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Tony Blair announces his resignation

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11th May, 2007

THE ARTICLE

Tony Blair announces his resignation

British Prime Minister Tony Blair said on Thursday that he will step down as leader on June 27. This means he will leave after a decade in office. He also resigns as one of the most popular and successful leaders in British history. His resignation comes just days after perhaps his greatest political achievement - peace in Northern Ireland. It is likely, however, that he will be most remembered for following the United States into war in Afghanistan and Iraq. In his resignation speech, Blair asked the British people to believe he took his country to war for the right reasons. He told his supporters: "Hand on heart, I did what I thought was right... it was right, to stand shoulder to shoulder with our oldest ally [the USA]." He asked the British people to judge him, saying: "I may have been wrong. That's your call."

Blair led his party to two landslide election wins in 1997 and 2001 and a narrower but still comfortable victory over the Conservative party in 2005. Besides taking a strong stand against terrorism, Blair has been very active on the international stage. He tried to broker peace in the Middle East and other world flashpoints. Former US Secretary of State Colin Powell said: "Prime Minister Blair has had an enormous impact on world politics, and he certainly has had an enormous impact on the special relationship between the United States and Great Britain." Blair has also been a major player in the fight against global warming and was influential in convincing governments that climate change is a serious issue. Former Labour leader Neil Kinnock said Tony Blair will be remembered as a "winner" when he finally leaves Number 10.

WARM-UPS

1. TONY BLAIR: Walk around the class and talk to other students about Tony Blair and his resignation. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your original partner(s) and share what you found out.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

Britain / leaders / resigning / achievements / Iraq / speeches / honesty / allies / elections / victories / terror / peace / world politics / climate change / winners

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

3. HI. I'M TONY: Imagine you are Tony Blair. Talk to all the other "Tony Blairs" in the classroom about yourself (yourselves).

4. RESIGNATIONS: How would you feel if these people resigned tomorrow? Which 3 resignations would affect you most? Talk with your partner(s).

- US President George W. Bush
- Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
- your country's leader
- the best player of your team
- Bill Gates
- Swaziland's King Mswati III
- the leaders of N. Korea and Myanmar
- your favourite musician / singer

5. OUT OF 10: In pairs / groups, agree on a score out of 10 for Tony Blair on the following. Change partners and talk about your scores.

- looks and charisma
- climate change
- being a friend to your country
- on terrorism
- work in Africa
- as a European
- as a leader
- for being George W. Bush's friend

6. NEW JOB: In pairs / groups, decide which of these jobs Tony Blair should now try. Which would he be best / worst at and why?

- head of the UN
- teacher
- chat show host
- journalist
- speech presenter
- charity worker
- movie actor
- your choice _____

7. QUICK DEBATE: Have this quick debate with your partner(s). Students A think Tony Blair was a fantastic leader; students B think Tony Blair was a terrible leader. Change partners and topics every two minutes.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. Tony Blair will quit a week after his resignation speech. | T / F |
| b. He has been in office as British leader for almost ten years. | T / F |
| c. He will be remembered most for bringing peace to N. Ireland. | T / F |
| d. He has to appear before a judge in a British court. | T / F |
| e. Tony Blair's party easily won elections in 1997 and 2001. | T / F |
| f. Blair has also acted in plays in theatres around the world. | T / F |
| g. Tony Blair did very little to prevent global warming. | T / F |
| h. An ex-colleague said people will remember Blair as a winner. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| a. step down | next to |
| b. decade | apart from |
| c. achievement | decision |
| d. shoulder to shoulder | persuading |
| e. call | overwhelming |
| f. landslide | resign |
| g. besides | influence |
| h. flashpoints | ten years |
| i. impact | triumph |
| j. convincing | flare-ups |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| a. step down | achievement |
| b. leave after a | fight against global warming |
| c. his greatest political | stand against terrorism |
| d. he took his country to war for | decade in office |
| e. stand shoulder to shoulder | impact on world politics |
| f. Blair led his party to two landslide | the right reasons |
| g. taking a strong | election wins |
| h. He tried to broker | as leader |
| i. Blair has had an enormous | with our oldest ally |
| j. a major player in the | peace in the Middle East |

Tony Blair announces his resignation – 11th May, 2007

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Tony Blair announces his resignation

British Prime Minister Tony Blair said on Thursday that he will _____ down as leader on June 27. This means he will leave after a decade in _____. He also resigns as one of the most popular and successful leaders in British history. His resignation comes just days after perhaps his _____ political achievement - peace in Northern Ireland. It is likely, however, that he will be most remembered for _____ the United States into war in Afghanistan and Iraq. In his resignation speech, Blair asked the British people to _____ he took his country to war for the right reasons. He told his supporters: "Hand on _____, I did what I thought was right... it was right, to stand shoulder to shoulder with our oldest _____ [the USA]." He asked the British people to judge him, saying: "I may have been wrong. That's your _____."

