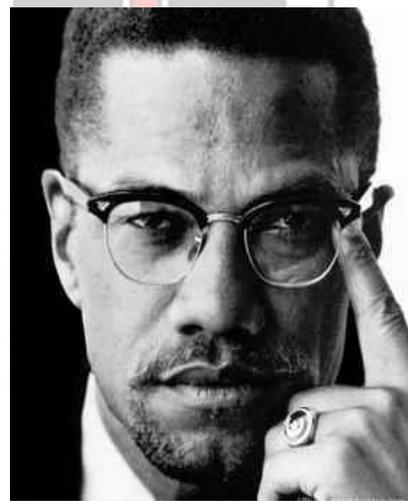


# History at Durham Johnston Comprehensive School



**Unit 1 Y113:** Britain 1930–1997  
(Enquiry topic: Churchill 1930–1951).

**Unit 2 Y213:** The French Revolution and the rule of Napoleon 1774–1815.

**Unit 3 Y319:** Civil Rights in the USA 1865–1992.

**Unit 4: Y100:** An independent piece of research coursework on a British Prime Minister of your choice from the period 1930–1997.

NAME:

Dear students,

Congratulations on choosing to study A-Level History at Durham Johnston Comprehensive School. Our A-Level course is designed to give students an introduction to a wide array of topics, depth studies and skills which are not only important as preparation for further study and employment, but also for your development as active citizens in British society. The topics you will be studying will give you a much better understanding of Britain's recent history, a wider appreciation of the changes that took place in France in the late eighteenth century, and an understanding of the political, economic and social shifts in American society in over a century of rapid and significant change. You will be taught how to analyse key events, evaluate and reach judgements, build arguments and challenge others' viewpoints. You will also be shown how to research, apply a critical eye to sources of evidence about the past, and understand how and why historians can study the same material and yet reach widely differing perspectives.

In short- you are going to be doing a lot of thinking! History is a subject that rewards those who really engage with the material: the more you know, the easier the analysis and the better the judgements; the more you think about the key issues of the historical periods you're studying, the easier it becomes to produce convincing judgements about people and events that have shaped the world as we know it today.

These activities are designed to allow you to begin to practise thinking like a historian. You don't need to have any prior knowledge of the events being discussed in order to answer the questions, although obviously any additional research or further reading would strengthen your answers. We will use your answers to inform debate and discussion when we start in September, and it will give you a good understanding of the type of work you can expect as you specialise further in your studies. **Your teacher for the British module will collect this work in during your first lesson with them in September.**

Good luck- and I look forward to meeting many of you in a few months' time.

**Mr Doyle**

Subject Leader for History

**SOURCE A**

**Anger of Winston Churchill's family as St Paul's Cathedral lambasts him as a 'white supremacist' in an online post about Britain's great wartime leader** (*Chris Hastings, Mail on Sunday, 24 June 2023*)

St Paul's Cathedral has provoked uproar by describing Sir Winston Churchill as an 'unashamed imperialist' and 'white supremacist' in an online post about Britain's great wartime leader.

The cathedral, which was the venue for Sir Winston's state funeral in 1965, removed the highly derogatory descriptions only last week after receiving complaints that they vilified a man voted as the greatest-ever Briton.

The Mail on Sunday understands the insulting description appeared on St Paul's website for more than a year – but it remained unclear last night who was responsible for writing it.

In an article about the state funeral, the website noted the war leader's role in 'fending off the threat of invasion and enabling a fightback against the Nazi occupation of Europe'.

But it added: 'He is also a figure of controversy, as he was an unashamed imperialist and white supremacist.'

Sir Winston's grandson Nicholas Soames last night said that the family were upset by what he called the 'deeply offensive, thoughtless, stupid and ignorant' remarks.

The 75-year-old Tory peer said his grandfather had 'saved England' by leading the fight against Hitler's racist Nazi regime.

He added: 'Even for allowances of some of the sort of more extreme views in the Church of England, this is really going too far. It was deeply offensive and caused great offence to a number of members of my family, and representations were made by a number of people. I am glad to see that the cathedral's canon chancellor has now written apologising and having the thing taken down. I don't know how it got there. It's the sort of thing that is so thoughtless, stupid and ignorant and does the image of the Church so much harm. It's such a terrible thing to say.'

Lee Anderson, deputy chairman of the Conservative Party, said: 'It is getting ridiculous. Anyone publicising information like this needs to take a long, hard look at themselves and ask themselves why they hate this country so much, its history and its heritage. They are idiots.'

The offensive description of Sir Winston was changed on Friday to read: 'He is also a figure of controversy, especially when viewed from a modern perspective.'

