

Forty Ways
to Look at
WINSTON
CHURCHILL

A Brief Account of a Long Life

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14

CHURCHILL'S TIME LINE

Key Events

As an attempt to mark all the crucial events in Churchill's life, the conventional time line surely fails. His arrival at Harrow rates the same emphasis as the surrender of Germany, and so many milestones are left out: the appearance of his nanny, Woom—his vow to one day become Prime Minister—the day he received his father's cruel letter—his first game of polo—the sleepless night in 1938—his first stroke—the day he painted for the last time. These are not the kinds of events that usually appear on time lines.

WINSTON LEONARD SPENCER CHURCHILL
(1874–1965)

1874

Born November 30, at Blenheim Palace

1888

Entered Harrow

1893

Entered Royal Military College at Sandhurst as cavalry cadet

1895

Death of his father

Commissioned in the Fourth Hussars

1895–1898

Military service in India and the Sudan

Publication of *The Story of the Malakand Field Force* (1898)

1899

Stood for and lost his first election

Escaped Boer prisoner-of-war camp

Publication of *The River War*

1900

Elected Conservative Member of Parliament

Publication of *Savrola*

Publication of *London to Ladysmith via Pretoria*

Publication of *Ian Hamilton's March*

1904

Joined Liberal Party

1905–1908

Undersecretary of State for the Colonies

1906

Publication of *Lord Randolph Churchill*

1908

Married Clementine Hozier

Publication of *My African Journey*

1908–1910

President of the Board of Trade

1910–1911

Home Secretary

1911–1915

First Lord of the Admiralty

1915

Failure of the Dardanelles campaign

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

1915–1916

Lieutenant colonel in France

1917–1919

Minister of Munitions

1919–1921

Secretary of State for War and Air

1921–1922

Colonial Secretary

Death of his mother

1922

Bought Chartwell Manor

1923

Publication of *The World Crisis* (1923–1931)

1924

Rejoined Conservative Party

1924–1929

Chancellor of the Exchequer

1930

Publication of *My Early Life*

1932

Publication of *Thoughts and Adventures*

1933

Publication of *Marlborough: His Life and Times* (1933–1938)

1937

Publication of *Great Contemporaries*

1939–1940

First Lord of the Admiralty

1940–1945

Prime Minister and Minister of Defense

1940

Battle of Britain

1941

First wartime meeting with Roosevelt

Soviet Union and United States enter the war

1944

Allied invasion of Normandy

1945

Surrender of Germany

Defeated in the general election

Surrender of Japan

1945–1951

Leader of the Opposition

Publication of *The Second World War* (1948–1954)

Publication of *Painting as a Pastime* (1948)

1951–1955

Prime Minister

1953

Awarded Nobel Prize in literature

Created Knight of the Garter

1956

Publication of *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*
(1956–1958)

1959

Won his last election to the House of Commons

1963

Made honorary citizen of the United States

1965

Died January 24

22

CHURCHILL IN CONTEXT

Facts at a Glance

Colorless but useful, bare facts help us grasp the whole of Churchill's life by placing him in context. Neatly ordered, seemingly without interpretation or bias, their precision is comforting. We read these facts; we assume these must be ones that matter.

Churchill's Sovereigns

Queen Victoria—1837–1901; Diamond Jubilee, 1897

King Edward VII—1901–1910

King George V—1910–1936

King Edward VIII—abdicated, December 1936

King George VI—1936–1952

Queen Elizabeth II—1952–present (Elizabeth is Victoria's great-great-granddaughter.)

Prime Ministers During Churchill's Political Career

1895 Salisbury

1902 Balfour

- 1905 Campbell-Bannerman (Churchill: Undersecretary for the Colonies)
- 1908 Asquith (Churchill: President of the Board of Trade, Home Secretary, First Lord of the Admiralty)
- 1916 Lloyd George (Churchill: Minister of Munitions, Secretary of State for War and Air, Colonial Secretary)
- 1922 Bonar Law
- 1923 Baldwin
- 1924 MacDonald
- 1924 Baldwin (Churchill: Chancellor of the Exchequer)
- 1929 MacDonald
- 1935 Baldwin
- 1937 Chamberlain (Churchill: First Lord of the Admiralty)
- 1940 Churchill
- 1945 Attlee
- 1951 Churchill
- 1955 Eden
- 1957 Macmillan
- 1963 Douglas-Home
- 1964 Wilson

Churchill's Changing Party Alliances

- In 1900, he entered Parliament as a Conservative.
- In 1904, he left the Conservatives over the issue of free trade and joined the Liberal Party.
- In 1924, he rejoined the Conservative Party.

