

Using these four sources in their historical context, assess how far they support the view that Churchill was a Great War leader. (30)

Winston Churchill is most famously associated with being the British Prime Minister during the Second World War. When Britain declared war on Germany in 1939 he was asked to become the First Lord of the Admiralty, directing the British Navy. After a crisis in confidence over the leadership of Neville Chamberlain in 1940, Churchill then became the Prime Minister.

Churchill's qualities as a leader have been argued and debated over many times.

The Task

Your task is to write **between 800 to 1000 words** on Churchill's suitability as a war leader at this time.

You need to use the 4 sources provided and think about their historical context: Read them carefully and discuss at length the ideas and themes they throw up. What do they suggest about Churchill? What are the positives and negatives about his leadership? Who are the authors, how may that affect what is being discussed? What can you gather about the type of war leader Churchill was?

You will be assessed on how well you write and construct your piece, and how well you have interpreted the sources.

Good luck.

Study all the Sources.

Assess how far the Sources support the interpretation that Churchill was a Great War leader.

Source A: In a speech to the House of Commons the newly-appointed Prime Minister sets out his policy towards the war.

You ask, what is our policy? I will say: it is to wage war by sea, land and air, with all our might and all the strength that God can give us; to wage war against a monstrous tyranny never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy. You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: victory – victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror; victory however hard and long the road may be, for without victory there is no survival.

Churchill, speech, 13 May 1940

Source B: The head of the British army expresses his annoyance with Churchill.

Another poisonous day! We went to see the Prime Minister to discuss South East Asia operations. I had another row with him. He refused to accept that any general plan was necessary, recommended a purely opportunistic policy and behaved like a spoilt child that wants a toy in a shop regardless of the fact that its parents tell him that it's no good! Got nowhere with him and settled nothing!

Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke, Diary, 19 August 1943

Source C: A leading soldier, the Military Assistant Secretary to the War Cabinet, recalls working with Churchill during the Second World War.

He possessed a solid base of experience in war and of great events that no one else in or around the Government could match. He could always distinguish the major factors in a given situation. Though he had somewhat old fashioned ideas of warfare he also succeeded in keeping abreast of new inventions, for example in radar, in air navigation and in new warships. Nothing fell outside the scope of his enquiring mind, and he had an energetic method of following up any matter which attracted his passing attention. We can only recall with gratitude the five years in which he inspired us by his leadership.

Sir Ian Jacob, Action This Day, Working with Churchill, 1968

Source D: A modern historian casts doubt on Churchill's abilities as war leader.

Churchill was ignorant of all that the administration of armies entailed, as was revealed in his attitudes to the Middle East and India. He had an often sound grasp of strategy, but was often completely naïve about tactics. His own war experiences in the field, the Sudan, the Boer War and the First World War, were from a different age. He did not understand the problems of the Middle and Near East. Churchill dismissed the honest and able General Auchinleck, and replaced him with General Montgomery. On 19th August 1942 Churchill visited Montgomery's comfortable Head Quarters. He listened in admiration to Montgomery expounding plans for the Desert War almost identical to those of Auchinleck as though they were Montgomery's own. In fact it was to Auchinleck that victory at El Alamein and in North Africa was due and Churchill could not grasp this.

R.W. Thompson, Generalissimo Churchill, 1974