

Churchill in Moscow – Lesson Material

A new history play about power, paranoia and realpolitik by Howard Brenton

25th April 2026 – 31st May 2026



The English Theatre
Frankfurt

Churchill in
MOSCOW

A new history play about power, paranoia and realpolitik by **Howard Brenton**

Directors **Rosie Tricks** and **Tom Littler** Playing from **24th April 2026**

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This teachers' pack includes information as well as tasks and topics to be dealt with in the classroom. The tasks do not necessarily build on each other. Cut and paste as you please.

Background Information to *Churchill in Moscow*

The author – Howard Brenton

Howard Brenton was born in 1942. He has written over 50 plays including *The Romans In Britain* (1980), *Bloody Poetry* (1983) and *Pravda* (1985, written with David Hare). The most recent are *PAUL* (2005), *Never So Good* (2008) and a version of Buchner's *Danton's Death* (2010) at the National Theatre; *The Ragged Trousered Philiosophers* (2010, after Robert Tressell) at the Everyman Theatre Liverpool and Chichester Festival Theatre; *In Extremis* (2008), *Anne Bolyn* (2010) and *Doctor Scroggy's War* (2014) at Shakespeare's Globe; *55 DAYS* (2012), *The Arrest Of Ai Weiwei* (2013), *Drawing The Line* (2014) and *Lawrence After Arabia* (2016) at Hampstead Theatre.¹



The Directors – Rosie Tricks and Tom Littler



Rosie trained on the Theatre Directing MFA at Birkbeck and was Resident Assistant Director at Orange Tree Theatre from 2024-2025. Her directing credits include **Mad Hatter's Tea Party** (Orange Tree Theatre); August Strindberg's **The First Warning** / Sarah Sigal's **Kirkenes**, and **Three Short Plays** by Tennessee Williams (Orange Tree Lunchtime Plays); **Along Came a Magpie** (Scarlet Oak Theatre); **Gus Runs Away** and **An Observation on Flirting** (Circle Theatre)

As Assistant Director: **Titus Andronicus** (Hampstead Theatre); **In Praise of Love**, **Churchill in Moscow**, **Twelfth Night** (Orange Tree Theatre); **Animal Farm** and **Anatomy of a Suicide** (Rose Bruford).

¹ <https://rsliterature.org/fellows/howard-brenton/>

Photograph: Eamonn McCabe. Found online: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/jul/10/howard-brenton-life-in-theatre>. Last access: April 17th 2026.

Tom has been Artistic Director of the Orange Tree Theatre in London since 2022. Under his leadership, the OT has won the Stage Award for Theatre of the Year and the Critics' Circle Peter Brook Empty Space Award, and been nominated for two Olivier Awards. Tom's own productions at the OT include **The Rivals**, **She Stoops to Conquer**, **Twelfth Night**, **Suite in Three Keys**, **Creditors** and **The Circle**. Before this, Tom was Artistic Director and Executive Producer of Jermyn Street Theatre from 2017 to 2022, during which he won the OffWestEnd Award for Best Artistic Director, and the theatre won the Critics' Circle Award for Exceptional Theatremaking in Lockdown and the Stage Award for Best Fringe Theatre. Previous to this, Tom was



Artistic Director of Primavera, Associate Director of Theatre503, and Associate Director of the Peter Hall Company. He won the OffWestEnd Best Director Award for **Twelfth Night** in 2025, and special OffWestEnd Awards for **15 Heroines** and **The Odyssey**.

Tom has directed seven productions for the English Theatre Frankfurt: **Strangers on a Train**, **Other Desert Cities**, **The Glass Menagerie**, **The Picture of Dorian Gray**, **Jekyll and Hyde**, **Cabaret**, and most recently **Switzerland** made under lockdown conditions in 2020.

Tom has directed several premieres of Howard Brenton's work including **Churchill in Moscow** (Orange Tree), **Cancelling Socrates** and **The Blinding Light** (Jermyn Street Theatre), and new versions of Strindberg's **Creditors** and **Miss Julie** (Jermyn Street Theatre / Theatre by the Lake) and **Dances of Death** (Gate).