The British Peerage

The British hereditary peerage comprises five descending grades of nobility: duke, marquess, earl, viscount, and baron. Dukes rank significantly above the four lower grades, and only a duke is addressed as “Your Grace” instead of “My Lord.”

A peer passes his title and estate to his eldest son, and his other children, who aren’t peers, must be content with courtesy titles. For example, the seventh Duke of Marlborough had two sons who survived to adulthood: the elder became the eighth Duke of Marlborough; the younger was “Lord Randolph,” but his children didn’t inherit a title. Therefore, Winston Churchill, though the grandson of a Duke, was Mr. Winston Churchill, a commoner. He became “Sir Winston Churchill” in 1953, when, after refusing the distinction for many years, he accepted the Order of the Garter in honor of Queen Elizabeth II’s coronation.

Churchill’s Executive Positions

1905–1908	Colonial Undersecretary
1908–1910	President of the Board of Trade
1910–1911	Home Secretary
1911–1915	First Lord of the Admiralty
1917–1919	Minister of Munitions
1919–1921	Secretary of State for War and Air
1921–1922	Colonial Secretary
1924–1929	Chancellor of the Exchequer
1929–1939	<i>“Wilderness years”</i>

1939–1940	First Lord of the Admiralty
1940–1945	Prime Minister
1951–1955	Prime Minister

Churchill Statistics

- Churchill's height: five feet six inches.
- Churchill's hair color: red.
- The period he described as the unhappiest of his life: his school days at Harrow.
- His best subjects at the Royal Military College at Sandhurst: military topography, tactics, fortifications, horse-riding skills.
- Churchill's age when the first Winston Churchill biography was published: thirty-one.
- Number of silver inkstands he received as wedding gifts: seventeen.
- Months it took him to dictate the first volume of his World War I memoir: three.
- Miles separating the coast of England from the coast of France: twenty-one.
- Temperature constantly maintained in Churchill's bedroom: seventy-four degrees Fahrenheit.
- Temperature maintained in Churchill's bath: ninety-eight degrees Fahrenheit.
- Code name for the preparations for Churchill's state funeral: "Hope Not."
- Weight of Churchill papers, in tons: fifteen.
- Number of times Churchill was on the cover of *Time* magazine: eight.

- Number of canvases he painted during his life: nearly five hundred.
- Whom he believed to be the greatest man who'd ever lived: Julius Caesar, "because he was the most magnanimous of all the conquerors."
- His mother's birthplace: 426 Henry Street, Brooklyn, New York.
- His attendance at church: infrequent.
- Subject of the biography he wanted to write but never did: Napoleon.

Churchill's Regiments

Fourth Hussars
 Thirty-first Punjabi Infantry
 Twenty-first Lancers
 South African Light Horse
 Oxfordshire Hussars
 Oxfordshire Yeomanry
 Grenadier Guards
 Royal Scots Fusiliers
 Oxfordshire Artillery

Churchill's Favorites

- Favorite whisky: Johnnie Walker Red Label.
- Favorite champagne: Pol Roger 1928. (Churchill named a racehorse Pol Roger.)
- Favorite cheese: Stilton.
- Favorite cigar: Romeo y Julieta.

