

Winston Churchill

In this lesson, you will learn about Sir Winston Churchill, a British wartime leader. You will practice asking and answering questions, and you will learn a useful everyday idiom.

“Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.” —Winston Churchill



Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Do you know when and how long Winston Churchill was prime minister of Great Britain?
2. Do you know which political party Churchill belonged to?
3. Did you know that Winston Churchill won a Nobel Prize? Can you guess what the prize was for?
4. Have you ever heard any of Churchill's famous speeches?
5. Do you know what it means to be given the title of "knight"?

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match the words on the left with the correct meanings on the right.

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| _____ 1. inspire | a) to win a victory |
| _____ 2. capture | b) management of money |
| _____ 3. escape | c) to make better |
| _____ 4. pension | d) to get free |
| _____ 5. employment | e) to make more modern |
| _____ 6. defeat | f) to take by force, to make a prisoner |
| _____ 7. improve | g) given in respect |
| _____ 8. update | h) work |
| _____ 9. finance | i) a payment made to a retired person |
| _____ 10. honorary | j) to encourage, to give positive feelings |

Reading

1. Winston Churchill is best known as the prime minister of Great Britain during the Second World War (1940–1945). His speeches to the British people during the war **inspired** many to keep fighting.
2. Churchill was born in Oxfordshire, England, on November 30, 1874. He went to military college. As a young officer, he served in Cuba, India, and the Sudan. In 1899, he went to South Africa to report on the Boer War. He was **captured** by the Boers, but **escaped** and wrote a book about it.
3. In 1900, Churchill was elected to parliament as a Conservative. But he was soon unhappy with their policies and, in 1904, he became a Liberal.
4. From 1906 to 1922, Churchill held many important government jobs. He brought in **employment**, old-age **pension**, and health laws that **improved** people's lives. He **updated** the British Navy, which then **defeated** the German Navy in the First World War. He also set up the Royal Air Force.
5. In 1924, Churchill became a Conservative again. He was **finance** minister until 1929, when they lost the election. From 1929 to 1939, he was not in government.
6. By 1939, Nazi Germany was trying to take over Europe, and Churchill was put in charge of Britain's war plans. When the prime minister quit in 1940, Churchill replaced him and was prime minister for the rest of the Second World War.
7. Churchill knew Britain could not defeat Germany by itself. He asked the United States to help. They shared and traded war supplies and fought together. Churchill also needed the Soviet Union's help. To get it, Britain and the United States said that the Soviet Union could control Eastern Europe after the war.
8. In 1945, the war ended, and Churchill lost the next election. He was prime minister again from 1951 to 1955. In 1953, he was made a knight and he won the Nobel Prize for Literature. In 1963, he became an **honorary** American citizen.
9. Churchill retired in 1955. He continued to write and to paint, something he was very good at. He died in England in 1965.

Comprehension

A. Matching

Match the information on the left with the correct date(s) on the right.

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| _____ 1. Churchill lived from... | a) 1953 |
| _____ 2. Churchill was prime minister from... | b) 1874 |
| _____ 3. Churchill was born in... | c) 1900 |
| _____ 4. Churchill was a member of the Liberal Party from... | d) 1963 |
| _____ 5. Churchill was captured by the Boers in... | e) 1940–1945, 1951–1955 |
| _____ 6. Churchill was first elected to government in... | f) 1874–1965 |
| _____ 7. Churchill was made a knight in... | g) 1904–1924 |
| _____ 8. Churchill became an honorary American in... | h) 1945 |
| _____ 9. Churchill retired in... | i) 1899 |
| _____ 10. World War II ended in... | j) 1955 |

B. Ask and Answer

Practice asking and answering the following questions with your partner. Then write your answers in your notebook. Use complete sentences.

1. What kind of college did Churchill attend?
2. Name four countries that he went to before becoming a politician.
3. When did Churchill first become a member of the British Parliament?
4. Why did Churchill leave the Conservative Party and join the Liberals?
5. What did he accomplish when he was in the Liberal government?
6. Which political party did he belong to when he became prime minister?
7. Which countries helped Britain to defeat Nazi Germany?
8. How was Churchill able to inspire the British people during the war?

Vocabulary Review

A. Complete the Sentences

Find a word (or words) in the story on page 2 to replace the words in brackets and complete the following sentences.

- Churchill first became a member of the British _____ in 1900.
(government)
- Churchill left the Conservative Party because he didn't like their _____.
(rules and principles)
- Churchill went to a _____.
(school to learn how to be a soldier)
- Britain and the United States _____ war supplies.
(exchanged)
- Churchill _____ in 1955.
(stopped working)

B. Who's in Charge?

to be in charge of (idiom)
to be the top person,
to have the top responsibility

Example:

Churchill was in charge of Britain's war plans.

- Who is in charge of your classroom? _____
- Who is in charge of your country? _____
- Who is in charge of an airplane? _____
- Who is in charge of a bank? _____
- Who is in charge of a ship? _____
- Who is in charge of your school? _____

Answer the questions on the right.

Discussion

- What characteristics make a great leader?
- Do you think a great leader must be a great public speaker?
- Churchill was an army officer before he became prime minister. Do you think this is necessary training for a leader?
- Who do you think was the best leader throughout history? Why?