

# Winston Churchill: “Never Give In”

*A Reading A-Z Level Y Leveled Book*

*Word Count: 1,566*

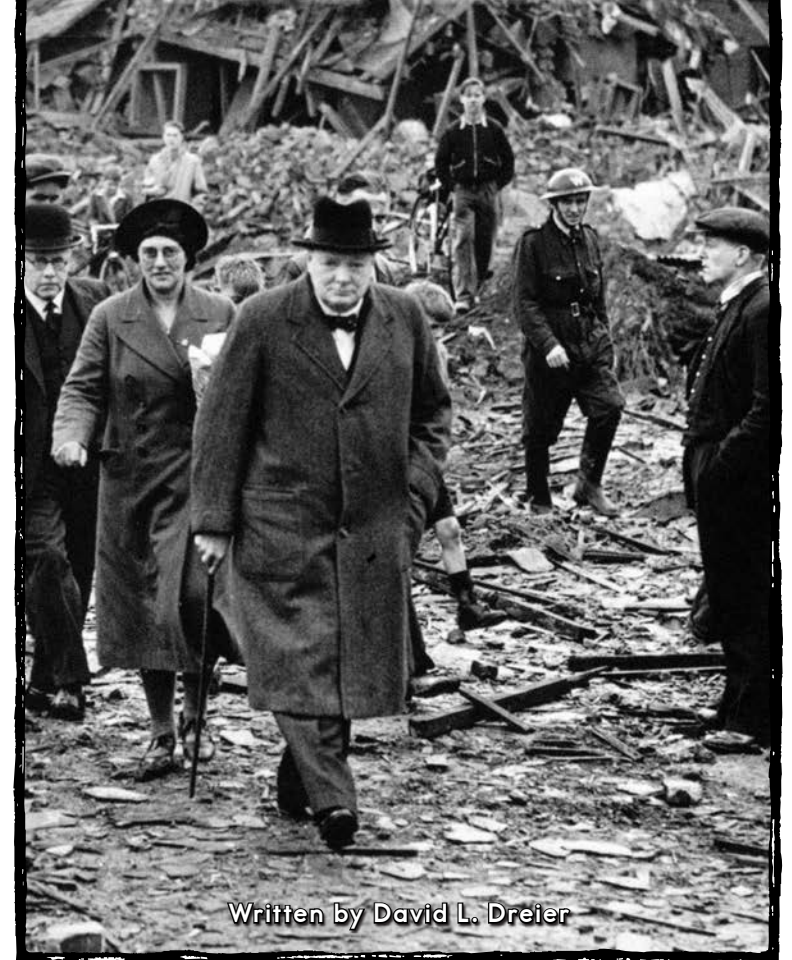


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Written by David L. Dreier

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Front cover: Prime Minister Churchill inspects bomb damage in London on the morning after a German air raid in 1940.

Back cover: Winston Churchill at age 7; Churchill at a polo match in 1925; Churchill has his flying helmet removed after flying to a Royal Air Force base near London in 1939; Churchill tours Berlin, Germany, in a military jeep on July 16, 1945.

Title page: Churchill gives the “V for Victory” sign while campaigning for reelection as prime minister in 1945.

Winston Churchill: “Never Give In”  
Level Y Leveled Book  
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Written by David L. Dreier