- Favorite movies: *Lady Hamilton* (Churchill saw it seventeen times), Olivier's *Henry V*, Chaplin's *The Great Dictator*.
- Favorite painting site: Marrakech, in Morocco.
- Favorite pets: his French poodles Rufus I and Rufus II, his cats Whiskey and Marmalade, his bird Toby.
- Favorite card games: bezique, gin rummy, Oklahoma.
- Favorite gift to other people: an autographed, leather-bound copy of one of his own books.
- Some favorite music: Gilbert and Sullivan's comic operas; martial airs; Harrow school songs, particularly "Forty Years On"; Noël Coward tunes; "Rule, Britannia"; "Land of Hope and Glory"; "Tipperary."
- Some favorite hymns: "Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory of the Coming of the Lord," "Fight the Good Fight with All Thy Might," "O God, Our Help in Ages Past."
- Some favorite books: H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (Churchill read it twelve times as a boy); T. E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*; Anthony Trollope's political novels, especially (unsurprisingly, given the title) *The Duke's Children*.
- Favorite English poet: A. E. Housman.
- Author most often quoted: Shakespeare, particularly *King John*, *Richard III*, *Hamlet*.
- A favorite aphorism: "*On ne règne sur les âmes que par le calme.*"
- A favorite Bible verse: "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn."

- A favorite wartime poem: Arthur Hugh Clough's "Say Not the Struggle Nought Availeth."

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back through creeks and inlets making
Came silent, flooding in, the main,

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light,
In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward, look, the land is bright.

Notes on the British Form of Government, in Comparison to That of the United States

The British Parliament is divided into two Houses: the House of Lords, made up of peers, and the House of Commons, made up of elected representatives. Members of the House of Commons are elected at a general election; if a Member of Parliament (MP) dies or retires between elections, the constituency elects a new MP at a by-election. Unlike the United States, where a candidate must live in a place to represent it, a candidate need not have lived in the constituency to "stand" for election there.

The British system doesn't follow a rigid schedule of elections. A parliament may (but often doesn't) last as long as five years; it also has the power to extend itself. For example, rather than hold a general election in wartime, the

parliaments elected in 1910 and 1935 prolonged their lives, year by year, until 1918 and 1945, respectively. Thus, for example, Harold Nicolson was an MP—after winning a slender majority in a single election—for ten crucial years, from 1935 to 1945.

In the United States, the executive and the legislative branches are distinct. The U.S. President is elected separately from the members of Congress, and he chooses whomever he wants to serve in his cabinet (subject to Senate confirmation).

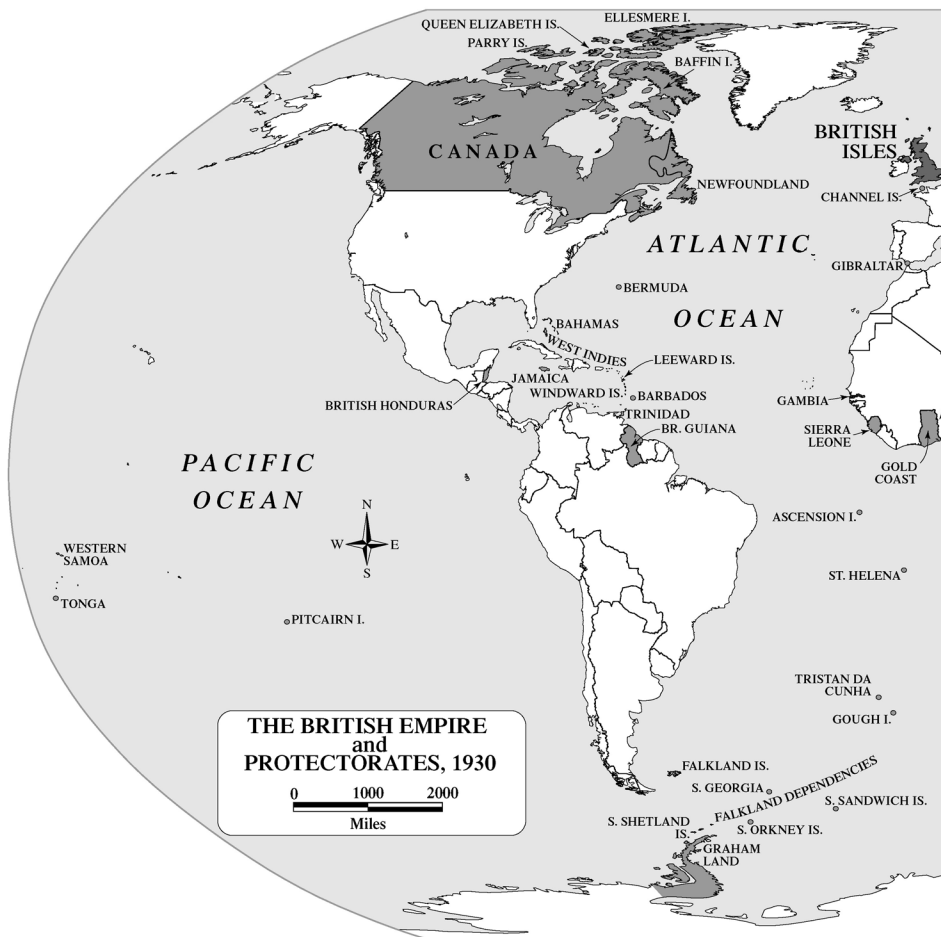
In Britain, the executive and the legislative functions are intertwined. The British Prime Minister is not elected as such but generally takes that office as one who commands a majority in the House of Commons (usually, but not necessarily, the Prime Minister is head of the majority party); the Prime Minister appoints ministers who are, with virtually no exception, drawn from the House of Commons or the House of Lords (as if, in the United States, the President could appoint only Representatives and Senators to cabinet positions). This circumstance makes individual ministers more independent from the Prime Minister than American cabinet members are from the President.