Tom has directed over eighty productions over the past twenty years, collaborating with playwrights including Lorna French, Natalie Haynes, Charlotte Jones, Hannah Khalil, Bryony Lavery, Isley Lynn, Joanna Murray-Smith, Lucy Shaw, Timberlake Wertenbaker and Alexandra Wood. He has revived plays by writers including Somerset Maugham, Noel Coward, Graham Greene, Dorothy L. Sayers, Terence Rattigan, and especially by William Shakespeare, many of whose plays Tom has directed to critical acclaim. He has directed many of the UK's best-loved actors including Roger Allam, Jane Asher, Charles Dance, Oliver Ford Davies, Patsy Ferran, Freddie Fox, Patricia Hodge, Penelope Keith, Tuppence Middleton, Michael Pennington, and Olivia Williams.

Tom trained as an assistant and associate to directors including Peter Gill, Peter Hall, and Trevor Nunn. He read English at the University of Oxford and has postgraduate degrees from the Open University and the University of Cambridge, where he subsequently taught eighteenth-century literature.

Churchill in Moscow – Characters

Winston Churchill

Charismatic, theatrical, and strategic. He is partly insensitive to Russian culture and is easily provoked. He doubts Stalin's trustworthiness. He uses humour and performance to mask insecurity and maintain control, but beneath it he is pragmatic and willing to make morally questionable decisions for victory.

Joseph Stalin

Cold, controlled, and deeply paranoid. He believes in power, fear, and survival above all else, yet is highly intelligent and capable of forming calculated alliances. There seem to be two Stalins. The well-read, sensitive father and the crass and violent leader of Russia.

Vyacheslav Molotov

Soviet Foreign Commissar and one of Stalin's closest allies. Loyal, disciplined, and ideological. He represents strict Soviet thinking, prioritising victory and political doctrine, while also revealing underlying fear of Stalin's authority. He is willing to manipulate the situation and the discussions so that they ultimately lead to an agreement.

Sir Archibald Clark Kerr

British Ambassador to Moscow. He understands the stakes and uses his good relationship with Churchill to rein him in and bring him to his senses. He, too, is willing to manipulate events for the greater good in such a way that no one's ego is bruised, but an agreement is reached in the end.

Sally

Translator and flight lieutenant in the RAF. Thoughtful and morally conflicted. She values truth and empathy, questioning authority and struggling with the ethics of manipulating language.

Olga

Translator Lieutenant in the Red Army. Composed, loyal, and pragmatic. She believes in the Soviet cause and prioritises victory over truth, though she shows intelligence and subtle emotional depth.

Svetlana Alliluyeva

Stalin's daughter. Sensitive, observant, and symbolic. She represents the human cost of power and history, ultimately embodying change and the future beyond both empires.

Churchill in Moscow - Summary

The play is set in 1941. Churchill arrives after a long journey via Gibraltar, Cairo and Teheran in Moscow to meet Stalin. They exchange pleasantries – more or less – and start misunderstanding each other right away. Following the German invasion of the USSR in June 1941, Stalin immediately demands a second front in France to be opened to relieve pressure on the Red Army. Churchill, however, argues that the British forces do not have the capacities and had decided together with the U.S. government not to strike just now. Instead, he explains, the British and the American plan to strike later the following year and - instead of landing in the North of France (the hard back of a crocodile) - , they want to free the North of Africa first and then fight the Nazis in the South of France (the soft underbelly of a crocodile), where they will least expect it.

Stalin hints that his intelligence service is up to date on the latest developments and seems to approve of „Operation Torch“ at first.

After the conversation, the parties withdraw for the time being. Archie and Lieutenant Powel stand in the entrance hall of their luxurious lodgings and realize as they talk that they are likely being bugged. Churchill joins them. He notices that a gramophone is missing from the otherwise lavishly furnished house and asks Sally to tell him more about Stalin as a person.

The next morning, evidence of the surveillance is found. Stalin makes no secret of the hidden microphones and had a gramophone brought to Churchill overnight.

