A2 History: Unit F965
Historical Interpretations and Investigations

Name:  
ALPS Target:  

Booklet 1: Introduction to Thatcher
Britain under Thatcher 1979-1990

Groby Community College
What is the A2 History coursework?

It consists of two pieces:

1. **Interpretations:** a 2000 word essay analysing four passages relating to a key issue of debate in Thatcher’s Premiership. You need to comprehend, analyse and evaluate the ways in which the past has been interpreted, and may involve historiography, or different emphases and approaches.

2. **Investigations:** a 2000 word essay from a question that you have chosen relating to a key issue in Thatcher’s Premiership based around the analysis of 8-10 sources that you have selected from your own research. You need to reach an argued conclusion based on analysis in relation to the historical context. You can design your own question OR you can choose from a list of OCR questions.

Both pieces are worth 40 marks. Collectively, they account for 20% of your final A-Level.

What do I need to know?

Own knowledge is really important in this unit, because a big part of your analysis in both areas should be based on your own knowledge. The exam board specify:

- How far was Thatcher’s success as a result of Labour’s failure and the breakdown of post-war consensus?
- Did Conservative policies towards the economy, the welfare state and the trade unions amount to a revolution, or were their effects exaggerated?
- To what extent was Britain’s position in the world changed by Thatcher’s foreign policy?
- Did Thatcher’s fall from power come about mainly as a result of her style of government or real disagreements about policy?

What people/groups do I need to know about?

This is not an exhaustive list. It will help you to make notes about who each one is though.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conservative groups/politicians</th>
<th>Opposition groups and politicians</th>
<th>Foreign leaders/ Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edward (Ted) Heath</td>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geoffrey Howe</td>
<td>Gang of Four/ SDP-Liberal Alliance</td>
<td>European (Economic) Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigel Lawson</td>
<td>Michael Foot</td>
<td>NATO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan Walters</td>
<td>Neil Kinnock</td>
<td>Ronald Reagan (USA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willie Whitelaw</td>
<td>James Callaghan</td>
<td>Mikhail Gorbachev (USSR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keith Joseph</td>
<td>Arthur Scargill</td>
<td>General Galtieri (Argentina)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cecil Parkinson</td>
<td>National Union of Mineworkers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Heseltine</td>
<td>Trade Union Congress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norman Tebbit</td>
<td>Bobby Sands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis Pym</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Policy Studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wets/ Dries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Nation Tories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Learning Objectives**

To be able to understand how Parliament works and particular issues surrounding the British government.

**Success Criteria**

1. To be able to explain the workings of the British Parliament.
2. To be able to link the workings of the British Parliament to some events and figures in Thatcher’s governments.
3. CHALLENGE: to be able to analyse how certain aspects of the British Parliament may have worked in Thatcher’s favour.

**Task 1: Different Aspects of Parliament**

Identify on these diagrams of the Houses of Commons who sits where, who does what and how it works.

A: The Speaker’s Chair:
B: The Front Bench on the left hand side
C: The Back Bench on the left hand side
D: The Front Bench on the right hand side.
E: The Back Bench on the right hand side

Where would these people sit and what do they do?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Chancellor of the Exchequer</th>
<th>The Home Secretary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Shadow Cabinet</td>
<td>The Liberal Democrats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Press</td>
<td>Chief Whip for the Labour Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Minister for Defence</td>
<td>You, if you visited the House of Commons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Monarch</td>
<td>The Lords</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Task 2: First Past the Post, how MPs get to Parliament

Voting takes place in 650 single-member constituencies (635 in the 1979 General Election, 650 in 1983 and 1987). These are areas that the country is divided into in order to send a single member from that constituency to Parliament.