Subject to Senate confirmation, a U.S. President has the power to appoint not only cabinet secretaries but also a huge number of their deputies, assistants, and other officials. By contrast, a Prime Minister appoints only the heads of the different branches. Ministers are intended to set broad policy outlines and leave the actual administration of their departments to the permanent civil service.

CHURCHILL'S EMPIRE

How He Saw the World

Understanding where the biography's subject lived is as important as understanding when. Churchill considered himself to live in England, but more important, in the capital of the British Empire. It's easy, given the Britain of today, to forget the immensity of the Empire at its height, when London directed the government of more than one-quarter of the world's land and population. Churchill was alive when the Empire's reach was greatest, and its supreme position matched the enormity of his own ambitions. He never resigned himself to its diminishment.





CHURCHILL TRUE OR FALSE

Challenged Assumptions

Facts have an irresistible glamor and authority, but they're slippery: the actual life of a public figure like Churchill becomes obscured by myth, by assumptions we make, and by facts we think we know. Pulling information out of context in a crude "True or False?" quiz highlights the difficulty of grasping the true facts of a life, even a life as familiar as Churchill's.

Circle "True" or "False." See end of chapter for answers.

1. True / False

Churchill was a polo champion.

2. True / False

Churchill was a fencing champion.

3. True / False

Churchill owned a champion racehorse.

4. True / False

As a youth, Churchill hounded his mother for money.

5. True / False

As a youth, Churchill paid for his former nanny's funeral and the upkeep of her grave.

6. True / False

At age twenty-seven, Churchill was one of the world's highest-paid newspaper reporters.

7. True / False

Churchill was offered £10,000 to write a screenplay.

8. True / False

When Churchill was captured by the Boers in 1899, it was General Louis Botha, leader of the Commandos and later South Africa's first Prime Minister, who took him prisoner.

9. True / False

Churchill's mother married a man sixteen days older than her son.

10. True / False

Churchill's mother married a man three years younger than her son.

11. True / False

Churchill never attended a university.

12. True / False

Churchill won the Nobel Prize in literature.

13. True / False

Churchill didn't see *Hamlet* until he was in his late seventies.

14. True / False

Churchill altered his war memoirs to avoid antagonizing President Eisenhower.

15. True / False

Churchill was a Freemason.

16. True / False

After being blackballed at an exclusive club, Churchill founded his own.

17. True / False

Out of superstition, Churchill insisted that a champagne bottle be passed to the left around a table.

18. True / False

Churchill had a daughter who died as a child.

19. True / False

Churchill had a daughter who became a chorus girl.

20. True / False

Churchill had a daughter who committed suicide.