The British are confident that the upcoming meeting with Stalin and Molotov will now proceed productively and quickly, when Molotov enters the room without Stalin and with bad news. The meeting is postponed until late in the evening. Churchill remains friendly toward Molotov, but afterward, without any regard for the eavesdropping, he expresses his anger at the Russians' opportunistic attitude, which makes the enemy of one's enemy a friend and switches sides depending on their own interests.

At the same time, Stalin meets his daughter. The separation between family and politics becomes clear. He places great importance on protecting his daughter from the role of the strategic and manipulative politician and makes a strict distinction between Stalin and Little Papa. She has no role in world politics and is exclusively his little hostess. They speak affectionately about literature and her late mother, and he jokingly asks her to be the little hostess during dinner with Churchill.

After she leaves the room, Stalin is briefly melancholic but then slips back into his role as a rather coarse politician.

When the delegations meet again, Stalin has completely reversed his strategy. After initially agreeing, he now begins to attack the British once more and becomes increasingly harsh in his accusations. He criticizes Operation Torch and again demands the deployment of British troops in northern France. The female translators feel increasingly uncomfortable between the two undiplomatic men.

Finally, Churchill loses his temper and accuses Stalin of the 1939 pact with Hitler, reminding him that, unlike Russia, Great Britain had been an opponent of the Nazi regime from the very beginning.

Stalin abruptly ends the conversation, reminds Churchill of a banquet in the evening, and leaves the room. Churchill also leaves the room. The translators remain behind, analyzing what happened and trying to figure out where the conversation went off the rails. The

two women quickly recognize and overcome the cultural references and ignorance of each other's mentalities.

In the garden Churchill rages about the meeting to his ambassador Archie, who tries to calm him down and to see the bigger picture. He reminds him, why Churchill agreed to come to Moscow in the first place. He reminded him of the fear that Moscow might make peace with Hitler so avoid further conflict and would leave the Western world hanging. He convinces Churchill to not return home just yet but to attend the banquet and play the game.

The next scene takes place in a Kremlin bathroom during a heavy drinking session. Archie is drunk, while Molotov, also drunk but more controlled, tries to speak with him. At first, the conversation is humorous and chaotic. They joke about drinking culture, toasts, and Russian music, with Archie complaining about the overwhelming presence of alcohol in Soviet life. Molotov explains that drinking is a way of coping with constant danger. He urgently tells Archie that Winston Churchill must not leave Moscow the next day. He warns that the German army is dangerously close to Stalingrad, raising the possibility of Soviet defeat. Both sides express deep mistrust: Molotov suspects Britain might make peace with Nazi Germany and turn against the Soviet Union. Archie denies this, insisting Britain will continue fighting.

On the sidelines, Sally and Olga settle down in a corridor. At first, their conversation is light and humorous. They compare English and Russian language, joke about slang, and bond over exhaustion. Their playful discussion about words and translation highlights how language shapes meaning—and misunderstanding.

Gradually, the conversation deepens. They reflect on the heavy drinking culture among leaders, suggesting it may mask fear. They also talk about different beliefs about leadership: Sally argues that leaders should feel fear like ordinary people. Olga insists leaders must appear fearless. They also discuss translation itself, realizing that translators are not neutral—they interpret meaning and subtext, sometimes shaping how nations understand each other. The idea emerges that what is left unsaid (“the untranslatable”) matters as much as words themselves.

The mood turns darker as they acknowledge the stakes of the war. Despite their different backgrounds, they share a quiet moment of mutual understanding and vulnerability. The scene then shifts back to political urgency. Molotov and Archie enter. They instruct the translators about a private upcoming meeting between Joseph Stalin and Winston Churchill:

Archie subtly pressures Sally to translate in Britain's favour, so it will not anger Churchill. Molotov pressures Olga to do everything in her power to keep the two leaders in the same room, thus translate in a way that avoids further conflict. Both translators are thus caught between truth and political manipulation.

