

MARGARET THATCHER

AND CONSERVATIVE POLITICS IN ENGLAND



Nicknamed the “Iron Lady,” Margaret Thatcher (1925–2013) served longer than any other UK prime minister in the 20th century.

IN A HISTORIC ELECTION IN 1979, VOTERS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM (UK) ELECTED MARGARET THATCHER TO BE PRIME MINISTER. SHE WAS THE FIRST WOMAN ELECTED TO THAT OFFICE. SHE WENT ON TO BE THE LONGEST-SERVING PRIME MINISTER IN THE 20TH CENTURY. AS HEAD OF THE UK GOVERNMENT AND LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY, THATCHER PROVOKED CONTROVERSY. EVEN AFTER HER DEATH IN 2013, SHE REMAINS A HERO TO SOME AND A VILLAIN TO OTHERS.

Born in 1925, Thatcher was the daughter of Alfred Roberts, a middle-class grocer in the town of Grantham, England. Young Margaret Roberts, her sister, mother, and father lived in an apartment above one of Alfred’s two grocery stores. Later, Thatcher said of her family that “we always lived within our means.” Her father was involved in local politics and was elected as mayor of Grantham for a year in 1945.

Margaret Roberts entered Oxford University in 1943 to study chemistry. She worked on a project of X-ray crystallography, supervised by Dorothy Hodgkin, who later won a Nobel Prize in chemistry. While in college, she developed an interest in politics and served as president of the Oxford Conservative Association.

The Conservative Party, also called the Tory Party, is one of two major parties in England along with the more liberal-left Labour Party (in the UK, the word “labor” is spelled *labour*). Conservatism is a political ideology that generally supports private property rights, a limited government, a strong national defense, and the importance of tradition in society. The Labour Party grew out of the trade union movement in the 19th century, and it traditionally supports the interests of working people, who want better wages, working conditions, and job security.

After college, Roberts worked as a chemist for a plastics company. She still had an interest in Conservative Party politics and even in running for office. She met Denis Thatcher, a wealthy businessman, at a Conservative Party conference, and the two married in 1951. Soon after, she studied law and became a tax lawyer. In 1959, she was elected to the House of Commons in Parliament.

From then on, Thatcher’s career was entirely in politics. From 1959 until 1970, she served in Parliament. In 1970, Conservative Party Prime Minister Edward Heath appointed her edu-

cation secretary, part of his Cabinet (government officials in charge of departments). As secretary, she made a controversial decision to end the government’s distribution of free milk to schoolchildren aged 7 to 11. The press revealed that she privately opposed ending the free-milk policy, but the Treasury Department had pressured her to cut government spending.

‘Who Governs Britain?’

Struggles between the UK government and trade unions marked Thatcher’s career. In the 1970s, the UK’s economy experienced inflation, which devalued the currency and made goods and services more expensive. Prime Minister Heath attempted to fight inflation by capping pay raises for public employees. This affected coal miners, who worked for the government. In protest in 1973, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) had the miners slow down their work to the bare minimum, which reduced the supply of coal.

Heath responded with an energy-saving policy called Three-Day Week, which limited non-essential businesses to only three consecutive days a week to conserve energy. This put the government and NUM further into

conflict. Miners found their hours and wages cut. They went on strike in 1974. In the midst of this conflict, Heath called for a parliamentary election, which UK prime ministers may do. Heath's campaign slogan was "Who governs Britain?," which was a challenge to the NUM. But Heath and the Conservatives lost, and the Labour Party won.

The following year, Thatcher defeated Heath to become the leader of the opposition. This is an official position in Parliament, filled by the leader of the largest minority party in the House of Commons. The position enabled Thatcher to speak prominently about the ever-weakening British economy, the threat of the Soviet Union in world affairs, and other concerns.

When the Labour government of Prime Minister James Callaghan had its own troubles with trade unions, Thatcher seized an opportunity. With inflation skyrocketing, Callaghan imposed pay caps on public employees, much like Heath before him. Many trade unions went on nationwide strikes during the winter of 1978–79, known as the "Winter of Discontent." Piles of garbage went uncollected. In some areas, gravediggers left bodies unburied. Thatcher called for a new election. When Callaghan did not hold a new election, Thatcher called the Labour government "chickens."

