

# [Was the heath government a total failure? assignment](https://assignbuster.com/was-the-heath-government-a-total-failure-assignment/)

Was the Heath government a total failure? It is undoubtedly true that during Heath’s time in office, 1970-1975, he faced many difficulties, many of them at the hands of the Trade Unions, which made his time in government difficult to make any progress. However it cannot be denied that the Heath Government did make some successes, and considering the harsh times that Heath faced, it could be argued that the Heath government was not a total failure and instead was one that had experienced lot of bad luck.

The Heath government was not a total failure as when he came into office in 1970, e marked changed throughout Britain, mainly because Heath himself came in with a ‘ bustle of no-nonsense efficiency and many saw that it was what Britain needed. One of Heath’s first successes was the establishment of a New Relations Court, made by legislation, similar to that of Barbara Castle. This was a success for Heath as it would see fair play for workers and employers, and end industrial anarchy that had bedeviled the country.

This showed that Heath knew what he wanted and had the determination to get what he wanted, an important characteristic that made the public have hope that Heath could get them out of the situation they had lived in for years. Therefore, you could argue that the Heath government made legislations based on the public needs, which shows a successful government that was not a total failure. Even though Heath showed his will to get things right, as anyone would, he made many mistakes and drove Britain into even harsher times.

The aim to reduce government’s involvement in the economy began to lose focus when Rolls Royce rain into difficulties in its rare engine operation, and had to be bailed out with overspent money in 1971 meaning that the government had to nationalist one of the most prestigious companies. After this, Heath’s administration increasingly became one of intervention. This change in policy seemed essential with the rapid rise of unemployment, which climbed to over one million in 1972.

This betrayal to his promises portrayed a prime minister that couldn’t keep his word, losing support from the public and damaging his image of a man who supposedly ‘ knew what to do’. Unemployment was an important crisis that never seemed to end meaning that the public were fed up with losing Jobs and having no disposable income, a massive contrast to the ‘ swinging sixties’ were life in Britain was finally peaking.

However with all his failures Heath successfully achieved his dream of entry into the European Union (SEC) in January 1973. This was a success for the Heath government, but especially to Heath as he played a major role in winning over the French President and ensuring parliamentary approval. In gaining entry into the SEC it weakened his political opposition from the Labor Party.

This was because Jenkins was resolutely opposed to the idea of the SEC, mainly because it would mean Britain would have to change her tariffs in order to fit in’, however Jenkins only had a small number of supporters from labor rebels, and triumph in January left labor divided and weak, which took pressure off Heath as it would seem he had no threatening political opposition. This is a point for how the Heath government was not a total failure, as the Heath government is that it faced harsh times that any government would find hard to control and solve. An example of this would be the difficulties with the Trade

Unions which resulted in a massive unrest with the miners. The new Industrial Relations Act was not working as was hoped and the newly enforced Industrial Relations Court, which had powers to enforce ballots, could only act if unions registered under it and so proved to be useless as most unions simply ignored it, emphasizing the lack of control the government had over the unions and showing how dependent they were on their decisions. The miners, in a declining economy, had accepted moderate payments over the past 15 years and in 1971 demanded an increase in income.

The miners were under the influence of more radical leaders, spurred on from the government trying to moderate wage increases. Reluctantly the Coal Board offered an 8 per cent wage increase but it was rejected by the National Union of Miners (NINJA) and a national strike began in January. The answer for the government was to perform a ‘ U-Turn’ and return to a government prices and incomes policy. The whole affair with the miners resulted in a government who couldn’t stand up to unions. The strike appealed to many people which gave the public courage to stand up against the government.

Overall, the Heath government did try to solve this issue by offering an 8 per cent increase, and so did try to deal with the issue. It shows how bad the economic situation was in Britain, which badly affected the government and its role in controlling the country. In conclusion, the Heath government was not a total failure because it inherited industrial problems from Wilson and his labor government (1964-70) because they didn’t want to take power away from the unions, which actually proved to be a good point as a overspent needs support from the unions, but since Heath lost it, it caused trouble for his government.

Even though Heath made matters worse by allowing a banned civil right meeting in 1972 to go ahead, which caused 14 deaths and hatred towards the Red Army, he was faced with a lot of bad luck, like the Israeli-Arab war which caused petrol prices to rapidly increase, causing deep resentment throughout Britain. As a prime minister, he couldn’t control these invents, proving that the Heath government was not a total failure.