Tony Blair announces his resignation

URL: http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0705/070511-tony_blair.html

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11th May, 2007
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.
Tony Blair announces his resignation – 11th May, 2007

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 Blair’s” 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.

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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

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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.
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.

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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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>step</th>
<th>landslide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>decade</td>
<td>stand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>history</td>
<td>flashpoints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>following</td>
<td>enormous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heart</td>
<td>major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ally</td>
<td>winner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas to talk about</th>
<th>Notes for my/our speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My time in office</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My plans when I came to office</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My successes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mistakes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You, my people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My future, your future</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 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.

Tony Blair announces his resignation

British Prime Minister Tony Blair said on Thursday that he will step (1) **down** as leader on June 27. This means he will leave after a decade in (2) **office**. He also resigns as one of the most popular and successful leaders in British history. His resignation (3) **came** just days after perhaps his greatest political achievement - peace in Northern Ireland. It is (4) **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 (5) **heart**, I did what I thought was right... it was right, to stand shoulder to shoulder with our oldest (6) **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 (7) **defeats** in 1997 and 2001 and a narrower but still comfortable victory over the Conservative party in 2005. Besides taking a strong (8) **stand** against terrorism, Blair has been very active on the international stage. He tried to (9) **make** 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) **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 (11) **convincing** governments that climate change is a serious issue. (12) **Former** 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
b. 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:

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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

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