

Theresa May

[The Right Honourable](#)

Theresa May

Official portrait, 2024

[Prime Minister of the United Kingdom](#)

In office

13 July 2016 – 24 July 2019

Monarch	Elizabeth II
First Secretary	Damian Green (2017)
Preceded by	David Cameron
Succeeded by	Boris Johnson

[Leader of the Conservative Party](#)

In office

11 July 2016 – 23 July 2019^[nbl]

Chairman	Patrick McLoughlin Brandon Lewis
Preceded by	David Cameron
Succeeded by	Boris Johnson

[Home Secretary](#)

In office

12 May 2010 – 13 July 2016

Prime Minister	David Cameron
Preceded by	Alan Johnson
Succeeded by	Amber Rudd

[Minister for Women and Equalities](#)

In office

12 May 2010 – 4 September 2012

Prime Minister	David Cameron
Preceded by	Harriet Harman
Succeeded by	Maria Miller

[Chairwoman of the Conservative Party](#)

In office

23 July 2002 – 6 November 2003

Leader	Iain Duncan Smith
Preceded by	David Davis
Succeeded by	Liam Fox The Lord Saatchi

[Shadow Cabinet](#) positions

[Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions](#)

In office

19 January 2009 – 11 May 2010

Leader David Cameron

Shadowing [James Purnell](#)
Yvette Cooper

Preceded by [Chris Grayling](#)

Succeeded by [Yvette Cooper](#)

[Shadow Minister for Women and Equality](#)**In office**

2 July 2007 – 11 May 2010

Leader David Cameron

Shadowing Harriet Harman

Preceded by [Eleanor Laing](#)

Succeeded by Yvette Cooper

In office

15 June 1999 – 18 September 2001

Shadow Minister for Women

Leader [William Hague](#)

Shadowing The [Baroness Jay of Paddington](#)
[Patricia Hewitt](#)

Preceded by [Gillian Shephard](#)

Succeeded by [Caroline Spelman](#)

[Shadow Leader of the House of Commons](#)**In office**

6 December 2005 – 19 January 2009

Leader David Cameron

Shadowing [Geoff Hoon](#)
[Jack Straw](#)
Harriet Harman

Preceded by [Chris Grayling](#)

Succeeded by [Alan Duncan](#)

[Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport](#)**In office**

6 May 2005 – 8 December 2005

Leader [Michael Howard](#)

Shadowing [Tessa Jowell](#)

Preceded by [John Whittingdale](#)

Succeeded by [Hugo Swire](#)

[Shadow Secretary of State for the Environment and Transport](#)**In office**

6 November 2003 – 14 June 2004

Leader Michael Howard

Shadowing [Margaret Beckett](#) (Environment)
[Alistair Darling](#) (Transport)

Preceded by [David Lidington](#) (Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)
[Tim Collins](#) (Transport)

Succeeded by [Tim Yeo](#)

[Shadow Secretary of State for Transport](#)

In office

6 June 2002 – 23 July 2002

Leader [Iain Duncan Smith](#)

Shadowing Alistair Darling

Preceded by *Herself* (Transport, Local Government and the Regions)

Succeeded by Tim Collins

Shadow Secretary of State for Transport, Local Government and the Regions

In office

18 September 2001 – 6 June 2002

Leader Iain Duncan Smith

Shadowing [Stephen Byers](#)
Alistair Darling

Preceded by [Archie Norman](#) (Environment, Transport and the Regions)

Succeeded by *Herself* (Transport)
[Eric Pickles](#) (Local Government and the Regions)

[Shadow Secretary of State for Education and Employment](#)

In office

15 June 1999 – 18 September 2001

Leader William Hague

Shadowing [David Blunkett](#)
[Estelle Morris](#) (Education and Skills)
Alistair Darling (Work and Pensions)

Preceded by [David Willetts](#)

Succeeded by [Damian Green](#) (Education and Skills)
[David Willetts](#) (Work and Pensions)

[Member of the House of Lords](#)

[Lord Temporal](#)

[Life peerage](#)

TBD

[Member of Parliament for Maidenhead](#)

In office

[1 May 1997](#) – [30 May 2024](#)

Preceded by *Constituency created*

Succeeded by [Joshua Reynolds](#)

Majority 26,457 (45.5%)

Personal details

Born 1 October 1956 (age 68)
[Eastbourne](#), [Sussex](#), England

Political party	Conservative
Spouse(s)	Philip May (m. 1980)
Parents	Hubert Brasier Zaidee Mary Barnes
Residence	Sonning, Berkshire
Alma mater	St Hugh's College, Oxford
Signature	
Website	www.tmay.co.uk Edit this at Wikidata
n.b. Acting: 7 June – 23 July 2019	

Theresa Mary, Lady May (née **Brasier**; born 1 October 1956) is a [British](#) former politician. She was the 54th [Prime Minister of the United Kingdom](#) and the 15th [Leader of the Conservative Party](#) from 2016 to 2019.