In this example, the UK has been divided into ten constituencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>J</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lab: 6</td>
<td>Lab: 3</td>
<td>Lab: 5</td>
<td>Lab: 4</td>
<td>Lab: 5</td>
<td>Lab: 5</td>
<td>Lab: 3</td>
<td>Lab: 5</td>
<td>Lab: 3</td>
<td>Lab: 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con: 3</td>
<td>Con: 5</td>
<td>Con: 6</td>
<td>Con: 5</td>
<td>Con: 4</td>
<td>Con: 3</td>
<td>Con: 5</td>
<td>Con: 5</td>
<td>Con: 4</td>
<td>Con: 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: 1</td>
<td>Other: 2</td>
<td>Other: 0</td>
<td>Other: 1</td>
<td>Other: 1</td>
<td>Other: 2</td>
<td>Other: 2</td>
<td>Other: 1</td>
<td>Other: 1</td>
<td>Other: 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a general election, each constituency has to vote for the candidate they wish to represent them in Parliament. Political parties themselves decide which candidate they wish to stand in each area, or candidates can be independent.

In a First Past the Post system, the candidate with the most votes wins a seat in Parliament. The party with the most seats wins the election and runs the country and the leader becomes Prime Minister. In this case, the Conservatives (represented by the black boxes) have won the election.

Questions

a) Which percentage voted Conservative, Labour or other?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labour %:</th>
<th>Conservative %:</th>
<th>Other %:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) What might seem unfair about this result?

............................................................................................................................................................
............................................................................................................................................................
............................................................................................................................................................


c) What do you think the advantages of this system are?

............................................................................................................................................................
............................................................................................................................................................
............................................................................................................................................................


d) What are the disadvantages? (think about the smaller parties in particular)

............................................................................................................................................................
............................................................................................................................................................
............................................................................................................................................................

............................................................................................................................................................
............................................................................................................................................................
............................................................................................................................................................
............................................................................................................................................................
............................................................................................................................................................
............................................................................................................................................................
............................................................................................................................................................
Task 3: Thatcher's performance in elections

### a) The 1979 General Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leader</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Labour</th>
<th>Liberal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>Margaret Thatcher (since Feb 1975)</td>
<td>James Callaghan (since April 1976)</td>
<td>David Steel (since July 1976)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seats won</td>
<td>339 (277- up by 62)</td>
<td>269 (319- down by 50)</td>
<td>11 (13- down by 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage vote</td>
<td>43.9% (8.1% swing up)</td>
<td>36.9% (2.3% swing down)</td>
<td>13.8% (4.5% swing down)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### b) The 1983 General Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leader</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Labour</th>
<th>SDP-Liberal Alliance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>Margaret Thatcher (since Feb 1975)</td>
<td>Michael Foot (since November 1980)</td>
<td>David Steel- Liberal (since July 1976), Roy Jenkins- SDP (since July 1982)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seats won</td>
<td>397 (277- up by 58)</td>
<td>209 (319- down by 50)</td>
<td>23 (11- although this was Liberal only- up by 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage vote</td>
<td>42.4% (1.5% swing up)</td>
<td>27.6% (9.3% swing down)</td>
<td>25.4% (11.6% swing up)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### c) The 1987 General Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leader</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Labour</th>
<th>SDP-Liberal Alliance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>Margaret Thatcher (since Feb 1975)</td>
<td>Neil Kinnock (since October 1983)</td>
<td>David Steel- Liberal (since July 1976), David Owen SDP (June 1983)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seats won</td>
<td>376 (397- down by 21)</td>
<td>229 (209- up by 20)</td>
<td>22 (23- down by 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage vote</td>
<td>42.2% (0.2% swing down)</td>
<td>30.8% (3.2% swing down)</td>
<td>22.6% (2.8% swing down)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What conclusions can you draw from these election results?

1) Conservative popularity over the three elections.

2) Labour popularity over the three elections.

3) How this system might seem unfair for the third party AND how the third party may have affected Labour’s results.

Homework Task

This is a list of events and issues that may have affected the outcome of these elections. Research them for homework, say which election they may apply to, and try to explain how. Write your notes on lined paper.

- The ‘Labour isn’t working’ poster
- The ‘Gang of Four’
- Nigel Lawson’s 1987 Budget
- The Falklands War
- The Longest Suicide Note in History
- The Winter of Discontent
- Michael Foot

CHALLENGE: Do you think that it was Conservative strength or Labour weakness that caused the Conservative victories in 1979, 1983 and 1987?
Learning Objectives
To be able to explain how Thatcher rose to become leader of the Conservative Party.