The cathedral acted after receiving a complaint from Nick Gent, 72, a member of the Friends of St Paul's. In his letter last month, he wrote: 'I believe that some of the language you have used in Churchill's profile is too heavily charged, condemnatory to the extent that it demonises Churchill. Perhaps this language is a function of ignorance or of political ideology.' He accepted that Churchill often made himself 'a hostage to fortune' with comments and jokes which would be regarded as unacceptable today.

But he said it was important to judge the man by his achievements in the defeat of Hitler.

In an email to Mr Gent on Thursday, canon chancellor Dr Paula Gooder wrote: 'We agree that the tone is not consonant with the rest of the page or pages on the website. We have removed the phrase and hope that the paragraph now feels more balanced and appropriate in this context.'

Mr Gent said: 'Churchill was such a great humanitarian who transcended politics. He should be a role model for the young.'

Historian Andrew Roberts said: 'It's excellent that St Paul's have dropped their ultra-woke stance. The cathedral was at the centre of the world during Churchill's funeral in 1965, and their original ill-chosen words detracted from that. Since pretty much everything from the past is controversial, especially when viewed from a modern perspective; their new wording is pleasingly meaningless.'

Lady Antonia Fraser, historian and author said: 'There is a great deal more to be said about Churchill and that he was a wonderful man. He is regularly voted the greatest Englishman and, as far as I am concerned, that is where he stays.'

Frank Furedi, emeritus professor of sociology at Kent University, said: 'Branding Churchill as an unashamed imperialist and white supremacist is not only an act of historical distortion but an attempt to discredit everything positive that Britain stood for in the 20th century.'

A spokesperson for St Paul's said: 'Information on our website regarding the state funeral of Winston Churchill was recently updated. It was brought to our attention that part of the text within the description was not consistent with the tone of the rest of the page.'

'We have therefore reworded the paragraph with the aim of making the description more balanced and appropriate in its context.'

**SOURCE B**

**Why Churchill's legacy marks a fault line in British politics:** The wartime leader's influence on the British establishment's psyche runs deep. (Charlie Cooper, *Politico*, 14 February 2019)

He has been dead more than half a century, but Winston Churchill still has the power to set the U.K. political agenda. Labour Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell's decision to brand the wartime leader a "villain" for his role in suppressing a strike in a Welsh mining town more than a century ago merited responses from the prime minister's official spokesman, the leader of the House of Commons and the mayor of London. It even briefly supplanted Brexit as the main topic of national political conversation.

The whole episode, prompted by a two-word answer to a quick-fire question at a POLITICO London Playbook event Wednesday evening, is another reminder that Churchill is lodged deeply in the psyche of the British establishment — and the Conservative Party in particular. Revering his leadership of the country during World War II is a matter of pride for some. For most it's just sound history. His words and deeds of that time are rarely contested. McDonnell himself, responding to the storm he created, acknowledged Churchill was "obviously a hero" in the war years.

The rest of his life and career is much more contentious. But for someone who within months could be running Her Majesty's Treasury, McDonnell's "villain" comment is still a political risk — such is the esteem in which Churchill is held.

As Theresa May's own spokesman was at pains to point out to Westminster journalists on Thursday, at a daily press briefing, Churchill topped a public poll of "Greatest Britons" in 2002. "The British public will reach its own judgment on this characterization of Churchill," the spokesman added, before recalling that May herself has "quoted and referenced Sir Winston Churchill on many occasions and acknowledged him as one of the great prime ministers of the 20th century." She even has a picture of him on the wall of her Downing Street office, the spokesman said.

Clearly, to stand in Churchill's shadow is still a mark of honour for many politicians — and to condemn him is probably still an unwise move for any party that wants to be electable. But Churchill's memory is not so sacred as to be beyond reproach. Critical assessments are now much more mainstream than they were, even as recently as that public vote of 2002.

Responding to claims last month by a Green party member of the Scottish parliament, Ross Greer, that Churchill was a "white supremacist" and "mass murderer," Tory peer Danny Finkelstein agreed in the *Times* earlier this week that the first assessment, at least, was correct. "Churchill justified British imperialism as being for the good of the 'primitive' and 'subject races' ... to call him a white supremacist is nothing but the truth. And it is never a good idea to deny the truth," Finkelstein wrote. "To insist that for Churchill to be a great man he must never have thought or done anything bad is to insist that the world is divided into good and bad people, and you can only be one or the other."

It may have been this that Labour's Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London, was referring to when he said the former prime minister was "an imperfect leader" and that "he did many things that I would disagree with, with the benefit of hindsight."

McDonnell's comment fit within a tradition of left-wing resentment of Churchill for his role, as home secretary in 1910, in using the army to crack down on striking coal miners in the south Wales mining town of Tonypanody. One protester died and hundreds were injured, though Churchill's responsibility for sending in the troops is contested by historians. Greer's critique, by contrast, reflected the extent to which Churchill's record is being reassessed by a new generation that is far more queasy about adulating such a man — no matter what his achievements. It is in the same vein as student protests at universities across the U.K. that have forced colleges to remove statues and other tributes to colonial era benefactors and alumni whose actions are deemed by a new generation to be beyond the pale.

