

Margaret Roberts THATCHER

UNITED KINGDOM

Prime Minister (since May 1979)

Addressed as:
Prime Minister



Margaret Thatcher, the Conservative Party's self-proclaimed crusader for the economic revival of Great Britain, is the first woman to become British Prime Minister; she is also the first European woman to reach the top national position. Thatcher earned that distinction after the elections of 3 May 1979, in which her party gained a comfortable 43-seat majority in Parliament; she has been party leader since February 1975. During her first 10 months as Prime Minister, she has fulfilled several of her campaign promises: she has made substantial reductions in personal income taxes, prepared plans to sell some of Britain's nationalized industries, had some success in reforming the trade unions, and begun a pruning of the bureaucracy and of government involvement in the economy.

Thatcher visited the United States in 1967 as a Foreign Leader Grantee. On a return visit in 1975 she met with then President Gerald Ford in Washington, and in 1977 and 1979 she met with President Jimmy Carter. Since becoming Prime Minister, she has taken several trips abroad.

After graduating from Oxford with honors in chemistry, Margaret Roberts studied law, specializing in tax legislation and patents. She enjoys listening to music by Bach, Beethoven and Chopin and reading detective stories, historical novels and biographies. She does not smoke. The Prime Minister, 54, has been married since 1951 to Denis Thatcher, who retired as executive director of the Burmah Oil Company in May 1975. The Thatchers have 26-year-old twins, Mark and Carol.

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