Then, in March 1979, Thatcher made a motion in Parliament for a vote of no-confidence in Callaghan. In this kind of vote, members of Parliament vote up or down whether they want to continue having their current prime minister (and majority party). Callaghan lost by one vote, which forced a general election by the people.

Thatcher ran against Callaghan, whose popularity was sinking. The Conservative Party hired an advertising agency, Saatchi & Saatchi, to design an ad for the election. The agency came up with a poster that read in bold letters "Labour Isn't Working" above an image of what looked like an unemployment line. This novel political move helped sway public opinion further against Callaghan's Labour government. In the May 1979 general election, the Conservative Party won a majority of seats in Parliament, making Margaret Thatcher prime minister.

First Female Prime Minister

Thatcher's 1979 election was newsworthy partly because she was the first woman to be prime minister of the UK. Unfortunately, some men in Parliament were condescending to her simply because she was a woman in a strong leadership role. One said that arguing with her was "prototypical" of arguing with a woman, having "no rational sequence."

She downplayed the fact that she was a woman, however, and never embraced the feminist movement. "You see," she later said, "you do not actually elect women Prime Ministers. . . . You elect a person . . . and the fact that they are either men or women is secondary."

*The agency came
up with a poster that
read in bold letters
'Labour Isn't Working'*

In fact, she was more proud of being the first scientist to become prime minister than being the first woman in that role. During her three terms as prime minister, she never appointed one woman to a Cabinet position. She did, however, make thousands of positions in the army open to women. She also supported abortion rights for women throughout her political career.

Ending the Consensus

Thatcher's victory did more than end the rule of the Labour Party. She and her supporters had long hoped to shake up the Conservative Party. "If a Tory does not believe that private property is one of the main bulwarks of individual freedom," Thatcher wrote in 1975, "then he had better become a socialist and have done with it."

As prime minister, Thatcher's main challenge was to reduce inflation. Neither the previous Conservative nor Labour governments had managed to do that. Thatcher believed that a big part of the problem was that the Conservative Party was not confrontational enough.

Since World War II, the UK had been run under what was known as a "consensus" between Labour and Con-

servatives over a welfare state, collecting taxes and borrowing money to fund welfare programs and services for the public. Both parties supported the welfare state and also trade unions, even though they disagreed about how the welfare state should be run, how much it should provide, and how much power the trade unions should have. For example, both parties agreed that the government should provide universal healthcare and national unemployment insurance for all citizens.

Most of the Tory leaders in Parliament were from the upper class and had inherited their wealth. They were called "one-nation Tories" because they accepted the consensus. Many of them also felt a sense of *noblesse oblige*, the obligation of nobles to take care of the lower classes.

Margaret Thatcher was different. She had humbler middle-class beginnings. She had married a wealthy man, but she was independent-minded and had studied science and law. She intended to shake up the consensus, which she felt had led to uncontrollable inflation and a culture of dependence on government. This culture had allowed the trade unions to have too much influence on government.

The Basis of Thatcherism

Since studying at Oxford, she had developed an interest in the theories of Austrian economist Friedrich von Hayek, a winner of the Nobel Prize in economics. Hayek favored minimal government control over businesses and the economy. Thatcher had enough support within her party to put into practice several of Hayek's ideas. One of these ideas was privatization, taking away government control of key industries and businesses.

She also liked the ideas of Milton Friedman, an American economist and also a Nobel Prize winner. Friedman was a monetarist, which means he believed the way to lower inflation was to control the supply of money in a nation's economy. Simply put, the more money in an economy, the less it is worth. That causes inflation. More important, the nation's money supply should grow at fixed rates, so businesses can plan accordingly and adjust how many goods or services they can afford to supply. In turn, the government lowers taxes and does not

control prices or wages.

Thatcher used privatization and monetarism as the main ways to accomplish her goals and end the consensus. These policies came to be known early on as “Thatcherism.” Throughout most of the 1980s, Thatcherism did reduce inflation.

Another element of Thatcherism was strong nationalism and the use of military and police power. In 1982, the military of Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic. The Falklands had been a colony of the UK since 1840, but the Argentine *junta* (military dictatorship), which was in power in 1982, disputed the UK’s claim to the islands. In response to the invasion, Thatcher sent the Royal Navy and Army to reclaim the island.