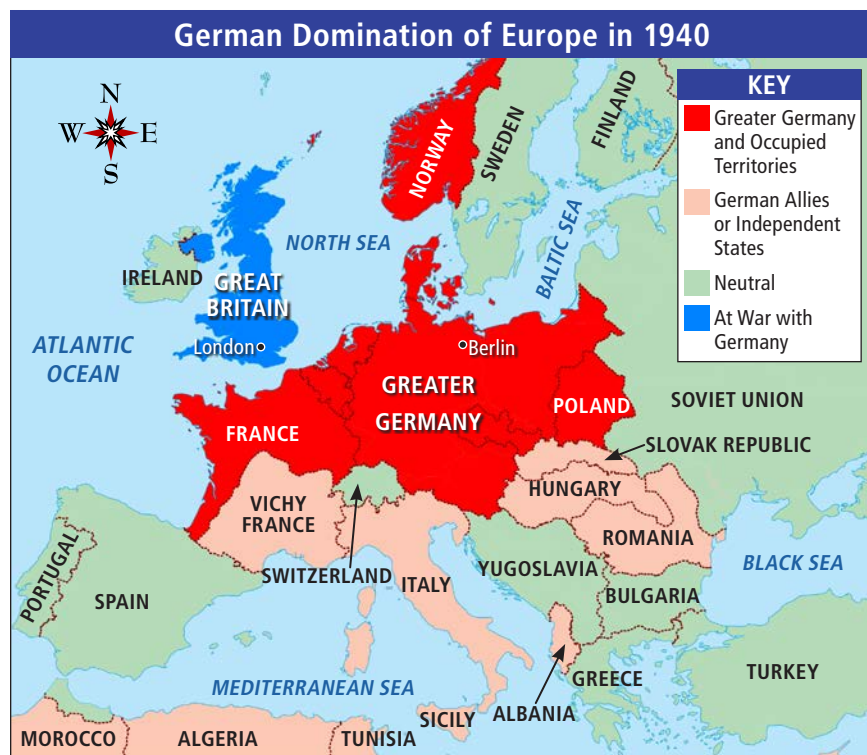
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## Correlation

### LEVEL Y

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Winston Churchill, prime minister of Great Britain, greets a crowd outside his office before meeting with King George VI on August 19, 1941.

## One Goal Only: Victory

In October 1941, Great Britain's **prime minister**, Winston Churchill, spoke at Harrow, the school he had gone to as a boy. The nation was facing a dark time. World War II was being fought, and Germany had conquered most of Western Europe. Britain stood alone against the power of Germany.

Despite the danger to his country, Churchill was **undaunted**. For him, there could be just one goal for Britain: victory, whatever the cost. No matter how desperate the situation, Churchill told his listeners, "Never give in—never, never, never!"

Churchill lived by those words throughout his life. He never gave in—to the enemies of Great Britain, to his political opponents, or to his own personal challenges.

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## Young Winston

Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill was born on November 30, 1874, at a family estate near Oxford, England. He was born into an **aristocratic** family with a long history of government and military service. Winston's father, Randolph Churchill, was a well-known figure in conservative **politics**. His mother, Jennie Jerome, was an American.



Churchill became a cavalry officer at age 20.

As a boy, Winston showed little promise. His grades at school were average at best. Rather than going to Oxford or Cambridge University—the best universities in England—he entered the Royal Military Academy of Sandhurst. He graduated in 1894 and became an officer in the cavalry.

The young officer was sent to India, which was an important part of Britain's colonial **empire**. While on duty there, he published a book about an Indian revolt against British rule in a northwest province. It was the first of many nonfiction books he would write.



Churchill was captured by Louis Botha, who later became the first prime minister of what is now South Africa.

In 1899, after leaving the army, Churchill became a writer for the *London Morning Post* newspaper. He went to South Africa to report on the Boer War, a rebellion against British rule by descendants of Dutch settlers, called *Boers*.

Soon after he arrived, Boer soldiers ambushed an armored train carrying Churchill and more than one hundred British troops. The attackers captured Churchill and several dozen British soldiers and put them in prison. Churchill refused to give up. On a December night, he slipped over the prison wall. He evaded capture for nine days and fled to freedom. His daring escape made him a national hero.

Churchill returned home in 1900. Just twenty-six years of age, he had already published four nonfiction books about the British military.



Churchill struggled with periods of depression throughout his life.

### Soaring Energy, Deep Despair, Sharp Wit

Churchill could write very quickly when he was inspired. He was often able to work with great energy. Over his lifetime, he wrote forty-three books.

In his forties, Churchill developed another interest—art—and pursued it with equal energy. Over a period of forty-eight years, he made more than five hundred paintings.

However, Churchill's periods of creative energy were often followed by terrible **depressions**, which he called "my black dog." Churchill struggled with his black dog many times throughout his life.