In Joseph Stalin's private room, he meets Winston Churchill with only their translators, Sally and Olga. The meeting begins politely, with Stalin introducing his daughter Svetlana Alliluyeva, which briefly softens the atmosphere. Churchill and Stalin then exchange jokes and historical references while subtly testing each other. They discuss weapons, almost playfully admiring their destructive power, showing how

normalized war has become. The mood shifts when Stalin receives urgent news: German forces are near Stalingrad. He angrily questions Britain's commitment to the war. At this point, Sally deliberately softens Stalin's harsh words in translation, and Olga notices.

At some point, Sally and Olga are dismissed and meet Archie and Molotov outside the room waiting. Churchill and Stalin are communicating without translation. The translators reflect on their earlier mistranslations: Sally feels she has betrayed the truth. Olga argues that truth doesn't matter—only victory does.

Inside, Churchill and Stalin communicate through gestures, broken words, and shared ideas, gradually understanding each other without translators. Their conversation becomes a raw exchange about: War, history, and power, violence and moral compromises (both admit to brutal decisions in their empires), and the nature of leadership and control. They reach a mutual understanding: Britain will send support (convoys). The USSR will keep fighting at Stalingrad. After the war, they will divide influence over the world and "coexist"

At the end of the play Svetlana delivers a powerful monologue about her future. She predicts that she finally will learn the truth about her mother's suicide, she will be controlled and oppressed by her father, will suffer from failed relationships and personal loss. Eventually she will be defecting to the West and witness the fall of both the Soviet Union and the British Empire. She will live her life as an individual, not performing a role.

Themes: Key themes include wartime diplomacy, the "Grand Alliance," the role of interpreters, and the personal relationships between Allied leaders.

Historical context

The play *Churchill in Moscow* is based on a mixture of historical events. It mainly deals with the contents of the Anglo-Soviet agreement of 1941.

Following the German invasion of the USSR in June 1941, Stalin immediately demanded a second front in France to relieve pressure on the Red Army. Britain, having evacuated Dunkirk in 1940, lacked the capacity to launch a successful amphibious invasion in 1941. After Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the US and UK officially began coordinating strategy, with the US supporting the idea of a direct assault on Europe, though not immediately.²

The result a meeting of British and Soviet government officials in Moscow in June 1941 was the **The Anglo-Soviet Agreement**. The Soviets and the British agreed not to cooperate with Hitler and to support each other. The constant fear, the other party might start negotiations with Germany, is a constant in the play *Churchill in Moscow*.

² <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1937-1945/war-time-conferences#:~:text=The%20first%20involvement%20of%20the,on%20establishing%20a%20second%20front.>

Also in real life, The British agreed to send convoys to support the Soviets while fighting the Germans. These convoys started in July 1941 and are mentioned as a result of negotiations at the end of the play.

While the agreement is fact, the first meeting between Churchill and Stalin in person only took place in 1942 at the Conference of Moscow where the Allies decided to postpone the opening of a second front further and to continue with Operation Torch, much to the Soviet's dismay. At this meeting Churchill also met Stalin's daughter for the first time. Another reason, why this play is supposedly set in 1942 is the mention of the Germans being at the gates of Stalingrad, which was in 1942.

Therefore, the meeting itself, personal notions and content of internal discussions as well as negotiation strategies portrayed in the play are mainly fictional but based on many different accounts of the politicians' characters. Especially influential seem to be letters by Sir Alexander Cadogan, who was permanent under-secretary at the Foreign Office that were published in 2013 about the meeting in Moscow 1942.³

The following gives a timeline of events dealt with in or relevant for "Churchill in Moscow". It does not claim to be complete.