Blair led his party to two landslide election _____ in 1997 and 2001 and a narrower but still comfortable victory over the Conservative party in 2005. _____ taking a strong stand against terrorism, Blair has been very active on the international _____. He tried to _____ peace in the Middle East and other world flashpoints. Former US Secretary of State Colin Powell said: "Prime Minister Blair has had an enormous _____ on world politics, and he certainly has had an enormous impact on the special relationship between the United States and Great Britain." Blair has also been a major _____ in the fight against global warming and was influential in _____ governments that climate change is a serious issue. Former Labour leader Neil Kinnock said Tony Blair will be remembered as a "winner" when he _____ leaves Number 10.

ally
greatest
heart
step
call
following
office
believe
broker
convincing
impact
stage
wins
player
finally
besides

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LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Tony Blair announces his resignation

British Prime Minister Tony Blair said on Thursday that _____ as leader on June 27. This means he will leave _____. He also resigns as one of the most popular and successful leaders in British history. His resignation comes _____ perhaps his greatest political achievement - peace in Northern Ireland. It is likely, however, that _____ remembered for following the United States into war in Afghanistan and Iraq. In his resignation speech, Blair asked the British people to believe he took his country to war _____. He told his supporters: "Hand on heart, I did what I thought was right... it was right, to stand shoulder to shoulder _____ [the USA]." He asked the British people to judge him, saying: "I may have been wrong _____."

Blair _____ landslide election wins in 1997 and 2001 and a narrower but still comfortable victory over the Conservative party in 2005. Besides _____ against terrorism, Blair has been very active on the international stage. He tried _____ the Middle East and other world flashpoints. Former US Secretary of State Colin Powell said: "Prime Minister Blair has had an enormous impact on world politics, and he _____ enormous impact on the special relationship between the United States and Great Britain." Blair has also been a major player in the fight against global warming and _____ convincing governments that climate change is a serious issue. Former Labour leader Neil Kinnock said Tony Blair will be remembered as a "winner" _____ Number 10.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'step' and 'down'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "TONY BLAIR" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about Tony Blair and his decade as Britain's leader.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• step• decade• history• following• heart• ally	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• landslide• stand• flashpoints• enormous• major• winner
--	---

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) Do you like Tony Blair?
- c) What are his strongest points?
- d) What are his biggest mistakes?
- e) Do you think he's a puppet of George Bush's or was he right to stand "shoulder to shoulder" with his greatest ally?
- f) What do you think when you see him speaking?
- g) How does he compare against the leader of your country or of other countries?
- h) Do you think he did good work in Kosovo, Africa and with global warming?
- i) Do you think he had some control over George W. Bush?
- j) Do you think he's honest?



STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you think Tony Blair is the same as other world leaders or different?
- c) What do you think of some of Tony Blair's nicknames – "Tony BLIAR" and "Phony Tony"?
- d) Was Tony Blair a friend of your country?
- e) What should he have done but didn't, and what did he do that he shouldn't have?
- f) Do you think there are "right reasons" to fight wars?
- g) What do you think of the "special relationship" between Britain and the USA?
- h) What questions would you like to ask Tony Blair?
- i) Do you think he will be remembered as a winner?
- j) Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a) What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b) Was there a question you didn't like?
- c) Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d) What did you like talking about?
- e) Which was the most difficult question?

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SPEAKING

RESIGNATION SPEECH:

You are either Tony Blair, George W. Bush or the leader of your own country. Your job is to write your resignation speech. You and your “First Lady” or “First Husband” partner will make the speech. Use the table to help you:

Areas to talk about	Notes for my/our speech
My time in office	
My plans when I came to office	
My successes	
My mistakes	
You, my people	
My future, your future	

- Change partners and give feedback to make your speeches better.
- Make our speeches to the class. Ask questions after.
- Vote on the best resignation speech.
- In pairs / groups, discuss the consequences of a speech you heard.

LANGUAGE

CORRECT WORD: Put the correct words from a-d below in the article.

Tony Blair announces his resignation

British Prime Minister Tony Blair said on Thursday that he will step (1) _____ as leader on June 27. This means he will leave after a decade in (2) _____. He also resigns as one of the most popular and successful leaders in British history. His resignation (3) _____ just days after perhaps his greatest political achievement - peace in Northern Ireland. It is (4) _____, however, that he will be most remembered for following the United States into war in Afghanistan and Iraq. In his resignation speech, Blair asked the British people to believe he took his country to war for the right reasons. He told his supporters: "Hand on (5) _____, I did what I thought was right... it was right, to stand shoulder to shoulder with our oldest (6) _____ [the USA]." He asked the British people to judge him, saying: "I may have been wrong. That's your call."