Finkelstein detected "something else at play, something beyond Churchill" in the increasingly heated debate about his legacy. "It is hard for one generation not to be irritated when its ideas and assumptions are challenged by the new generation," he wrote. "We think we have done our best to reach an enlightened view of the world and it can be annoying to have our heroes and values questioned." That is not to say some of Churchill's defenders won't fight back hard. In an op-ed for the *Telegraph*, Former Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson — who has written a biography of Churchill — accused McDonnell of peddling "myths of the old hard left." "Churchill was not only a man with a conspicuous social conscience but probably the greatest leader this country has ever had. What on earth has happened to Labour?" he wrote.

Churchill's grandson, Nicholas Soames, who is also a Tory MP, condemned the shadow chancellor as a "Poundland Lenin" and declared his remark a "very foolish and stupid thing to say." Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt condemned Greer's intervention last month, saying Churchill was the "greatest Briton who ever lived. You only have the freedom to make stupid, ill-informed comments because he fought for your freedom. Some irony?" he added.

With the future so uncertain, and the odds — in the view of many observers — stacked against success, it is perhaps no wonder that British politicians cling so tightly to a national hero who, despite being wrong about so much, ended up being right at the most important moment.

As for the wider British population, while still holding Churchill dear, they may be wondering what all the fuss is about. May's spokesman declined to mention that in a more recent BBC TV poll, earlier this year, to find the 20th century's greatest global icon, Churchill was chosen by a panel of experts to be among four "leaders" in the running — but lost out in the public vote to a much more forward-looking figure: Nelson Mandela. In the final itself, the public picked a contemporary of Churchill's, and also a war hero: computing pioneer Alan Turing.

Westminster might still obsess about Churchill. But those Britons who considered a black South African leader and a gay scientist more iconic than their wartime leader appear to be moving on.

Read through sources A and B. Both are modern commentary on Winston Churchill, his legacy and reputation.

- 1) Read through Source A. In one sentence, summarise the article. What's the 'headline' interpretation that it wants you to take away?
  
- 2) Now do the same for Source B.
  
- 3) Clearly, both interpretations are different. Therefore, we need to apply a critical eye over how the interpretations are put together in order to establish the strength and validity of the different viewpoints.

Read through Source A again. It uses evidence and commentary from six different sources to build its argument. For each of the sources, identify who they are, summarise what they say, and identify how far you think their judgement on this issue can be trusted, and why.

**Nicholas Soames**

**Lee Anderson**

**Nick Gent**

**Andrew Roberts**

**Lady Antonia Fraser**

**Frank Furedi**

- 4) Source B clearly takes a different approach to the controversies surrounding Winston Churchill. Choose **three** of the figures quoted in the article. As with the previous task, identify who they are, summarise what they say, and identify how far you think their judgement on this issue can be trusted, and why.

**Commentator A:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Commentator B:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Commentator C:** \_\_\_\_\_

- 5) Nicholas Soames is quoted in both articles. However, the choice of comments that he has made is quite different. How does the selection of quotations support the overall purpose of each article?

- 6) Much is made in both articles of the fact that Churchill was voted top of the 100 Greatest Britons poll conducted by the BBC in 2002. After an initial poll of the general public, a top 100 list was created. Each figure in the top 10 then featured in their own documentary, after which the public were able to vote again to determine a ranking within the top ten. Each of the top ten Britons had a well-known public figure advocating for them in a final debate; in Churchill's case, Mo Mowlam (a former Labour party minister, known primarily for her role in brokering the Good Friday Agreement that ended the Troubles in Northern Ireland) spoke for him.

**What are the strengths of this poll as evidence upon which to build a historical argument, and why?**

**What are the weakness of this poll as evidence upon which to build a historical argument, and why?**

- 7) Having analysed both interpretations, you are nearly in a position to reach a balanced historical judgement. However, what we have not done yet is look at the actual events in question.

For each of the things mentioned, you need to find at least TWO SPECIFIC FACTS about them. This may be from the internet, although familiarising yourself with the local library may also be a good idea. You need to make sure that the facts you are selecting from your research allow you to assess which of the interpretations is most convincing:

**Winston Churchill's attitude to imperialism**

**Winston Churchill's role as Britain's political figurehead during the Second World War**

**Winston Churchill's actions at Tonypandy**

- 8)** Based on what you've read, the analysis you have done of the evidence used to build the interpretations, and the independent research you have done, you are now in a position to explain which interpretation you find most convincing. In no more than 500 words, explain why each interpretation is a convincing view of Winston Churchill's reputation using evidence, before going on to explain which you think is more convincing than the other, and why.