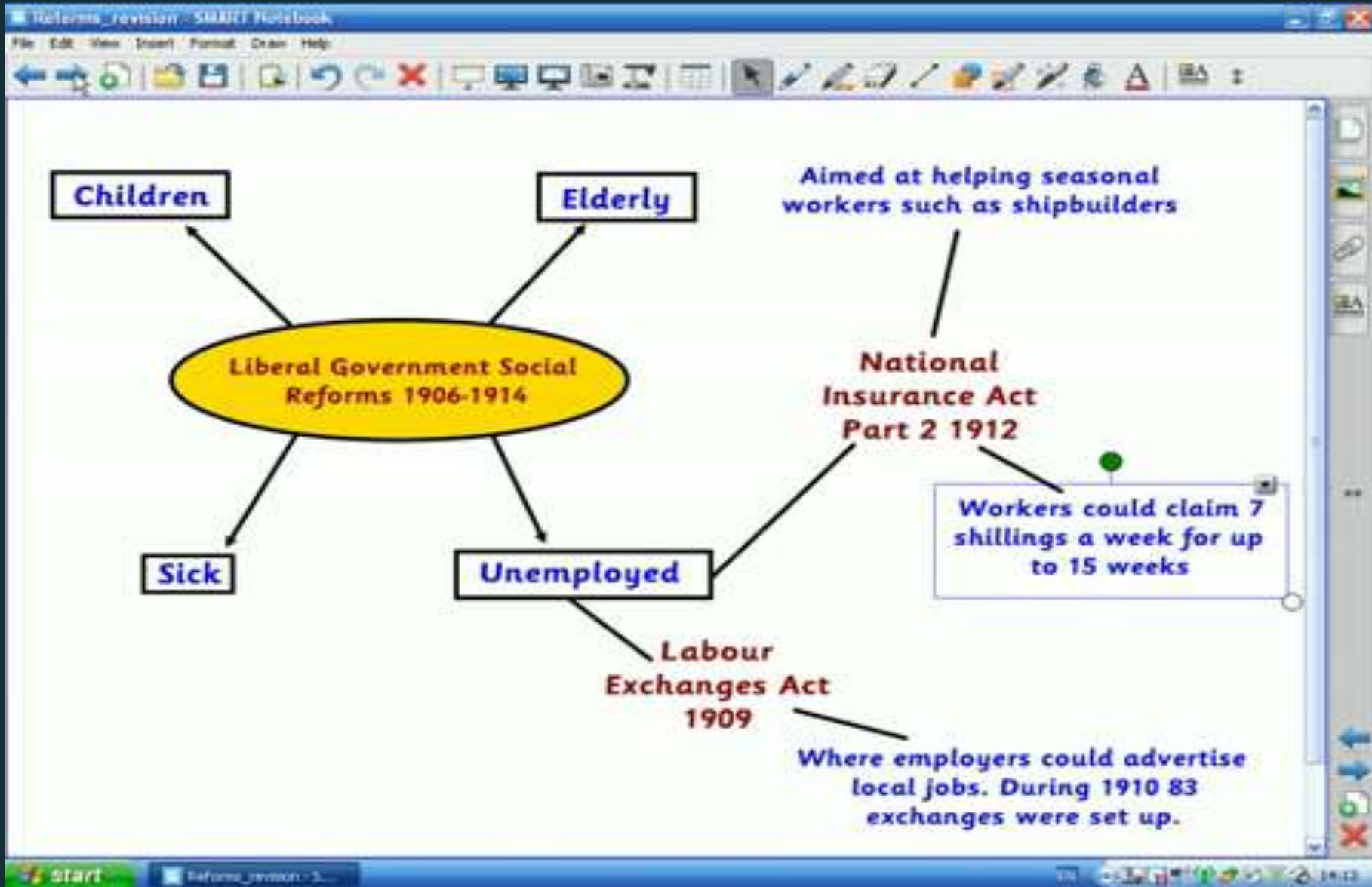
- Illness and absence from work was one of the major causes of poverty – no free medical treatment
- Two thirds of volunteers for the Boer War rejected for reasons of ill health
- Killer diseases such as tuberculosis claiming 75,000 lives per year