She was born in [Eastbourne, Sussex](#), and grew up in [Oxfordshire](#).^{[1][2]} She was the [Member of Parliament](#) (MP) for the [constituency](#) of [Maidenhead](#) in the [House of Commons](#) from 1997 to 2024, standing down at the [2024 general election](#). She was the [Home Secretary](#) in the [David Cameron government](#). In 2018, she was elected as [Commonwealth Chair-in-Office](#).

On 12 December 2018, 48 Conservative MPs had submitted letters of no confidence to the Chairman of the 1922 Committee Sir [Graham Brady](#), triggering a [vote of no confidence](#). Despite this, May won the confidence vote after 200 MPs vowed support to her leadership.^[3] On 15 January 2019 after her [Brexit](#) proposal failed in the [House of Commons](#) by a 432 to 202 vote, Opposition Leader [Jeremy Corbyn](#) filled a [motion of no confidence](#) in her ministry, which failed in a 325 to 306 vote.^{[4][5]}

In March 2019, May said she would resign as Prime Minister if Parliament passed her Brexit deal, to make way for a new leader in the second phase of Brexit.^[6]

On 24 May 2019, she announced that her resignation as party leader would take effect on 7 June and she would leave her position as Prime Minister when her [replacement is selected](#).^[7] She was replaced by [Boris Johnson](#).

Early life

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May was born on 1 October 1956 in a maternity hospital at 9 Upperton Road in [Eastbourne](#), Sussex.^[8] May is the only child of Zaidee Mary (née Barnes; 1928–1982) and [Hubert Brasier](#) (1917–1981). Her father was a [Church of England clergyman](#).^{[1][9][10][11]} May was educated at [Oxfordshire primary and grammar schools](#) in the [State](#) sector, and graduated from the [University of Oxford](#) in 1977.

Early career

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From 1977 and 1983 May worked at the [Bank of England](#), and from 1985 to 1997 as a financial consultant and senior advisor in International Affairs at the [Association for Payment Clearing Services](#).^[12] May's parents died during this period, her father in a car accident in 1981 and her mother of [multiple sclerosis](#) a year later.^{[13][14]} May served as a councillor for the [London Borough of Merton](#) from 1986 to 1994, where she was Chairman of Education (1988-90) and Deputy Group Leader and Housing Spokesman (1992-94).

Early political work

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She first became a [Conservative Party](#) MP at the [1997 general election](#) and was promoted to the [shadow cabinet](#) in 1999. She held several positions in the shadow cabinet,^[15] including Chairman of the Conservative Party (July 2002-November 2003) and Shadow Leader of the House of Commons (December 2005-January 2009).

"Nasty party"

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In October 2002, May used the term "nasty party" to describe the Conservative Party. She wrote: "*There's a lot we need to do in this party of ours. Our base is too narrow and so, occasionally, are our sympathies. You know what some people call us -- the Nasty Party.*"^[16] What she meant at the time was that the Conservative Party was hostile towards people with disabilities, as well as other people who are vulnerable.

The term "Nasty Party" applied to Conservative Party members with traditional conservative views: this included being anti-[gay](#), anti-minorities, and pro-business, and lacking concern for the poor.^{[17][18]}

Many conservatives felt this one the reasons the Conservative Party lost the last three general elections and needed to broaden their traditional base to have a chance of reelection.^{[19][20]}

Nasty party is likely a play on words (of the [Nazi Party](#), which was active in Germany in the 1930s and 1940s).

Home Secretary (2010-2016)

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She became the Home Secretary and Minister for Women and Equality on 12 May 2010.