Success Criteria

1. To be able to explain how Thatcher overcame various challenges to be in a position to take over the Conservative Party in 1975.
2. To be able to identify Thatcher’s values and ideas, as well as her personality and characteristics that would follow her through her career.
3. To be able to draw conclusions about Margaret Thatcher’s time before 1975.

Task 1: The Career of Margaret Thatcher before Parliament

Read the following biography and quotations that follow and complete the questions.

- Born October 13 1925, in Grantham. The daughter of Alfred Roberts, a grocer, Methodist and elected councillor of Grantham. A man of strong values: commercial, political and religious, he preached at his local church. The Roberts family was comfortable financially, although Alfred kept his family to a Puritan austerity due to his religious beliefs in economy and temperance.
- Accepted at Somerville College, Oxford to read Chemistry, 1943 to 1947. Achieved a second class honours degree (partly due to being distracted by politics and illness during her finals).
- While at Oxford, part of the John Wesley Society attending the Wesley Memorial Church and preaching in the surrounding villages.
- Joined the Oxford Union Conservative Association. Out of place at Somerville, as it had a liberal, left wing reputation and many of the students were either undecided or radical.


“She always insisted that the most important lesson her father taught her was to follow her own convictions. ‘Never do things just because other people do them’, he told her when she wanted to go dancing. ‘Make up your own mind what you are going to do and persuade people to go your way’. ‘Never go with the crowd’, she paraphrased his advice in 1982. ‘Never, never, never’”.

“The political personality that Margaret Thatcher became was moulded by her upbringing. Essentially, she took three things from her father’s example. First it was Alfred who instilled in her the habit of hard work, as something both virtuous in itself and the route to self-advancement. Second, it was the example of Alfred’s tireless community activity, which bred in his daughter a powerful impulse towards public service. The third, and perhaps most important, legacy which Alfred gave his daughter was an exceptionally powerful moral sense. More than anything else in her political make up, it was her fierce confidence that she knew right from wrong... which marked Margaret Thatcher out from contemporary politicians... This rare moral certainty and unreflective self-righteousness was her greatest political strength in the muddy world of political expediency and compromise; it was also in the end her greatest weakness”.

- While at Oxford, part of the John Wesley Society attending the Wesley Memorial Church and preaching in the surrounding villages.
- Joined the Oxford Union Conservative Association. Out of place at Somerville, as it had a liberal, left wing reputation and many of the students were either undecided or radical.
At 21 (1947), taken on by BX Plastics as a laboratory researcher, working on surface tensions to develop an adhesive for sticking polyvinyl chloride to wood or metal.

Attended the 1948 Party Conference at Llandudno, representing the Oxford University Graduates Association. She was introduced there to the chairman of the Dartford Conservative Association, John Miller, who was looking for a candidate. Dartford was a rock solid labour seat. After the usual rounds of meetings and interviews, she was selected.

Met Denis Thatcher on the evening of her adoption meeting (as Dartford Candidate).

Taken on by food manufacturers J. Lyons as a research chemist working in Hammersmith, testing ice cream and pie fillings.

First General Election 1950- she did not win, but she did cut the Labour majority by a third. Overall, Clement Atlee (and Labour) survived with an overall majority of just five seats.

Studied for the Bar exam (Law). She was advised that to advance her career she should marry and the practicalities meant that if she married, she could give up her work and concentrate fully on law and politics. She married Denis in 1951. Her engagement was announced the day before polling for the 1951 General Election and she took a further thousand votes of the Labour majority. The Tories narrowly won that election.

1953: Had twins, Carol and Mark,

Passing the Bar, joined her first chambers in January 1954.

1957, began seeking a winnable constituency. After a battle against powerful prejudice, and two close run ballots, selected as the candidate for Finchley (a Conservative safe seat).

1959 General Election, she won, increasing the Tory majority by over 3000 votes. Macmillan increased his overall majority to 100 seats, the Conservatives had won.

“The discovery that all the trendy people were against her only confirmed her certainty that they were all wrong and reinforced her righteous sense of persecution. She encountered the same patronising attitude when she first became Leader of the Opposition in 1975. She had probably met it already at school, where she was used to being a loner who was not allowed to go to dances... But nowhere can it have been more brutal than at Oxford where she went up naively expecting to find rational inquiry but met only arrogant superiority. This was her first encounter with the liberal establishment and she did not like it. It hardened her heart: one day she would get even”.