She made a controversial decision to torpedo an Argentinian ship, the *General Belgrano*, which was sailing outside the “exclusion zone,” where military engagement was allowed. Unless the *Belgrano* was directly threatening British ships, the use of a torpedo against it would be an act of aggression. The sinking of the ship killed more than 320 Argentine sailors, and Thatcher’s decision was criticized in Parliament.

The UK was victorious in the Falklands War, which lasted two months. Despite many critics of the *Belgrano* incident, Thatcher’s popularity soared. Partly based on sweeping nationalistic pride, Thatcher was able to fully implement her plan to end the consensus. By 1984, when she was elected a second time, she had fired almost all of the one-nation Tories from her Cabinet.

Popular Capitalism

A nationalized industry is owned and operated by a nation’s government. The way for government to privatize, then, is for government to sell off its nationalized industries to private corporations. Soon after Thatcher’s election in 1979, her government began the process by selling the profitable companies British Aerospace and British Cable & Wireless. Thatcher hoped that privatizing these companies would reduce government borrowing and thus reduce government debt.

After 1982, her government decided to privatize large utilities. It sold Britoil



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Supporters of the miners’ strike march in London in 1984.

and later British Gas, the national oil and gas companies, respectively. During Thatcher’s second and third terms in office, the government sold the British water and electric utilities. In total, the Thatcher government privatized more than 50 companies, including the Jaguar automobile company, British Steel, and British Airways.

Thatcher used the term “popular capitalism” to describe privatization in the 1980s. “Popular capitalism is nothing less than a crusade to enfranchise the many in the economic life of the nation,” she told the Conservative Party in 1986. “We Conservatives are returning power to the people.”

Popular capitalism, however, provoked controversy and even fierce resistance. When Thatcher announced a plan to privatize coal mines in March 1984, the plan included closing 20 mining pits for good. Many in the NUM, the union that had brought about the defeat of Edward Heath in 1974, were angered. But Thatcher was determined not to suffer Heath’s fate.

In response to the plan, the new NUM president, Arthur Scargill, called for a national miners’ strike. Scargill was a socialist, and he believed that Thatcherism harmed the UK. He and his supporters argued that the closures of the mines would lead to the loss of 20,000 jobs. Unemployment had already reached 3 million since Thatcher took office.

Thatcher argued that the mining pits were unprofitable, and job losses were inevitable. But she also argued

that the strike itself was illegal. The NUM constitution called for a national ballot of miners to decide whether to strike. In April 1984, when Scargill could not get the required 55 percent approval vote, a special delegation of the NUM changed the rule to a simple majority of 51 percent and approved the strike. But a high court in September declared that the strike was indeed illegal.

Nonetheless, the strike lasted a year and was marked by violent episodes. Miners who refused to strike and continued working met threats and occasional assaults by some strikers. Notable violence occurred between thousands of police and strikers at Orgreave in June 1984. Scargill planned for about 5,000 miners to block convoys of coal-fuel (coke) convoys there. About 10,000 police, gathered from all over Britain, confronted the miners. Violent clashes ensued, and dozens of people were injured on both sides. In response to the “Battle of Orgreave,” Thatcher called the strike “an attempt to substitute the rule of the mob for the rule of law.”

At the height of the strike, but unrelated to the strike itself, she survived a bombing by a radical Irish nationalist. Five others were killed. The question of Northern Ireland’s independence had been a longstanding and extremely contentious issue. The day after the bombing, Thatcher gave a speech to the Conservative Party and said, “And now it must be business as usual.” Business as usual included ending the miners’ strike.

The end was still months away. Because a 1980 law banned strikers’ families from receiving welfare benefits, many of them relied on handouts in 1984 and 1985. After a year out of work, exhausted NUM delegates agreed to abandon the strike without even getting an agreement with the Thatcher government.

As a result, Thatcher achieved part of her popular capitalist goal. Largely because of the failed miners’ strike, all trade unions were weakened. Union membership fell from 12 million in the 1970s to almost half that by the end of her administration in 1990. The coal mines were not privatized, however, until 1994.

Excerpt from Labour Party Leader Neil Kinnock's Speech to the Labour Party Conference October 3, 1989 in Brighton, England

Neil Kinnock was the leader of the Labour Party and leader of the opposition from 1983 until 1992, during most of Thatcher's years as prime minister. In the excerpt below, Kinnock criticizes her record in power.