Date	Historic events
30 September 1938	<p>The Munich Agreement</p> <p>In 1938, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain wants to ensure another European war is avoided.</p> <p>With Nazi Germany expanding its territories in Europe, Britain, France and Germany sign the Munich Agreement, which states the Czechoslovakian region of Sudetenland should be given to Germany and Hitler can claim no more land.</p>
23 August 1939	<p>The German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact, also called the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, signed August 23, 1939, was a nonaggression pact between Germany and the Soviet Union. Just days before World War II began, it divided eastern Europe into German and Soviet spheres of influence., which was unknown to the countries in question.</p> <p>The agreement stipulated that the two countries would not attack each other, support any third power that attacked the other, or join any group threatening either party. It also included a secret protocol that divided eastern Europe into German and Soviet areas of influence.</p>
1 September 1939	<p>Germany invades Poland</p> <p>At 04:45 on 1 September 1939, the assault on Poland begins. A German battleship opens fire on the Polish garrison in Danzig (Gdansk). It is the first military engagement of World War Two. Simultaneously 1.5 million German troops march over the Poland border.</p>

³ <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-22623251>

2 September 1939	Chamberlain sends an ultimatum to Hitler: if he does not withdraw his forces by the following day, there will be war.
3 September 1939	Britain and France declare war on Germany Britain and France have agreed to defend Poland under the terms of the 1918 Treaty of Versailles. When Germany refuses to withdraw, Britain and France declare war.
17 September 1939	Stalin sends the Red Army to occupy eastern Poland but the Soviet Union declared itself neutral in the war between the UK and Germany. The British Army, made up of around 150,000 men, travels to France. Allied forces are put on alert, guarding the border with Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg. The French reinforce an impressive series of fortifications along the German border, the Maginot Line, but crucially they do not extend it to reach the Belgian frontier.
10 May 1940	Germany invades France Chamberlain's appeasement policy has failed. He resigns as prime minister on 10 May and is succeeded by Winston Churchill. German troops use Blitzkrieg tactics and unleash a surprise attack to storm through neutral Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands before crossing the border into northern France. The French, with most of their forces on the Maginot Line further south, are outmanoeuvred and outfought. Hopelessly outgunned, the British Army retreats towards the coast.
19 May 1940	The evacuation from Dunkirk German military success continues as they reach the coast at Abbeville in Northern France and cut off the British Army between Lille and the sea. Between 26 May and 4 June a British ragtag fleet, ranging from battleships to pleasure boats braves the Channel to save the stranded soldiers.
June 1940	Charles de Gaulle - Under-Secretary of State for National Defence and War - asks Churchill for help in the Battle of France. Churchill refuses.
14 June 1940	German soldiers enter Paris
17 June 1940	De Gaulle travels to London to meet Churchill. France's president Pétain approaches the Germans for terms. De Gaulle broadcasts from London to the French population summoning them to stay resistant.

22 June 1940	France is divided into an occupied section and a German puppet state , headed by Pétain, known as Vichy France. Germany is now the dominant power in Western Europe.
19 July 1940	Battle of Britain With France conquered, Germany plans a knockout blow to Britain across the Channel. The RAF puts up an incredible fight and, over the course of the battle, downs 1,887 German planes. The Luftwaffe fails to dominate British skies and, by the end of October, the threat of invasion recedes.
7 September 1940	The Blitz With the Battle of Britain going badly, the Luftwaffe commander, Hermann Goering, switches to bombing British cities.
22 June 1941	Germany invades the Soviet Union (Operation Barbarossa) Three million German troops are supported by Italian, Hungarian, Romanian and Finnish allies. Stalin is taken by surprise, and the Soviets are forced to retreat. The Germans use Blitzkrieg tactics and one week into the invasion the Soviets suffer 150,000 casualties. Stalin immediately demanded a second front in France to relieve pressure on the Red Army. While Soviet pleas began in 1941, British logistical limitations and US planning prioritized other areas, delaying the main second front invasion until June 6, 1944
12 July 1941	The Anglo-Soviet Agreement was a declaration signed by the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union. The UK and the Soviet Union pledged to cooperate in the war against Nazi Germany and not to make a separate peace with Germany. After Three weeks of difficult negotiations the two countries reached an agreement to cooperate against Germany. The UK consulted with the US, Canada, Australia and South Africa before concluding the agreement.
August 1941	The Arctic convoys from Britain to the Soviet Union began the following month as did the joint Anglo-Soviet invasion of Iran which opened a supply route to the USSR.
October 1941 - January 1942	Battle of Moscow The Soviet defensive effort thwarted Germany's attack on Moscow