“Although Dartford is not a good constituency for a woman candidate there is a possibility that Miss Margaret Roberts will be selected; her political knowledge and her speaking ability are far above those of the other candidates”.

“This was a wonderful piece of Thatcherite efficiency- two babies for the price of one, a boy and a girl in a single economy pack, an object lesson in productivity... getting two babies for the labour of one suited her admirably”.
Using the information above and the knowledge you have collected so far (or that you may already have), create a list of Thatcher’s personality traits, characteristics etc. with evidence either from quotations, actions she took or things she might have said.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personality traits</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHALLENGE:** Read the Daily Telegraph short biography of Thatcher (Moore, Charles, 2013. *First Among Equals, The Daily Telegraph, April 2013*) and highlight these personality traits.

**Task 2: Becoming Leader of the Conservative Party**


“In 1970, Jim Prior got a call from the new Prime Minister. Ted Heath said that he and Willie Whitelaw were trying to decide who ought to be the one statutory woman in the Cabinet. Prior didn’t hesitate: ‘Of course, it should be Margaret Thatcher’. ‘Oh yes, we’ve discussed her’, Heath replied. ‘Willie [Whitelaw] says if we take her we’ll never be able to get rid of her’”.

Using pages 1-4 of the textbook *Britain Under Thatcher* (by Seldon and Collings), graphical guide in this workbooklet, and this video (a Panorama special on the vote for Party Leadership in 1975 [http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/thatcher/6317.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/thatcher/6317.shtml), you will also find a range of different videos on Thatcher’s early career here). Create your notes in whatever way you like: mind map, timeline, bullet points etc. but ensure that you have explained:

- problems that Thatcher needed to overcome to become Party Leader in 1975.
- how Thatcher overcame those problems in 1975.
**Section 3: The Conservatives and the 1979 General Election**

**Learning Objectives**

To be able to explain how Thatcher overcame the issues of taking party leadership to a Conservative victory in the 1979 General Election

AND

To assess the extent to which it was Labour weakness that led to a Conservative victory rather than Conservative strength

**Success Criteria**

1. To have identified key historical terminology and be able to use it confidently to describe different Tories

2. To have explained how Thatcher managed to establish control of the Conservative Party

3. To have explained how Thatcher led the Conservatives to victory in the 1979 election

4. To have developed a judgement on whether it was Labour weakness that led to a Conservative victory rather than Conservative strength

---

**Task 1: Different Types of Tory**

Conservatives are split, like all political parties between more left wing and right wing factions. This does not mean that the left wing are truly left wing, however. Use the information on pages 4-5 of your textbook, and on the next few page to explain where these key concepts go (west, dries, consensus, One Nation, monetarism, Keynesianism), and where the Tory politicians fit on this spectrum.
Sources to help you understand these key concepts

This source helpfully explains consensus politics. Think about how left wing ideas include help for all people, state ownership and collaboration rather than competition.


“The 1945 Labour government was largely responsible for what is called the ‘post-war consensus’. However, some of the key elements can trace their origins to the war-time coalition government and the influence of Liberals like William Beveridge and the economist John Maynard Keynes.

The major features of domestic politics included:

1. Governments accepted a commitment to maintain full employment by Keynesian techniques of economic management. Ministers would use their levers, such as cutting taxes and boosting state spending, to increase the level of economic activity.

2. Acceptance and some encouragement of the role of the trade unions. In contrast to the pre-war years, governments recognised and consulted them regularly on workplace relations and economic policy. The unions’ access to government was increased partly by full employment and partly by governments turning, post-1961, to income policies as a way of curbing inflation.

3. The mixed economy, with a large role for state ownership of the utilities (such as gas, electricity, coal, rail, etc) and intervention and planning in the economy.

4. The welfare state. The object of the national insurance system and the National Health Service was to provide an adequate income and free health when a family’s income was hit by, for example, sickness, old age, unemployment or death of the main breadwinner. The services were provided out of general taxation, or insurance, and represented social citizenship.