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1 [The Japanese] gave her a lovely
2 reception. They had all the bands
3 out, red carpets. But let's face it: if
4 we had a relationship with a coun-
5 try and they had had a £1 billion trade deficit with us in 1979
6 and now they had a £5 billion trade deficit with us, I would
7 give them the red carpet treatment. They could have my
8 ticket for the Arms Park. There would be nothing too big.

9 Japan is a fairly good place to go to listen and to learn. That
10 did not happen when Mrs Thatcher went there. As usual, Mrs
11 Thatcher went there to lecture. She went to instruct the
12 Japanese that if only they would de-regulate, implement
13 free trade policies and remove exchange controls, they too
14 could enjoy the same level of unbounded success as Britain
15 has under Mrs Thatcher. That is what she was telling them.
16 She told them – and she tells us – that we have been enjoy-
17 ing an economic 'miracle.' [Cabinet member] Nigel Lawson
18 says the same, that we are enjoying a 'miracle.' *The Sun*, the
19 *Daily Mail* and even some of the newspapers say the same
20 thing. I suppose it is a miracle of a sort, because if you think
21 about it, when Moses parted the Red Sea and took the child-
22 ren of Israel across, that was a miracle. The trouble was
23 that in the middle of the same miracle along came Pharaoh's
24 army. They got onto the bottom of the Red Sea and it all
25 closed in on them: We have been going through this miracle
26 from the Pharaoh's army eye-view.

27 But it has been a miracle, truly. We have had oil wealth that
28 none of our major competitor countries has had. At the end
29 of that ten years, Britain has got two million unemployed still
30 – recorded unemployed – the highest inflation rate of any
31 industrialised country, the highest interest rates of any in-
32 dustrialised country, the biggest balance of payments deficit
33 by far of any industrialised country and, to go with it, some-
34 thing that is not too frequently disclosed, a huge net outflow
35 of long term capital. . . . The worst news is that underlying
36 those figures of failure – indeed causing those conditions – is
37 the Tories' refusal, year after year, to make the essential com-
38 mitment to the productive base of the economy: education and
39 training, research and development, science and the transport
40 and communications system are all objects of gross neglect.
41 We are the only major industrialised country that in the last
42 ten years has continually spent a lower and lower proportion
43 of our gross national product on education; everybody else
44 has been increasing it. Where could be the sense in that?

Excerpt from Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's Speech to the Conservative Party Conference October 13, 1989, in Blackpool, England

A short time after Kinnock's speech, Thatcher delivered a speech on her government's accomplishments to her party.



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1 Ten years ago, we set out together
2 on a great venture. To provide a new
3 lexicon for prosperity. To replace "It
4 can't be done," with "I'll have a go."
5 and we succeeded. Yes, there are
6 still serious problems to tackle and
7 I'll come to them in a moment. But
8 let us set them against the massive achievements of our pe-
9 riod in office. Industry – modernised at a pace unrivalled in
10 the post-war years. Productivity in manufacturing – gains
11 far exceeding those in Europe and North America. Profits –
12 the best for 20 years, leading to investment at record levels.
13 Jobs – more people in work in Britain than ever before. Liv-
14 ing standards – higher than we have ever known. Reducing
15 the national debt – not piling it up for our children to repay.
16 Privatisation – five industries that together were losing over
17 £2 million a week in the public sector, now making profits of
18 over £100 million a week in the private sector. That is the
19 measure of our achievements. But if you really want to see
20 how the economy is doing, look at the newspapers. No, I
21 didn't say read them. Just count the ones that didn't exist
22 before 1979 – and weigh the ones that did.

23 And if you're still not satisfied, talk to the Americans and
24 Japanese. They are investing more in Britain than in any
25 other European country. Moreover, for the first time in years
26 there are as many British as there are German companies in
27 the top 100 in Europe. and, further, of these, six of the seven
28 top earners are British or part British. And, with all these
29 achievements under our belt, who presumes to advise us on
30 inflation? Labour – who hold the record for the highest in-
31 flation for 50 years: 27 per cent. . . . [A]ll inflation is painful.
32 So is reducing it. But in 1982, we got it down to 5 per cent
33 and by 1986 to 3 per cent. Today, inflation is 7.6 per cent.
34 For a Conservative Government that's far too high. We must
35 get it down again. And we will.

