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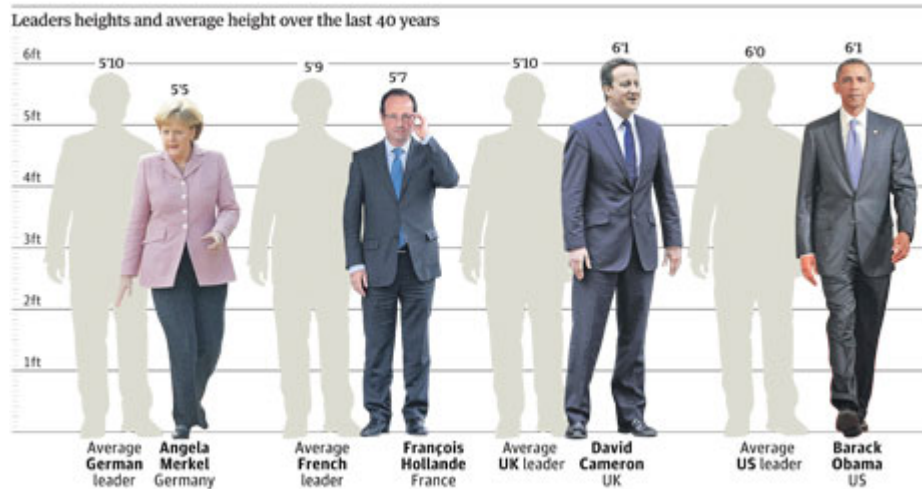
Facts are sacred

Statesmen and stature: how tall are our world leaders?

It seems we like our political giants to be just that – giants – according to research. So how does France's new president François Hollande compare to past leaders?

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Statesmen and stature



Statesmen and stature: click image for graphic

François Hollande will step into Nicolas Sarkozy's shoes today when he is sworn in at the Elysée palace, becoming France's first socialist leader in nearly 20 years. But how does he compare to the past leaders in terms of height?

Last year we were told stature really does matter according to a scientific paper published in Social Science Quarterly.

It was an opportunity too good to pass up so we compared the heights of various leaders from different countries and eras. Now we have a new leader in the pack we're asking once again how tall really are our leaders? We've also compared them to the average height of statesmen of their country over the last 40 years.

At 5ft 7ins, Hollande is two inches taller than Sarkozy but also two inches shorter than the average height for French leaders of the past 40 years. Both David Cameron and Barack Obama beat the average height, standing tall at 6ft 1. As the first female Chancellor of Germany, it's not suprising that Angela Merkel stands 5 inches shorter than the average height for German leaders.

In the scientific paper published last year psychologists from Texas Tech University found in a study that almost two-thirds of participants showed a preference to draw larger figures when asked to draw images of leaders. An evolutionary throwback has been suggested as the root of this. Nic Fleming wrote:

🔴🔴 It is not for nothing that top politicians are known as political giants or "big beasts". Voters see tall politicians as better suited for leadership, according to a survey of how people visualise their leaders. Psychologists believe the bias may stem from an evolved preference for physically imposing chiefs who could dominate enemies.

Cameron, Obama and Hollande have all beaten shorter candidates in past elections – Gordon Brown at 5ft 11ins, John McCain at 5ft 8ins and Sarkozy at 5ft 5ins.

The work, published by Dr Gregg Murray and J. David Schmitz, found evidence that would suggest physical stature affects people's preferences for political leadership. The paper entitled 'Caveman Politics' on evolutionary psychology relates it back to ideas and beliefs gleaned from our prehistoric ancestors.

Well, apart from Cameron, Obama and Canada's Stephen Harper who all come in at over six foot there are some current political leaders who are rather more diminutive. Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is placed at somewhere around the 5ft 2ins mark.

America certainly seem to be following the rule with all but one of the US presidents in our list coming in at six foot or over. The UK have rather a mixed bag from Margaret Thatcher (5ft 5ins) and Winston Churchill (5ft 6ins) to Robert Gascoyne-Cecil who is believed to have been 6ft 4ins.

The table below shows a selection of world leaders, past and present, and their stature. Those in bold are current leaders.

What can you do with this data?

• *This article was amended on 7 February 2014 to remove a duplication of François Hollande in the table and spreadsheet which incorrectly named him as a German leader as well as the current President of France.*

Data summary

Heights of leaders - past and present

Click heading to sort table. [Download this data](#)

Name	Height, Cm	Height, Feet and inches (rounded to nearest)	Country (leader of)
Abdelaziz Bouteflika	159	5'2	Algeria
Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner	164	5'4	Argentina
Julia Eileen Gillard	166	5'5	Australia
Stephen Harper	188	6'2	Canada
Fidel Castro	190	6'3	Cuba
Tarja Halonen	172	5'8	Finland
François Hollande	170	5'7	France
Nicolas Sarkozy	165	5'5	France
Napoleon	168	5'6	France
Jacques Chirac	189	6'2	France
François Mitterrand	172	5'7	France
Valéry Giscard d'Estaing	189	6'2	France
Georges Pompidou	181	5'11	France
Charles de Gaulle	196	6'5	France
Angela Merkel	165	5'5	Germany
Gerhard Schröder	174	5'8	Germany
Helmut Kohl	193	6'4	Germany
Adolf Hitler	173	5'8	Germany
Viktor Orban	174	5'8	Hungary
Mahmoud Ahmadinejad	157	5'2	Iran
Saddam Hussein	188	6'2	Iraq
David Ben Gurion	152	5'0	Israel
Silvio Berlusconi	165	5'5	Italy
Benito Mussolini	169	5'6	Italy
Yasuo Fukuda	169	5'6	Japan
Kim Yong Il	160	5'3	Korea (North)
Muammar Gaddafi	183	6'0	Libya

Name	Height, Cm	Height, Feet and inches (rounded to nearest)	Country (leader of)
Benito Juarez	137	4'6	Mexico
Josef Stalin	165	5'5	Russia
Dmitry Medvedev	163	5'4	Russia
Vladimir Putin	170	5'7	Russia
Boris Yeltsin	187	6'1	Russia
Vladimir Lenin	165	5'5	Russia
Tony Blair	183	6'0	UK
David Cameron	185	6'1	UK
Winston Churchill	168	5'6	UK
Gordon Brown	180	5'11	UK
Nick Clegg	185	6'1	UK
Margaret Thatcher	165	5'5	UK
Robert Gascoyne-Cecil	193	6'4	UK
Sir Alec Douglas-Home	185	6'1	UK
James Callaghan	185	6'1	UK
Edward Heath	183	6'0	UK
John Major	180	5'11	UK
Queen Elizabeth II	163	5'4	UK
Harold Wilson	173	5'8	UK
George W. Bush	182	5'11	USA
Barack Obama	185	6'1	USA
John F Kennedy	183	6'0	USA
George Washington	187	6'2	USA
Abraham Lincoln	193	6'4	USA
Ronald Reagan	185	6'1	USA
Bill Clinton	184	6'2	USA
George H.W Bush	188	6'2	USA
Gerald Ford	183	6'0	USA
Richard Nixon	182	5'11	USA
Hugo Chávez	173	5'8	Venezuela

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