In December 2010, May declared that deployment of water cannon by police forces in mainland Britain was an operational decision which had been "resisted until now by senior police officers."^[21] She rejected their use following the [widespread rioting in Summer 2011](#). In 2010, May promised to bring the level of net migration down to less than 100,000.^[22] In February 2015, *The Independent* reported, "The [Office for National Statistics](#) (ONS) announced a net flow of 298,000 migrants to the UK in the 12 months to September 2014—up from 210,000 in the previous year."

At the Conservative Party Conference on 4 October 2011, while arguing that the Human Rights Act needed to be amended, May gave the example of a foreign national who the Courts ruled was allowed to remain in the UK, "because—and I am not making this up—he had a pet cat".

In May 2012, she said she supported [same-sex marriage](#). She recorded a video for the [Out4Marriage](#) campaign.^[23]

In July 2013, May decided to ban the stimulant [khat](#), against the advice of the [Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs](#) (ACMD). The council said that there was "insufficient evidence" it caused health problems.^[24]

Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (2016-19)

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2016 Conservative Party leadership election

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May was a candidate in the upcoming election for leadership of the Conservative Party. May described herself as a candidate who will unify the party after a 'divisive' referendum ([Brexit](#)).^{[25][26]} She won the first ballot on 5 July 2016 by a large margin with 50% of the votes. On 7 July, May won the votes of 199 MPs, facing the vote of Conservative Party members in a contest with [Andrea Leadsom](#).^[27]

Leadsom's withdrawal from the contest on 11 July led to May being set to be appointed party leader and hence, Prime Minister, an office she assumed on 13 July 2016.^{[28][29]}

Early days

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After being appointed by [the Queen](#) on 13 July 2016, May became^[30] the United Kingdom's second female Prime Minister, after [Margaret Thatcher](#). She is the first female Prime minister of the 21st century.^[31]

May told the media on 12 July 2016 that she was "honoured and humbled" to be the party leader and to become prime minister. Responding to some calls for a general election (reported by the news media) to confirm her mandate, "sources close to Mrs May" said there would be no such election according to the [BBC](#).^[32]

A big issue May had to tackle during her premiership is [Brexit](#), after Britain voted to leave the [European Union](#). May has led talks with the European Union to plan how the split will happen.

May has also dealt with the war in Iraq and Syria. She has used Britain's military to fight [ISIS](#) in both countries. British troops have been in the Battle of Mosul, helping Iraq's military and the Kurdish forces.

General election, 2017

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May with President [Donald Trump](#) in [Washington, D.C.](#), January 2017

See the main article: [United Kingdom general election, 2017](#)

On 18 April 2017 Theresa May surprised people by saying she wanted to have a snap general election on 8 June .^[33] The next day the [House of Commons](#) voted in favour of holding the general election in June.^[33]

At the start of the campaign the Conservatives had a large lead in the polls. As the campaign went on, the Labour Party gained more support and started to rise in the polls. On the day of the election the Conservatives did worse than expected and May lost her majority in the House of Commons.^[34]

Vote of no confidence

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On 12 December 2018, the chairman of the [1922 committee](#) received enough formal request letters to warrant what some Westminster system countries call a [Leadership spill](#),^[35] which was promptly scheduled for the following evening. Many say this is because of the [Brexit](#) deal and the way May is handling the deal. Before the vote, May said later that day that she would not lead her party in the next general election.^[36] May would go on to win the confidence vote.

Brexit defeat

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May announcing her resignation outside [10 Downing Street](#), May 2019

On 15 January 2019 Theresa May's government was defeated in the house of commons by a majority of 203 in a vote on her deal to leave the European Union. This is the largest majority against a United Kingdom government ever.^[37]

Resignation

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On 24 May 2019, May announced that she would resign as Conservative Party leader effective on 7 June and that she will remain as Prime Minister until her [replacement is picked](#).^[7]

In the 2019 General Election she was re-elected in her Maidenhead constituency.

Personal life

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She married Philip John May on 6 September 1980. She has no children.^[38]

In 2013, she was [diagnosed](#) with [Type 1 diabetes](#).^[39]

May is a member of the [Church of England](#) and regularly worships at church on Sunday.^[40]

Honors

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Styles

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- Miss Theresa Brasier (1956–1980)
- Mrs Philip May (1980–1997)
- Theresa May [MP](#) (1997–2003)
- [The Rt Hon](#) Theresa May MP (2003–2024)

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Other websites

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