Blair led his party to two landslide election (7) _____ in 1997 and 2001 and a narrower but still comfortable victory over the Conservative party in 2005. Besides taking a strong (8) _____ against terrorism, Blair has been very active on the international stage. He tried to (9) _____ peace in the Middle East and other world flashpoints. Former US Secretary of State Colin Powell said: "Prime Minister Blair has had an enormous impact on world politics, and he (10) _____ has had an enormous impact on the special relationship between the United States and Great Britain." Blair has also been a major player in the fight against global warming and was influential in (11) _____ governments that climate change is a serious issue. (12) _____ Labour leader Neil Kinnock said Tony Blair will be remembered as a "winner" when he finally leaves Number 10.

1. (a) on (b) in (c) up (d) down
2. (a) office (b) official (c) officer (d) offish
3. (a) comedy (b) comeback (c) comes (d) coming
4. (a) liken (b) likely (c) likelihood (d) like
5. (a) backbone (b) brain (c) stomach (d) heart
6. (a) ally (b) all-in-one (c) all-stars (d) alloy
7. (a) defeats (b) beats (c) wins (d) victory
8. (a) sit (b) stand (c) march (d) bow
9. (a) broken (b) break up (c) beaker (d) broker
10. (a) certainties (b) curtain (c) certainly (d) certain
11. (a) convincing (b) convinced (c) convinces (d) convicting
12. (a) Formal (b) Former (c) Form (d) Format

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information about Tony Blair. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. TONY BLAIR POSTER: Make a poster about Tony Blair and his legacy as a world leader. In particular, focus on his interaction with your country. Show your poster to your class in the next lesson. Vote on the best one(s).

4. MAGAZINE ARTICLE: Write a magazine article about Tony Blair. Choose three or four areas to write about. Decide if your article will be

- the real, true facts
- a humorous story
- your real opinion
- a story told by someone affected by Tony Blair's decisions
- other

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Which article was best and why?

5. LETTER: Write a letter to Tony Blair. Ask him/her three questions about his time in office. Give him/her three pieces of advice about what he should do next. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

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ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. F b. F c. F d. F e. T f. F g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. step down	resign
b. decade	ten years
c. achievement	triumph
d. shoulder to shoulder	next to
e. call	decision
f. besides	apart from
g. broker	negotiate
h. flashpoints	flare-ups
i. impact	influence
j. convincing	persuading

PHRASE MATCH:

a. step down	as leader
b. leave after a	decade in office
c. his greatest political	achievement
d. he took his country to war for	the right reasons
e. stand shoulder to shoulder	with our oldest ally
f. Blair led his party to two landslide	election wins
g. taking a strong	stand against terrorism
h. He tried to broker	peace in the Middle East
i. Blair has had an enormous	impact on world politics
j. a major player in the	fight against global warming

GAP FILL:

Tony Blair announces his resignation

British Prime Minister Tony Blair said on Thursday that he will **step** down as leader on June 27. This means he will leave after a decade in **office**. He also resigns as one of the most popular and successful leaders in British history. His resignation comes just days after perhaps his **greatest** political achievement - peace in Northern Ireland. It is likely, however, that he will be most remembered for **following** the United States into war in Afghanistan and Iraq. In his resignation speech, Blair asked the British people to **believe** he took his country to war for the right reasons. He told his supporters: "Hand on **heart**, I did what I thought was right... it was right, to stand shoulder to shoulder with our oldest **ally** [the USA]." He asked the British people to judge him, saying: "I may have been wrong. That's your **call**."

Blair led his party to two landslide election **wins** in 1997 and 2001 and a narrower but still comfortable victory over the Conservative party in 2005. **Besides** taking a strong stand against terrorism, Blair has been very active on the international **stage**. He tried to **broker** peace in the Middle East and other world flashpoints. Former US Secretary of State Colin Powell said: "Prime Minister Blair has had an enormous **impact** on world politics, and he certainly has had an enormous impact on the special relationship between the United States and Great Britain." Blair has also been a major **player** in the fight against global warming and was influential in **convincing** governments that climate change is a serious issue. Former Labour leader Neil Kinnock said Tony Blair will be remembered as a "winner" when he **finally** leaves Number 10.

LANGUAGE WORK

1 - d 2 - a 3 - c 4 - b 5 - d 6 - a 7 - c 8 - b 9 - d 10 - c 11 - a 12 - b