21. True / False

Churchill's great-granddaughter was one of Princess Diana's wedding attendants.

22. True / False

Churchill's family nickname was "Pig."

23. True / False

Clementine once threw a bowl of spinach at her husband's head.

24. True / False

Clementine once wrote a Prime Minister to beg him to find Winston a place in the government.

25. True / False

Clementine once sold a necklace to pay household expenses.

26. True / False

When Clementine learned that Winston had been injured, she rushed to the hospital without putting on her shoes.

27. True / False

When Churchill returned in 1939 as First Lord of the Admiralty, a message flashed out to all ships: "Winston is back."

28. True / False

Churchill was dressed each day by a valet.

29. True / False

Churchill wore pale pink silk underwear.

30. True / False

Churchill was accused of homosexual misconduct.

31. True / False

One of Churchill's closest associates was an effeminate aesthete.

32. True / False

Churchill was rumored to have an illegitimate child.

33. True / False

Churchill was accused of accepting a bribe.

34. True / False

Churchill hated paper clips.

35. True / False

Churchill demanded that the British civil service substitute "Yes" for "The answer is in the affirmative" in official communications.

36. True / False

When reports indicated that Germany was preparing to

bomb Coventry, Churchill refused to jeopardize intelligence sources by sending aid.

37. True / False

Churchill supported the policy of bombing German civilians.

38. True / False

Churchill preferred white wine to red wine.

39. True / False

At a conference in Egypt, Churchill wanted Egyptians excluded from his hotel.

40. True / False

Churchill sent £2 each month for fifty years to a former Indian servant.

41. True / False

Churchill refused the offer of a dukedom.

42. True / False

As First Lord in 1940, Churchill traveled with a suicide pill in his pen in case of capture.

43. True / False

Churchill pioneered the concept and development of the tank.

44. True / False

Churchill pioneered the concept and development of floating landing harbors.

45. True / False

Churchill pioneered the establishment of the British Air Force.

46. True / False

Churchill worked to ensure that Air Force officers were drawn from the social elite.

47. True / False

Churchill once traveled on a holiday with eight hundred pounds of luggage.

48. True / False

Churchill was the savior of his country.

Churchill made the following statements:

49. True / False

“I have a keen aboriginal desire to kill several of these odious dervishes.”

50. True / False

“I do not care so much for the principles I advocate as for the impression which my words produce and the reputation they give me.”

51. True / False

“No one can travel even for a little while among the Kikuyu tribes without acquiring a liking for these light-hearted, tractable, if brutish children, or without feeling that they are capable of being instructed and raised from their present degradation.”

52. True / False

“I only wish I were more worthy of you, and more able to meet the inner needs of your soul.”

53. True / False

“We have got all we want in territory, and our claim to be left in the unmolested enjoyment of vast and splendid possessions, mainly acquired by violence, largely maintained by force, often seems less reasonable to others than to us.”

54. True / False

Of the Navy: “Traditions! What traditions? Rum, sodomy—and the lash!”

55. True / False

“I know this war is smashing and shattering the lives of thousands every moment, and yet—I cannot help it—I enjoy every second I live.”

56. True / False

“As to freedom of the press, why should any man be allowed to buy a printing press and disseminate pernicious opinions calculated to embarrass the government?”

57. True / False

“A universal suffrage electorate with a majority of women voters will have shown themselves incapable of preserving those forms of government under which our country has grown great.”

58. True / False

“It is said that famous men are usually the product of an unhappy childhood.”

59. True / False

“India is no more a political personality than Europe. India is a geographical term. It is no more a united nation than the Equator.”

60. True / False

“Thus the world lives on hopes that the worst is over, and that we may yet live to see Hitler a gentler figure in a happier age.”

61. True / False

“The greatest cross I have to bear is the Cross of Lorraine.”

62. True / False

“Kindly remember I am Winston Churchill. Tell the station master to stop the train.”

63. True / False

“We have now reached the dawn of what is called the sixteenth century, which means all the years in the hundred years that begin with fifteen.”

Answers: All true, except for 8, 27, 36, 54, and 61. These well-known Churchill stories are apocryphal.