5. There was a belief that government could play a positive role in promoting greater equality through social engineering, for example, by progressive taxation, redistributive welfare spending, comprehensive schooling and regional policies”.

This source contains a definition of ‘one nation’ Toryism but also be aware that it is a tricky one to place on the spectrum (particularly as the definition of ‘one nation’ Toryism does change.


“One-nation Toryism... involved the attempt to promote social harmony by such means as paternalistic legislation, pride in the Empire or respect for the Crown... One-nation Toryism became transmuted [changed] over time from a paternalist to a classless ideal. In the Thatcher years One-nation Toryism was a coded means whereby ‘wets’ distanced themselves from the allegedly divisive policies pursued by the government”.

Ana’s diagram explaining Keynes’ ideas about the economy and monetarism.

The cycles of Boom and Bust

Keynes’ idea was that demand stimulates the economy, creating jobs, people then get wages which they want to spend, stimulating more demand, creating more jobs, people get more wages, companies invest more, and that stimulates more demand...

Wage increases were seen as happening due to excessive trade union power—the trade unions need squishing. Then the economy could go back to being controlled by elected government.

Monetarism was the view that the reason for inflation was the willingness of government to create an excessive money supply—not due to wage increases. Wages should be controlled, never popular with voters.

Remember! We’ve already seen Keynesian economics in action! Hitler’s public work schemes and rearmament programmes were exactly that—government funds used to stimulate the economy. However, remember, it also was a short term growth. The Nazi economy was in danger of overheating and government borrowing remained high.
Task 2: How did Thatcher try to gain control of the Tories?

You have already looked at this information for your previous task. Using the information on page 4-5 of your textbook, and the following source, write a summary of how Thatcher pulled the Tories together before the 1979 election.


“Although the new leader [MT] in no way in intended to backpedal as far as her ideology was concerned, she kept most of Heath’s former colleagues in the Shadow Cabinet. Heath himself refused an offer to join it, saying that he preferred to be free to speak from the back benches... It was not so much his refusal to join as his palpable and public resentment at the conduct of his successor which damaged his reputation... Thatcher kept the Shadow Cabinet must as it was and made no attempt to get rid of Heath’s appointments. Two of them, Peter Walker and Geoffrey Rippon, refused to join. But Reginald Maudling... James Prior, Lord Carrington and Ian Gilmour remained. So did the most important of all, Willie Whitelaw, the runner up in the second ballot. They fully balanced any incipient swing to the right. Lord Hailsham, who cannot easily be categorised, also remained a member. The right comprised Keith Joseph, Angus Maude, Airey Neave and Geoffrey Howe; there were many others who were more or less neutral. Mrs Thatcher was careful not to alienate Heath’s supporters. he was shown in advance the new party document, *The Right Approach*, and commended it at the 1976 party conference... The new leader adopted a cautious attitude towards the unions and accepted James Prior’s approach- or at any rate, did not dissent from it. She was equally cautious over the EEC [European Economic Community, forerunner to the European Union] referendum.

“She did undoubtedly project a very different public image from her predecessor's. The tone and style marked a shift from consensualist centrism to something that has been described as the Radical Right; and this shift corresponded to a distinct change in the general climate of opinion on social and economic matters against ‘big government’, high spending, Keynesian economics and the more extravagant aspects of the welfare state”.

A cartoon from 1990- was this the case from the beginning?
Task 3: The 1979 Election

There are a number of reasons why the Conservatives won the 1979 election, but the question really comes down whether the Conservatives won through their own strength or whether the Labour Party lost that election by their own weakness.

During the reading you have on this issue, highlight where you see Labour weakness or Conservative strength. You can also use pages 5-6 in your textbook.

Essay Task

Research and write an essay on the following. It should be at least a side and a half of A4 lined paper but no more than three sides. You can type it if you prefer. It should take about 45 minutes to write, once you have done your research. I have provided some reading for you, but feel free to find other sources.

Did Labour Lose or the Conservatives win the 1979 election?

Challenge Interpretation Essay Task

If you feel confident on this issue (or if you are told to attempt this essay) then research and assess how far these interpretations are true. It should take about 45 minutes to write still, but you need to use the knowledge you have collected to assess whether these interpretations are correct.

