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Margaret Roberts THATCHER

UNITED KINGDOM

Prime Minister (since May  
1979)

Addressed as:  
Prime Minister



Margaret Thatcher, leader of the Conservative Party since 1975, is the first woman ever to serve as British prime minister. During her first year in that office she has fulfilled her promise of "a new direction for Britain" through her decisive actions both at home and abroad. Her ultimate goal is the restoration of Britain to the first rank of nations. Although Thatcher has not achieved this lofty aim, her bold policies have earned her the respect and admiration of political supporters and opponents alike. [REDACTED]

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Thatcher's stern economic measures have included substantial reductions in personal income taxes, preparation for the sale of some of Britain's nationalized industries, reform of the trade unions, and a pruning of the bureaucracy. Inflation and unemployment have continued to rise, but the Prime Minister has urged patience, believing that in a year or two her tough policies should show some positive effects. [REDACTED]

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#### Foreign Policy

Thatcher was relatively inexperienced in foreign relations when she took office, but she quickly surrounded herself with experienced advisers. Assisted by her highly regarded Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington, she has undertaken diplomatic initiatives on several important international issues. Thatcher's support for the constitutional conference on Zimbabwe-Rhodesia held in London in late 1979 culminated in the largely peaceful transfer to majority rule in the former colony and in the establishment of independent Zimbabwe in April 1980; the successful outcome in that African nation is widely viewed as the foreign policy triumph of

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Thatcher's first year in office. A strong advocate of NATO, the Prime Minister has urged West European nations to modernize their defense forces in order to match Soviet military strength. Under her leadership Britain has been the strongest supporter among America's European allies of President Jimmy Carter's call for an Olympic boycott in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and of his efforts to obtain the release of the American hostages in Iran. [redacted]

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#### Career and Personal Data

After graduating from Oxford with honors in chemistry, Margaret Roberts studied law, specializing in tax legislation and patents. A member of Parliament since 1959, she has served as joint parliamentary secretary to the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance (1961-64), as Secretary of State for Education and Science (1970-74), and as shadow deputy chancellor of the exchequer (1974-75). [redacted]

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Well organized, Thatcher works hard to master the details of complex issues. She expresses ideas clearly and logically. No recent British leader has had her powers of concentration, capacity for hard work, and self-confidence. In dealing with the news media she tends to be crisp and somewhat patronizing; with colleagues she is honest and straightforward. [redacted]

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Thatcher enjoys listening to classical music 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 twins, Mark and Carol, who are in their mid-twenties. [redacted]

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6 May 1980

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