

## Winston Churchill's First 100 Days as Prime Minister

In 2002 Winston Churchill was voted the greatest Briton of all time. This was mostly because of his leadership as Prime Minister (PM) of the UK during WWII, and how he helped the **Allies** (the countries that opposed Germany) win victory.



Churchill became PM on **10 May 1940**, at a time when WWII was not going well for the Allies. This worksheet will help you understand what Churchill did in his first 100 days as PM, and evaluate how well he did.

### Recap: The Situation in May 1940

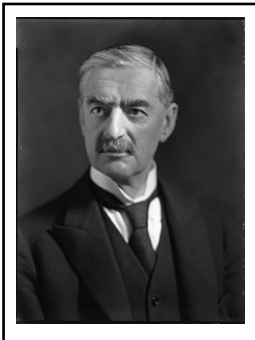
- Germany had invaded Poland in **September 1939** and defeated their army. Polish territory was then divided between Germany, USSR, Slovakia and Lithuania.
- The **Allies** had not launched any major attacks on Germany.
- **Rationing** started in the UK - this meant there were limits on the amount of food people could buy.
- **Evacuation** had started in the UK - this was when children from big cities were sent to live in the countryside to protect them if cities were bombed.
- Germany had invaded Denmark on **9 April 1940** and defeated them in a few hours. Germany then occupied Denmark - this meant they put soldiers there and tried to control their government.
- Germany had invaded Norway on **9 April 1940**. The Allies had sent soldiers and ship to help the Norwegians resist the Germans.

### Read the bullet-points and answer these questions in your book:

1. Which three countries had Germany invaded?
2. What two things had started in the UK and how do you think they would have changed people's lives?

**Challenge:** What do you think stopped the Allies doing more to oppose Germany in the early months of WWII? (1-3 sentences)

### Neville Chamberlain



When WWII started the PM of the UK was **Neville Chamberlain**. He was a member of the **Conservatives** and had been PM since 1937. Chamberlain had made many new laws that improved people's lives (e.g. giving workers the right to one week of paid holiday per year). However, Chamberlain is now most remembered for supporting **Appeasement**.

At first Chamberlain had a high level of public support and MPs in Parliament backed him. This changed when Germany invaded Norway in **April 1940**. Many people blamed Chamberlain for not responding quickly enough. From **7-9 May 1940** a debate was held in Parliament where many MPs criticised Chamberlain's leadership.

MPs demanded a **coalition government** (where all the different political parties unite together) but the **Labour** and **Liberal** parties said they would not take part in one if Chamberlain was PM. Early on **10 May 1940** news arrived that Germany had attacked Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, and France. That evening Chamberlain resigned as PM. The new PM was **Winston Churchill**, a Conservative MP who the other parties would accept as leader. Churchill was an experienced politician who had criticised the policy of Appeasement and had been in charge of the Navy.

### Read the three paragraphs and answer these questions in your book:

1. Write one positive thing about Neville Chamberlain and one negative thing.
2. Why did MPs lose faith in Chamberlain's leadership?
3. Why do you think Churchill was selected as the new PM?

**Challenge:** Do you think Chamberlain deserves his mostly negative reputation? (1-3 sentences)

## Main Task: Churchill's First 100 Days as PM

### Instructions:

1. Read through the boxes, which contain information on events from May to August 1940.
2. Using the information in the boxes and on the other page of this worksheet, make a timeline of important events - remember, it should be in **chronological** order.
3. Classify each box. If you think it showed Churchill did well draw a 😊 next to it. If you think it shows he was not effective draw a 😞. If you think it shows neither draw a 😐.
4. Using the evidence from the boxes, in your book write one WWW for Churchill's first 100 days as PM and one EBI.
5. Give Churchill a mark out of 10 for his first 100 days as PM. Write 1-3 sentences in your book explaining why you gave him this mark. (Sentence starter: 'I would give Churchill ... out of 10 because...')

**Challenge:** Imagine you are a Member of Parliament (MP) in August 1940. Write a one-paragraph speech about how you think Churchill has done as PM. You can either be very critical of him or very supportive. Make sure to include evidence from the boxes to back up your points.

Some important British politicians believed that they would certainly be defeated by Germany and began to say the UK should surrender.

From **26-28 May 1940** Churchill met with leading British officials. He persuaded them that the UK must not surrender and gained their support for continuing to fight Germany.

On **13 May 1940** Churchill made his first speech in Parliament after becoming PM. He said:

**I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat... What is our aim? I can answer in one word: Victory. Victory at all costs ... Victory, however long and hard the road may be.**

His inspirational words led to a huge round of applause and helped persuade MPs Churchill was the right choice to be PM.

On **18 June 1940**, with France about to be defeated by Germany, Churchill made an important speech in Parliament. He said:

**The Battle of France is over... the Battle of Britain is about to begin... The whole fury and might of the enemy must very soon be turned on us... Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves, that if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, This was their finest hour.**

His words helped persuade MPs and the public that surrender to the Germans was not an option

On **10 July 1940** the Battle of Britain began, as Germany prepared to invade the UK. Thanks to the pilots of the Royal Air Force (20% of whom came from overseas) Germany was never able to cross the Channel.

On **20 August 1940** Churchill thanked the pilots in a speech saying, **Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.** However, Churchill was unable to do anything to prevent Germany bombing targets in the UK.

On **4 June 1940** Churchill made an important speech in Parliament. He warned the British people that the war was going badly and they might be invaded by Germany. However, he also inspired them to fight on by saying:

**We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.**

On **17 May 1940** Germany defeated the Netherlands when the last remaining Dutch soldiers surrendered.

The Dutch government had asked Churchill to send soldiers to fight the Germans but he was unable to spare any to help them.

After the Dutch surrendered, Germany occupied the Netherlands.

Germany invaded France on **10 May 1940**. British soldiers had been sent to help France fight the Germans.

Churchill flew to France several times to try and organise the fight-back against the Germans but he was unable to do anything to stop them advancing.

On **25 June 1940** France surrendered to Germany.

On **28 May 1940** Belgium surrendered to Germany.

Churchill had been able to send the British Army to help Belgium and also personally visited the country. However, this was not enough to save Belgium.

After they won victory, Germany occupied Belgium.

As a result of German victories, 340,000 Allied soldiers (mostly British) retreated to the port of **Dunkirk** in northern France, where they were surrendered by German soldiers.

Churchill helped save them by ordering a rescue fleet of hundreds of ships from **26 May to 4 June 1940**.

However, it was still a disaster for the Allies as 3 weeks later France surrendered to Germany.