36 [W]hen the choice is between high rates now or persistent
37 higher inflation later, with all the damage that would do, the
38 choice is clear. Inflation will come down through the use of
39 high interest rates, as it has in the past. And so it must, for
40 the rest of the world isn't standing still. America, Japan,
41 West Germany – they're all investing, modernising, and cut-
42 ting costs. To stay competitive, we must do the same. . . .
43 Only by steadily improving efficiency will we win and keep
44 our share of the world's markets. Britain's economy is
45 strong. When inflation is beaten – and it will be – Britain will
46 be stronger still.

The Legacy of the 'Iron Lady'

In 1980, Ronald Reagan was elected president of the U.S. In him, Thatcher found a kindred spirit, for they both shared a devotion to capitalist economics and a disdain for Communism and its influence in the world. In fact, it was a Soviet journalist who

gave her the nickname the "Iron Lady" for her adamant defense of the West against Soviet influence.

"Iron" also described her refusal to back down on issues. With inflation rates rising high during her third term, her government instituted a community charge to pay for local-

government services. The community charge, also called a poll tax, was a per-capita tax (per each adult). Since it charged every adult — rich or poor — the same amount, it was a regressive tax. Highly unpopular, the tax provoked riots and caused Conservative members of Parliament to break

ranks with the prime minister over the issue. She also angered members of her Cabinet and European leaders by refusing to negotiate on European currency issues. With her popularity dwindling, she chose to resign from office rather than change her mind on these issues. In 1990, John Major, a Tory and member of Thatcher's Cabinet, succeeded her as prime minister and abolished the poll tax.

Her strong will gave her a mixed legacy. Levels of unemployment, poverty, and home foreclosures reached record highs during her years as prime minister. Public spending reached a record low. The labor movement in the UK has never recovered from her government's confrontations with the NUM.

On the other hand, home ownership and private-sector service jobs boomed under Thatcher. Even the Labour Party accepted elements of Thatcherism in the 1990s, such as privatization. In other words, her bid to radically change her party and the UK succeeded, even though she did not permanently tackle inflation. Her administration marked a turning point for the UK, or perhaps a point of no return.



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Prime Minister Thatcher's time in office (1979-1990) overlapped with President Ronald Reagan's two terms in office (1981-1989), and the two conservative leaders forged a close relationship.

DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. Critics called Thatcher ruthless as a politician; admirers called her tenacious in standing up for her principles. What evidence is there in the reading for either or both of these characterizations?
2. Do you agree or disagree with Thatcher's statement: "We Conservatives are returning power to the people"? What examples from the reading support your position?
3. The U.S. Congress is often criticized for too much partisan fighting. Re-read the section "Ending the Consensus." Do you think this kind of consensus would be a proper way of running the U.S. government? Or should political parties stick to their ideologies and fight to implement them? Why?

CLOSE-READING ACTIVITY

Conservative vs. Labour

Each student should have a copy of the two speeches on page 13. Divide students into pairs.

Student instructions:

1. Read the excerpts of both speeches ("documents") silently to yourself. Note the dates for each as well as the speaker, setting, and audience. Underline two or three main points in each document. Circle words or phrases that you do not understand or need to look up. After reading, discuss the main points with your partner and try to reach agreement on what the documents are about. Read aloud the words or phrases that you do not understand and see if your partner can help explain them to you.
2. Re-read the excerpts, this time put a question mark in the margin next to any paragraph or sentence that you have a question about. Write down your questions on a separate sheet of paper if the margin does not give you enough room.
3. After re-reading, share your questions about the text with your partner. Determine if your partner can help you answer them, or if you need to look up more information.
4. Using the documents, answer the following questions. Specifically cite passages from the documents as evidence for your answers. When citing evidence, quote particular passages (and state the line number the passages are on).
 - a. How does each speaker describe the British economy?
 - b. What images does each speaker describe in order to criticize the other?
 - c. Do either of them use a literary reference? If so, what is it, and why do you think it is used?
 - d. What different ways do the speakers characterize Britain's relations with the country of Japan?
 - e. In what ways does each speaker use sarcasm to criticize the other?
5. Using the main article and documents, answer this question: Were Neil Kinnock's criticisms of Thatcher's government valid? Explain.
6. Be prepared to report your answers, with reasons and evidence, to the class.

