

# ● Portraits of Power

*What image do painters and photographers give of political leaders?*

## 1 The roaring lion

- A.** Observe this photograph of Winston Churchill and describe it briefly (pose, attitude, general appearance). Imagine the reason(s) why he has such an attitude.
- B.** Read the text and check your answers to question A.
- C. Go further.** Explain why Churchill called himself “a roaring lion” (l. 17).

In December 1941 [...] Churchill visited Parliament in Ottawa to thank Canada and the Allies for their help. Churchill wasn't aware that Yousuf Karsh had been tasked to take his portrait afterward, and when

5 he came out and saw the Turkish-born Canadian photographer, he demanded to know, “Why was I not told?” Churchill then lit a cigar, puffed at it and said to the photographer, “You may take one.” As Karsh prepared, Churchill refused to put down the cigar. So

10 once Karsh made sure all was ready, he walked over to the Prime Minister and said, “Forgive me, sir,” and plucked the cigar out of Churchill's mouth. “By the time I got back to my camera, he looked so belligerent, he could have devoured me. It was at that instant that I

15 took the photograph.” Ever the diplomat, Churchill then smiled and said, “You may take another one” and shook Karsh's hand, telling him, “You can even make a roaring lion stand still to be photographed.”

The result of Karsh's lion taming is one of the most

20 widely reproduced images in history and a watershed<sup>1</sup> in the art of political portraiture. It was Karsh's picture



Winston Churchill, Yousuf Karsh, 1941

of the bulldoggish Churchill—published first in the American daily PM and eventually on the cover of LIFE—that gave modern photographers permission to make honest, even critical portrayals of our leaders.

1 un tournant



## 2 “A remarkable example of modern art”

- A.** Observe this painting of Winston Churchill. Compare it to the photograph above.
- B.** Read the text on [Worksheet n°23](#) to learn about the story behind this portrait.
- C. Go further.** Why did Churchill say that his portrait was “a remarkable example of modern art”?

Winston Churchill,  
Graham Sutherland, 1941

### HELP!

#### Nouns

- bow tie
- suit /su:t/

#### Adjectives

- grumpy
- flattering ≠ unflattering
- sombre /'sɒmbə/

#### Expressions

- pose for sb
- stare at sb