## During

- National Insurance Act (1911) Part I
  - 10 shillings (50p) per week (women 7 shillings) sick pay for 26 weeks (5s thereafter)
  - 30 shillings maternity grants, free medical attention
  - worker paid 4p, employer 3p, government 2p each week (“9p for 4p”)

## After

- Only covered those on less than £160 per annum
- benefits covered only the insured not the wife or children
- did not cover hospital treatment
- employers objected to cost, doctors objected to loss of earnings, employee wage cut?
- no cover for long term sick
- 15 million people covered, major step in government intervention



# The Unemployed

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## Before

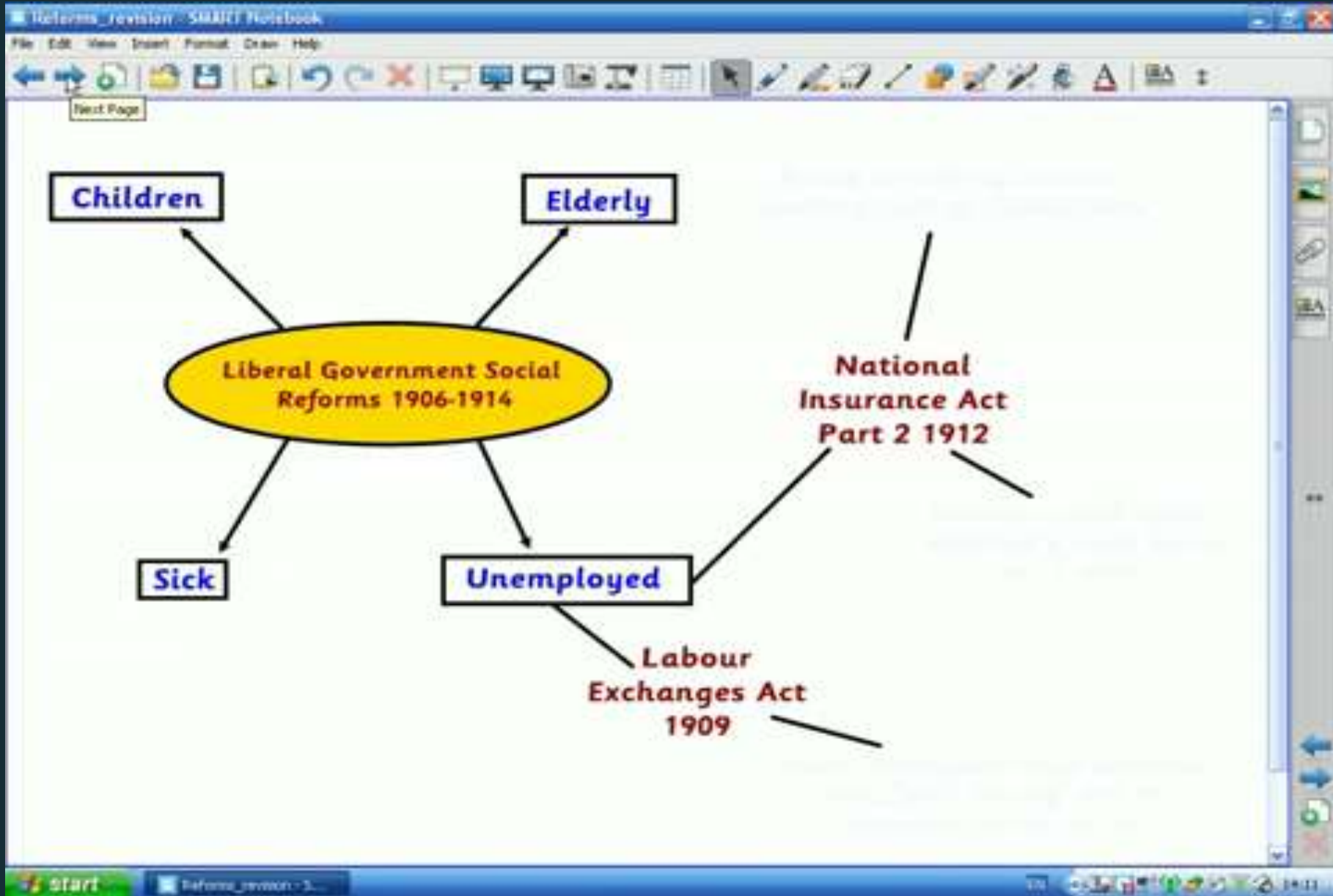
- William Beveridge “the problem of unemployment lies at the root of most social problems”
- Growing economic and industrial threat of Germany (existing state welfare)
- Government concerned at growth of trade unions and declining standard of living might drive workers to Communism or rebellion

