

# The "thatcher revolution" essay sample

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



## **The “ Thatcher Revolution” Essay Sample**

When one talks about revolution, certain concepts come to mind. They are that of a great upheaval, both social and economic and a change in the structure which is being targeted. The Thatcher Revolution was one such revolution, which started in 1979 when Margaret Thatcher came to power as the Prime Minister of England, till 2001, when Tony Blair finished his first term. Many barriers were broken down during this revolution, which changed England from a struggling economy to a highly efficient industrial power with a powerful economy.

The Thatcher Revolution tried to ensure that ideas that were put forth resulted in some sort of economic and social action regarding England. Although ideas came from different people and institutions, they were developed into an agenda and plan to follow and implement by Margaret Thatcher. The concept of Thatcherism emphasized on aspects such as individual freedom, opportunity and responsibility, with their being emphasis on aspects such as a strong market economy, strong families and a strong sense of patriotism.

Margaret Thatcher was extremely critical of how British individualism was being replaced by a growing sense of socialism, and how the emphasis on creating a welfare state was leading many British people to become passive bystanders rather than being actively involved in creating lives for themselves and their families. She believed the welfare state to be responsible for the breakup of the family setup. She saw many failures in

different aspects of the government or institutions of the government, such as schools, healthcare, law enforcement and local governmental handling.

She tried to aggressively change and up haul these institutions, by using the power of the state, because to her, these institutions and their failings represented a failing of the British people and their expectations. The Thatcher Revolution, while not being able to achieve everything that it had set out to accomplish, was successful on many fronts. The Thatcher Revolution started during the economic crisis, which was exacerbated by the framework of economic institutions within the state, that did not work efficiently any longer.

In order to ensure the survival of England in terms of economic well being, she clashed with many institutions , with nationalized industries and trade unions. Her confrontational attitude made her many enemies, who were extremely resentful of her, considering her not to be elite enough to enter English politics. The Thatcher Revolution achieved great successes in terms of revitalizing the British economy. Margaret Thatcher's economic programs helped in reducing governmental contribution to this crisis, by ensuring that there was a certain degree of fiscal and monetary stability.

She opened the economy to entrepreneurship and other market forces. She persisted in ensuring that barriers, which stifled and retarded economic growth, such as taxation, exchange controls, regulation, nationalized industries and trade union power, were broken down. Her initial success was tempered by some ill-fated policy decisions that were made by Nigel Lawson, and then the disaster that was the Exchange Rate Mechanism. While

Thatcher was phenomenal in terms of ensuring the economy and industry wise, Britain became a super power, she met with some failure and resentment from the British people when she tried to reform the welfare state.

They did not agree with her regarding her individualist views. Although they were willing to accept reforms that would be economically beneficial to the country, they did not agree with Margaret Thatcher on issues pertaining to curtailing amenities such as free education, National Health Service, and other free and low cost facilities. They did not concur with Thatcher on the issue that her reforms would make the system more efficient. This could be considered to be one of the major things that Margaret Thatcher failed in achieving during her tenure.

The Thatcher Revolution is important for the understanding of British history for many varied reasons. When Margaret Thatcher came to power in 1979, Britain was going through a massive economic crisis. The British workers were facing massive unemployment as well as having to bear the brunt of Callaghan's income policies, which were extremely skewed. Public sector unions were also increasing in size and strength because of these disastrous economic policies, which were leaving the workers with no choice but to fight against the government and its policies.

The militancy of these unions was also increasing, causing great problem to the government. Margaret Thatcher ensured that under her government, England became one of the world's greatest financial centers. She brought England back from an era of discontent and inflation. She reduced the power

of trade unions, who in her opinion were responsible for the decline of British economy. British modern political history is very much defined by the era of Margaret Thatcher.

Even after her fall in November 1990, her idea and the core principals by which she worked, were very much part of the governments of John Major and Tony Blair. They espoused to her ideas in many principles pertaining to British public policy. I believe that the Thatcher Revolution was very successful in the majority of tasks that it set out to accomplish. Margaret Thatcher came into at a time when Britain was at a very precarious junction in its history. The “ winter of discontent” had just occurred, with one million workers striking.

There was double-digit inflation in the country, and the economic crisis was casting a shadow on all other issues. Thatcher went on to deal with these problems very strongly and quickly. Her government went on to present a budget in 1981, that increased income taxes, increased National Insurance contributions, introduced new consumption taxes and other charges. Higher education also had severe cuts, along with a stop in university expansion. Social security was also reformed to cut costs.

Such cost cutting was extremely effective as it helped in bringing inflation down to 4. percent by the end of 1982. She accomplished a lot for the country in terms of putting a stop and effectively breaking the power of trade unions. Strikes had plagued the initial years of the Thatcher’s government, with 30 million workdays being lost due to strikes. She tried to effectively counter strike any sort of strike that the unions might have

planned. In order to see that the country did not get paralyzed if the coal workers decided to strike, she had extra reserves of coal stored to sustain the country in times of emergency.

She pursued a step by step approach regarding the unions. She dealt with many issues related to strikes, by passing the Employment act of 1980, and 1982 which required 80 percent approval to establish a closed shop, restricted sympathy strikes and stated that unions could be sued for civil damages, or jailed if found guilty of contempt in court. National unions were held responsible for any local violations of the law or labour contract that might occur due to a strike. In this way Thatcher ensured that the power of labour unions was broken forever.

These accomplishments were very important, and still have significance to this day for many reasons. The Thatcher Revolution ensured that England became a financial power again, a position it had not held since the WWII. Thatcher genuinely felt that she could help the British people, and firmly believed in the Victorian principles of scrupulousness and hard work. Some of her ideas and laws met with great disapproval and dislike, but in the end it was Thatcher, and the Thatcher Revolution which went on to restore England to some semblance of its former power.