How far do these two interpretations support that Labour weakness caused the Conservatives to win the 1979 election?


“The delay in the date of the election until 3 May gave the Conservatives a chance to revise their draft manifesto, notably by a toughening of passages on trade unions in reaction to the ‘winter of discontent’. The loss of government authority, a theme of the whole 1970s, but underlined by the events of the previous winter, had played largely into Mrs Thatcher’s hands. She could portray the Tories as the party of law and order, offering Britain a new start after a prolonged period of chaos... ‘Popular capitalism’ was dangled before the electorate with promises of sharp cuts in income tax and the prospect of tenants being able to buy their own council house, the latter a proposal put to, and rejected by Callaghan... Yet, as studies showed, the election result was better explained by a discredited government losing the election rather than a challenger winning it on the back of a popular fresh set of policies”.


“Thatcher does seem to have appealed to a small but important group of voters- those who had not previously voted Conservative but were willing to consider doing so. Thatcher’s appeal did not depend on identification with particular policies- such identification, particularly in economic matters was weak. It did depend, in a more complicated way, on the sense that she was identified with certain values, with a kind of moral mood music. This moral mood music was in part the product of deliberate strategy. Similarly, Thatcher’s brief remarks about white Britons feeling ‘swamped’ by immigrant cultures (delivered during a television interview on January 1978) had not been planned by her advisors but they did exactly what some Conservatives had urged in private for the previous four years- communicated a sense that a Conservative government would be tough on immigration. The very uproar that greeted some of Thatcher’s remarks probably served her party’s electoral purposes. It contributed to the sense that she had a dramatically new approach”.

Section 4: The 1983 General Election and the Falklands Factor

Learning Objectives
To be able to explain how Thatcher became elected to a second term in office

AND
To assess the extent to which it was Labour weakness that led to a Conservative victory rather than Conservative strength

Success Criteria

1. To have identified issues in Thatcher’s first term and explained how they affected chances of victory for a second
2. To have assessed the importance of the Falklands as a factor causing victory in 1983
3. To have explained how Thatcher led the Conservatives to victory in the 1983 election
4. To have developed a judgement on whether it was Labour weakness that led to a Conservative victory rather than Conservative strength

Task 1: Thatcher’s First Term

These are some of the key people within Thatcher’s first term cabinets. During your tasks where they do something important- note it here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key People</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>What they did, how they got on with Thatcher, what (if anything) happened to them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lord Carrington</td>
<td>Foreign Secretary</td>
<td><img src="Heathite-Wet" alt="Lord Carrington" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geoffrey Howe</td>
<td>Chancellor of the Exchequer</td>
<td><img src="Thatcherite-Dry" alt="Geoffrey Howe" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis Pym</td>
<td>Minister for Defence</td>
<td><img src="Heathite-Wet" alt="Francis Pym" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key People</td>
<td>Role</td>
<td>What they did, how they got on with Thatcher, what (if anything) happened to them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Walker</td>
<td>Minister for Agriculture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Heathite- Wet)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Whitelaw</td>
<td>Home Secretary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Thatcherite- Dry)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Nott</td>
<td>Trade Secretary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Thatcherite – Dry)</td>
<td>Minister for Defence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Prior</td>
<td>Employment Secretary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Heathite- Wet)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. John Stevas</td>
<td>Arts Secretary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Heathite-Wet)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are other important politicians during the first term, these are just a selection!
How did the economy affect chances of re-election?

Remember, this may include proposals as well as what happened.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budgets</th>
<th>Industrial Relations</th>
<th>International Diplomacy and Rhodesia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recession</td>
<td>Dealing with the IRA</td>
<td>The Falklands War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privatisation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Expenditure and the Welfare State</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How likely do you think it was that Thatcher would have been re-elected before victory in the Falklands?
**Task 2: Labour Weakness?**

You have some reading on this from Andrew Marr’s *History of Modern Britain* and also page 24 of the textbook. Note below all the ways in which Labour can be considered weak and the Conservatives considered stronger.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labour weakness</th>
<th>Conservative strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Task 3: To what extent is this interpretation true? Use your own knowledge to assess it.** This should be another 45 minute essay.

