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Margaret Thatcher—known as Baroness Thatcher of Kesteven since June of 1992—at her place in the House of Lords. Image online, courtesy Margaret Thatcher Foundation.

Although some of her closest colleagues worried that Margaret would become an "unemployed workaholic" - after her leadership fall - she traveled, wrote books, gave speeches and kept up-to-date on important matters. Her sharp tongue, which she still used on occasion, had not diminished - nor had her desire to look fashionable. Then, one day at lunch in 2000, she stunned her daughter by confusing the facts on clearly distinctive topics. Even before her husband died, Margaret was showing early signs of dementia.

Reportedly afflicted with the disease which also disabled her close friend, Ronald Reagan, Mrs. Thatcher is rarely seen in public. Birthdays remain major events for her, however, and she occasionally makes her way to Number 10, for visits with whomever resides there at the time.

It is said that Mrs. Thatcher was never able to get over her fall from power. Her biggest problem, apparently, was the way it had occurred. As she stated in an interview:

It was treachery with a smile on its face. Perhaps that was the worst thing of all.

A polarizing figure - no less now than when she was Prime Minister - people either love her (and what she did) or despise her (and what she did). They use kind phrases (such as "she was right all along") * or pointed descriptors (like "Flickknife Maggie, the Cosh Girl of Grantham").

People who make bold moves often fall into such categories. But as John Campbell said, at his conclusion of *The Iron Lady - from Grocer's Daughter to Prime Minister*:

For better and worse, the grocer's daughter from Grantham imprinted her personality, and her name, indelibly upon her era. She will always remain one of the transformative figures who shaped the twentieth century. (Campbell, page 502 of the 2009 paperback edition.)

Lady Thatcher died - of yet-another stroke - on the 8th of April, 2013. She was 87 years old.

* Amanda Foreman, the historian who wrote *Newsweek's* cover article for the magazine's 26 December 2011 edition, has said she "has never written a piece that so profoundly overturned her assumptions about the subject."

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/IRON-LADY-FINAL-YEARS-The-Iron-Lady>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/IRON-LADY-FINAL-YEARS-The-Iron-Lady>

Questions 2 Ponder

What Makes Someone a Polarizing Figure?

By the sheer force of one's personality, an individual can unite or divide people. Someone who tends to divide people tends to be a polarizing figure.

Margaret Thatcher, an individual who believed in the rightness of her positions, is often seen as a polarizing figure. Although she was able to work with foreign leaders, and to compromise on international issues, she

seemed less willing to compromise on issues - such as the "Poll Tax" - in Britain.

Why is Margaret Thatcher considered a polarizing figure?

What is the best part of her legacy? What is the worst part?

Do you know anyone who is a polarizing person? What makes that person a polarizer?

If you don't personally know anyone who is a polarizing individual, can you think of anyone in today's world who fits that description? Who is it? What makes that person polarizing?

Are there situations where a polarized discussion might be useful? Explain your answer.

Media Stream



Margaret Thatcher, 2007

Image of Lady Thatcher, with Gordon and Sarah Brown, online courtesy UK government.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Margaret-Thatcher-2007>



Margaret Thatcher at 86

Image of Baroness Thatcher, on her 86th birthday, online via the *Daily Mail*. Copyright, *Daily Mail*, all rights reserved. Image provided here as fair use for educational purposes.

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Margaret Thatcher and the Fashion Industry

Clip online, via YouTube.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Margaret-Thatcher-and-the-Fashion-Industry>



Margaret Thatcher on "Weak and Feeble" Leaders

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Iron Lady - "Treachery with a Smile on Its Face"

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Margaret Thatcher's Legacy - Varying Points of View

Clip of Charles Moore interview with Peter Robinson for "Uncommon Knowledge," sponsored by the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.

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