## During

- Labour Exchanges Act 1909
  - forerunner of the modern Job Centre
- National Insurance Act (1911) Part II
  - 7 shillings (35p) per week for 15 weeks
  - workers, employers paid 2.5p per week and the state paid 3p

## After

- Labour Exchanges
  - 430 by 1913
  - no need for individuals to search for work
  - No legal requirement for employers to advertise
  - low wages offered
  - 25% success rate
- NI Act Part II
  - only covered 2.5m people and 7 industries
  - gave unemployed 15 weeks to find work
  - contributory nature did not help those in poverty
  - No cover for those sacked
  - system collapsed after Great War when employed contributions did not cover unemployed payments



# Summary of Success

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- Safety net provided for most vulnerable in society but not did solve problem of poverty although given the scale of the problem it was a limited success
- Inflation and unemployment outweighed the benefits of the legislation
- Working people generally unimpressed with reforms
- Explosion of trade unions confirms discontent of Liberals in dealing with social problems
- Government had more pressing issues like expense of looming war and threat of Germany
- Conservatives dominated House of Lords and regularly opposed Liberal reforms
- Did not address problems of housing, education or health
- Reforms did lay foundations of the Welfare State

# Historiography

Copy any two quotes for each of the four areas

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## YOUNG

*"It is the height of cruelty to subject half-starved children to the process of education."* (This comment was made by the Committee on Physical Deterioration in 1905)

*"The country that spent £250, million to avenge an insult levelled at her pride by an old Dutch farmer is not ashamed to see her children walking the streets hungry and in rags."* (David Lloyd George)

*"The acts of 1906 & 1907 which enabled local authorities to provide free school meals and school medical inspection were very limited and permissive in form"* (Harris)

*"the acts were important strides, indicating a new and broader outlook upon children"* (Hill)

*"although it took several years for the system to become comprehensive: once fairly launched, it became the most important single measure of preventive medicine ever undertaken in this country"* (Hill)

*"best that was achieved for child poverty was intervention in the areas of school meals and school medical inspections, which were to a considerable extent a logical extension of the tradition of state protection for children"* (Wood)

*"Feed the stomach, then the mind."* (Social Reformer Margaret McMillan)

# Historiography

Copy any two quotes for each of the four areas

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## OLD

*“Old people had no cause to feel shame at being given public money. Pensions, unlike poor relief, it was paid as a right.” (Cootes)*

*“.....they would say as they picked up the money 'God bless that Lloyd George' and 'God bless you miss' and there were flowers from the garden and apples from their trees for the girl who merely handed them the money.” (Flora Thompson)*

*“The state provided a meagre pension for the needy over the age of 70.” (AJP Taylor)*

*“It is arguable that had not the Boer War intervened pensions may well have been introduced a decade earlier” (JR Hay)*

*“the dread of the workhouse remained .....in the not very generous pension scheme in 1909” (Wood)*

# Historiography

Copy any two quotes for each of the four areas

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## SICK

*“The aged we have dealt with. We are still faced with the more gigantic task of dealing with the rest – the sick and the infirm.”* (David Lloyd George )

*“in its final form, part I of the National Insurance Act did not seriously attempt to tackle the cause of ill-health”*  
(Fraser)

# Historiography

Copy any two quotes for each of the four areas

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## UNEMPLOYED

*“the problem of unemployment lies at the root of most other social problems,”* (William Beveridge)

*“The Labour exchange Act was particularly successful in aiding poverty”* (Fraser)

# Fab & Pants Exercise

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Working in groups read each of the evaluation statements and decide whether the information is ‘Fab’ (analysis) or ‘Pants (analysis plus) – copy any information down that you think will help with a ‘Success of Liberals’ essay





# Video Summary of Reforms



# Audio Summary of Success

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Take notes of any new arguments  
you hear that could be used for  
analysis or analysis plus



# Essay Question

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How effectively did the Liberal Reforms deal with the problem of poverty in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Britain?