**Interpretation A:** This historian argues that divisions within the Labour movement were crucial in explaining Conservative electoral dominance.

The schism on the Left gave the Conservatives their parliamentary victory in 1983. It can be argued that with more than three million unemployed Labour should have won, but it lost because of its defence policy and its spectacular disunity. Alternatively, it can be said that the continuance of the social and political trends which had contributed to Labour’s loss in 1979 virtually doomed it to lose again in 1983. That is not to suggest that Labour’s defeat was inevitable, although there is no doubt that most of the changes taking place in society were making it more difficult for it to win. Between 1979 and 1983 the working class, which had diminished in size, swung 3% to the Conservatives - in spite of ‘Thatcherism’, unemployment, the welfare spending cuts and the union laws - or, perhaps, not in spite of, but because of some of these things. Only 38% of manual workers and 39% of trade unionists voted Labour while 32% of trade unionists voted Conservative. The Tories led Labour by 12% among the skilled working class. In 1983 Labour became not ‘the party of the working class’ but rather the party of the underclass. In part this was due to continuing demographic change. However, there were new or special factors at work. In 1983 it did a good deal worse than socio-economic or demographic changes can explain. In 1983 Labour presented an unelectable face to the electorate, in terms of its leaders, many of its policies and in its general demeanour as a party aspiring to government, and this must explain a good deal of its unnaturally poor showing. Labour and the electorate made a poor ‘fit’. Labour had moved Left and the electorate to the Right, or rather the Labour party’s concerns and the electorate’s had grown increasingly apart.

Section 5: The 1987 General Election and the Unprecedented Third Term

Learning Objectives
To be able to explain how Thatcher became elected to a third term in office
AND
To assess the extent to which it was Labour weakness that led to a Conservative victory rather than Conservative strength

Success Criteria

1. To have identified issues in Thatcher’s second term and explained how they affected chances of victory for a third
2. To have assessed the importance of the miner’s strike and the Lawson economic boom as reasons for the third electoral success
3. To have developed a judgement on whether it was Labour weakness that led to a Conservative victory rather than Conservative strength

Task 1: Thatcher and the Miners’ Strike

a) Using the textbook pages 29-32, create an eight box cartoon strip explaining how Thatcher dealt with the miners’ strike of 1984.
a) Using the same pages and any other reading (this is a good opportunity to do some research amongst the books and newspapers available) explain how the miners’ strike affected Thatcher’s political standing and reputation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affected her reputation positively</th>
<th>Affected her reputation negatively</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) Do you think that the miners’ strike made it more or less likely that Thatcher would be re-elected for a third term?

........................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................
Task 2: Thatcher and the ‘Lawson Boom’

Read page 38-39 of the textbook and explain how Nigel Lawson (Chancellor of the Exchequer) could be said to have won the 1987 election.

Task 3: From the Lady Herself: The 1987 Election Campaign.

a) Read the reading from Margaret Thatcher on the 1987 election campaign and highlight
   i. Conservative strengths
   ii. Labour weaknesses

b) Read the account in the textbook (p40-41). Which do you think is the more accurate view of what happened?

c) Do you think Labour were as weak in 1987 as they had been previously? Explain why or why not.
You are going to attempt the following interpretations exercise over the summer holiday.
To prepare for it, you will need to:

a) Research the main issues for Thatcher’s electoral victories in order to obtain good contextual knowledge.
b) Know the interpretations thoroughly and draw links between them.
c) Be able to evaluate the views in the interpretations and use your contextual knowledge to evaluate them.
d) Write a piece of no more than 2000 words on the subject.

Use this sheet to help you plan it.

**The issues**

Complete the following table. You can draw them from the interpretations as well as your own knowledge and say which they appear in. An example has been done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Conservative strengths (across all elections)</th>
<th>Main Labour weaknesses (across all elections)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The economic success of the Conservatives (interpretation B, C and D, Lawson boom)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The interpretations**

Annotate your interpretations with:

a) where they agree and disagree.
b) where your own knowledge supports or challenges the view of the interpretation.
c) which interpretation you think is correct
d) which interpretation you think is least correct
e) how adequate each interpretation is to discuss the issue.

These bullet points should be the basis of your argument.

Good luck!