When the black dog was away, Churchill had a great sense of humor. He had a reputation for **wit**, and that wit could be biting. He called one of his political opponents, Clement Attlee, "a modest man with much to be modest about."

### In Service to the Government

Churchill was **ambitious** in his political career. He wanted to work at the highest levels of government. Shortly after his return from South Africa in 1900, he was elected to **Parliament** and served for five years.

In 1908, Churchill married a young aristocratic woman, Clementine Hozier. They would have five children together.

After serving in several important government posts, Churchill was chosen to head the Royal Navy in 1911. During World War I (1914–1918), he pushed for a military operation in Turkey. That effort ended in a major defeat for Great Britain and its allies, costing Churchill his position with the navy. To repair his reputation, Churchill rejoined the army and led troops fighting the Germans in France.



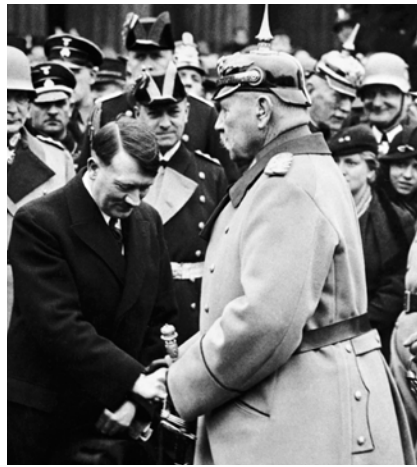
Churchill with his wife, Clementine, in 1914

One year before the war's end, Churchill returned to the government and was put in charge of weapons production. As part of his work, he helped develop the first combat tanks.

After the war, Churchill continued to serve on and off in Parliament, but one prime minister after another denied him high office. They didn't agree with Churchill's thinking about many important issues. Churchill was against giving in to people in India who wanted independence from the British Empire. He also argued unsuccessfully that Britain should expand its military in the 1930s after Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party came to power in Germany.

Churchill's fears about Nazi Germany were well founded. Hitler strengthened Germany's military and formed an alliance with Italy and Japan called the *Axis*.

Hitler made one demand after another for more territory in Europe. When Hitler threatened to invade Czechoslovakia in 1938, Britain's prime minister, Neville Chamberlain, flew to Germany. Chamberlain arranged a deal that gave Germany part of Czechoslovakia's territory in exchange for peace. Once back in Britain, Chamberlain said he believed he had secured "peace for our time."



Adolf Hitler (left), recently made chancellor, shakes hands with Germany's president in 1933.



British prime minister Neville Chamberlain attempted unsuccessfully to avoid war with Germany during the late 1930s.

Churchill publicly opposed the deal. In a speech before Parliament, Churchill said of Chamberlain, "You were given the choice between war and dishonor. You chose dishonor, and you will have war." Six months later, Germany broke the agreement and seized the rest of Czechoslovakia.

In September 1939, Germany invaded Poland, igniting World War II. The first months of the war went badly for Britain, leading Chamberlain to resign as prime minister. Britain's King George VI, realizing that the nation needed a strong leader, named Churchill to replace him on May 10, 1940.



## Britain Besieged

In his address to Parliament three days later, Churchill warned that the days ahead would be difficult. “I have nothing to offer,” he said, “but blood, **toil**, tears, and sweat.”

Those serious words soon became a reality. Beginning in July and continuing for nearly four months—a period known as the Battle of Britain—German planes bombed airfields, factories, ports, and, eventually, London.

Hitler wanted to invade England, but the Royal Air Force (RAF) stood in his way. The German navy could not invade across the English Channel unless the RAF was defeated. Day after day, RAF pilots battled German fighters and bombers in the skies over England. Although the RAF suffered terrible losses, the Germans were never able to destroy its ability to fight, and Hitler had to call off the invasion. Thanking the RAF fighter pilots on behalf of the nation, Churchill said that never before “was so much owed by so many to so few.”



Churchill inspects damage in London after a German air raid in 1940.



Churchill meets with U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1942.