Sources

Joan of Arc

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Standards

Joan of Arc

National High School World History Standard 23: Understands patterns of crisis and recovery in Afro-Eurasia between 1300 and 1450. (9) Understands the significance of Joan of Arc (e.g., her role in the Hundred Years War, her subsequent trial and execution, the Church's review of her trial 25 years later, and her revered image as a patron saint of France).

California History-Social Science Standard 7.6: Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the civilizations of Medieval Europe. (3) Understand the development of feudalism, its role in the medieval European economy, the way in which it was influenced by physical geography (the role of the manor and the growth of towns), and how feudal relationships provided the foundation of political order. (8) Understand the importance of the Catholic church as a political, intellectual, and aesthetic institution (e.g. founding of universities, political and spiritual roles of the clergy. . . .).

Common Core Standard RH.6-8.1 and RH.9-10.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

Common Core Standard RI.7.8: Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.

Common Core Standard RI.9-10.8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.

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National High School U.S. History Standard 9: Understands the United States territorial expansion between 1801 and 1861, and how it affected relations with external powers and Native Americans. (3) Understands shifts in federal and state policy toward Native Americans in the first half of the 19th century (e.g., arguments for and against removal policy, changing policies from assimilation to removal and isolation after 1825). (6) Understands Mexican and American perspectives of events leading up to the Mexican-American War (e.g., the Alamo, the treatment of Mexicans and Cherokees loyal to the Texas Revolution in the Lone Star Republic prior to 1846).

National High School U.S. History Standard 11: Understands the extension, restriction, and reorganization of political democracy after 1800. (2) Understands the positions of northern antislavery advocates and southern proslavery spokesmen on a variety of issues (e.g., race, chattel slavery, the nature of the Union, states' rights).

National High School U.S. History Standard 13: Understands the causes of the Civil War. (2) Understands events that fueled the political and sectional conflict over slavery and ultimately polarized the North and the South (e.g., the Missouri Compromise, the Wilmot Proviso, the Kansas-Nebraska Act)

California History-Social Science Standard 8.7: Students analyze the divergent paths of the American people in the South from 1800 to the mid-1800s and the challenges they faced. (2) Trace the development of slavery; its effects on black Americans and on the region's political, social, religious, economic, and cultural development; and identify the strategies that were tried to both overturn and preserve it. . . .

California History-Social Science Standard 8.8: Students analyze the divergent paths of American people in the West from 1800 to the mid-1800s and the challenges they faced. (6) Describe the Texas War for Independence and the Mexican-American

War, including territorial settlements, the aftermath of the wars, and the effects the wars had on the lives of Americans. . . .

California History-Social Science Standard 8.9: Students analyze the early and steady attempts to abolish slavery and to realize the ideals of the Declaration of Independence. (4) Discuss the importance of the slavery issue as raised by the annexation of Texas and California's admission to the union as a free state under the Compromise of 1850. (5) Analyze the significance of the States' Rights Doctrine. . . , the Compromise of 1850, the Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854). . . .

California History-Social Science Standard 8.10: Students analyze the multiple causes, key events, and complex consequences of the Civil War. (3) Identify the Constitutional issues posed by the doctrine of nullification and secession. . . .

Common Core Standard WHST.6-8.1 and 11-12.1: Write arguments focused on discipline specific content. . . .

Common Core Standard RH.6-8.2 and 11-12.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source. . . .

Common Core Standard SL.11-12.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Margaret Thatcher

National High School Civics Standard 5: Understands the major characteristics of systems of shared powers and of parliamentary systems. (2) Understands the major characteristics of parliamentary systems . . . (3) Understands the relative advantages and disadvantages of the various ways power is distributed, shared, and limited in systems of shared powers and parliamentary systems . . .

California History-Social Science Standard 12.9: Students analyze the origins, characteristics, and development of different political systems across time, with emphasis on the quest for political democracy, its advances, and its obstacles. (2) Compare the various ways in which power is distributed, shared, and limited in systems of shared powers and in parliamentary systems, including the influence and role of parliamentary leaders (e.g., William Gladstone, Margaret Thatcher).

Common Core Standard RH.1112.3: Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Common Core Standard RH.1112.6: Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

Common Core Standard SL.1112.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

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