Over the years, Churchill formed a close relationship with U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and asked him for help. The United States sent Britain military supplies, including ships and tanks. It also began providing supplies to the Soviet Union, which was thrust into the war in June 1941 by a German invasion of Russia.

On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked the U.S. naval base in Hawaii, bringing the United States into the war. Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union, and other opponents of the Axis joined forces as the Allies.

Throughout the war, Churchill was an inspiration to his nation. He worked long hours in an underground command center, made speeches to **rally** the people, and visited areas of London damaged by bombs. He never backed down from his message that Britain would never give in to the Germans.

## Victory at Last, but at Great Cost

In late 1942, the tide of the war began to turn. In November, the Allies pushed the German army out of North Africa. Meanwhile, the Soviet army fought the Germans in the east, and Allied bombers pounded German targets. Soviet leader Joseph Stalin urged Roosevelt and Churchill to launch an invasion from the west. Finally, they did so. On June 6, 1944—known as D-Day—a huge Allied invasion force landed on the coast of France. In August, Allied forces freed France from Nazi control.

On May 7, 1945, Germany finally surrendered. Speaking to a London crowd, Churchill said, “This is your victory! It is the victory of the cause of freedom in every land.” Sadly, President Roosevelt was not around to enjoy the moment. He had died of a stroke the month before.

Four months later, Japan surrendered as well. World War II was finally over. Widespread rejoicing was tempered by reflection on the terrible costs of the conflict. More than 40 million people around the world had died.



Churchill gives the “V for victory” sign while celebrating the end of the war in Europe.

## A Defiant Voice

One of Churchill’s most famous wartime speeches was given on June 4, 1940. The German military had just dealt a crushing defeat to French and British forces in France, and the mood throughout the country was grim. When Churchill spoke that day, he said, in part:

“We shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air. We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender . . . .”

Churchill’s speech helped unite the country and made people more willing to continue the war effort.

## Final Years

The world was now at peace, but political events took an unexpected turn for Churchill in 1945. In July, war-weary Britons rejected Churchill’s Conservative Party and voted the Labor Party into power. No longer prime minister, Churchill fell into a depression.

In 1947, Churchill was alarmed by another development when Britain granted India its independence. Churchill had insisted that Britain never give in to India’s desire to leave the British Empire, but that empire was now coming to an end.





Churchill works on one of his many paintings during a visit to Florida in 1946.

In 1953, while serving one last time as prime minister, Churchill was awarded the **Nobel Prize** for Literature. He was forced to resign from the government in 1955 because of ill health, but he continued writing. In 1958, he completed one of his most important pieces of writing, *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*.

In 1963, Churchill became the first person ever to be named an honorary citizen of the United States by an act of Congress. It was one of his final honors. He died on January 24, 1965, at the age of ninety.

Honoring Churchill, British Prime Minister Harold Wilson called him “the greatest man any of us have known.”

## Glossary

<b>ambitious</b> (adj.)	having a strong desire to succeed or achieve (p. 8)
<b>aristocratic</b> (adj.)	of or relating to a society’s highest social class, whose members are usually wealthy and powerful (p. 5)
<b>depressions</b> (n.)	periods of unhappiness and hopelessness (p. 7)
<b>empire</b> (n.)	a collection of nations or people ruled by one person or government (p. 5)
<b>Nobel Prize</b> (n.)	one of six prizes awarded each year for work in chemistry, economics, literature, medicine, or physics, or for advancing the cause of world peace (p. 15)
<b>Parliament</b> (n.)	the lawmaking body of the government of the United Kingdom (p. 8)
<b>politics</b> (n.)	activities having to do with government (p. 5)
<b>prime minister</b> (n.)	the leader of the government in most countries that have a parliament (p. 4)
<b>rally</b> (v.)	to inspire or encourage people during difficult circumstances (p. 12)
<b>toil</b> (n.)	difficult or unpleasant work (p. 11)
<b>undaunted</b> (adj.)	unafraid of continuing in spite of dangers or difficulties (p. 4)
<b>wit</b> (n.)	a talent for using words and ideas in clever and amusing ways (p. 7)