7 December 1941	<p>Pearl Harbor Japan, allies to Germany, bombs the American fleet moored at Pearl Harbor on the Hawaiian island of Oahu.</p> <p>USA officially enters the Second World War</p>
15 February 1942	<p>Fall of Singapore The Imperial Japanese Army continues its expansionist ambitions by hurling itself into a series of offensives across Asia.</p>
June 1942	<p>Germans are at the gates of Stalingrad</p>
August	<p>Conference of Moscow Churchill is in Moscow for the first time. Allies decide to go through with Operation Torch.</p>
23 October 1942	<p>Battle of El Alamein After two years of see-saw fighting in the deserts of North Africa, Churchill appoints Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery to command the British army. The British halt Germany's march into Egypt at the second battle of El Alamein. Germany and Italy are forced to retreat through Libya. It is the first major allied victory in the war.</p>
08-16 November 1942	<p>Operation Torch Allied invasion of French North Africa Torch was a compromise operation that met the British objective of securing victory in North Africa while allowing American armed forces the opportunity to begin their fight against Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy on a limited scale.</p>
February 1943	<p>German surrender in Stalingrad After the victory at Stalingrad, the Soviet army remained on the offensive, liberating most of Ukraine, and virtually all of Russia and eastern Belorussia during 1943.</p>
May 1943	<p>German forces are finally driven out of North Africa, ending the threat to the Suez Canal, a major trading route, and paving the way for the invasion of Italy.</p>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/articles/z6pjgwx>

<https://www.britannica.com/event/German-Soviet-Nonaggression-Pact>

Compare: Chubarov, Alexander. Russia's Bitter Path to Modernity: A History of the Soviet and Post-Soviet Eras, pg. 119

Compare: Beevor, Antony (2012). The Second World War. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson. pp. 17–21, 24–27, 32–33.

Compare: Willmott, H.P. (1984). June, 1944. Poole, Dorset: Blandford Press. ISBN 0-7137-1446-8 – via Archive Foundation.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/timeline-event/holocaust/1942-1945/german-defeat-at-stalingrad#:~:text=In%20February%201943%2C%20after%20months,and%20eastern%20Belorussia%20during%201943.>

Biography Winston Churchill⁴

Winston Churchill was born on 30 November 1874, in Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire and was of rich, aristocratic ancestry. Although achieving poor grades at school, his early fascination with militarism saw him join the Royal Cavalry in 1895. As a soldier and part-time journalist, Churchill travelled widely, including trips to Cuba, Afghanistan, Egypt and South Africa.



Credit: Imperial War Museum (MH 26392)

Churchill was elected as Conservative MP for Oldham in 1900, before defecting to the Liberal Party in 1904 and spending the next decade climbing the ranks of the Liberal government. He was First Lord of the Admiralty (the civil/political head of the Royal Navy) by the time of the disastrous Gallipoli campaign, which he created. Heavily criticised for this error, he resigned from this position and travelled to the Western Front to fight himself. The interwar years saw Churchill again 'cross the floor' from the Liberals, back to the Conservative Party. He served as Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1924, when he controversially opted for Britain to re-join the Gold Standard⁵. Following the Tory electoral defeat in 1929, Churchill lost his seat and spent much of the next 11 years out of office, mainly writing and making speeches. Although he was alone in his firm opposition to Indian Independence, his warnings against the Appeasement of Nazi Germany were proven correct when the Second World War broke out in 1939.

Following Neville Chamberlain's resignation in 1940, Churchill was chosen to succeed him as Prime Minister of an all-party coalition government eight months after the outbreak of World War II in Europe. Churchill rallied the British people and led the country from the brink of defeat to victory. He shaped Allied strategy in the war, resulting in an Anglo-Soviet pact of mutual assistance between the U.S., Great Britain and the Soviet Union, and later on, he alerted the West to the expansionist threat of the latter. Churchill, who also adopted the self-created position of Minister for Defence, was active both in administrative and diplomatic functions in prosecuting the British war effort. Some of his most memorable speeches⁶ were given in this period and are credited with stimulating British morale during periods of great hardship.

⁴ Picture taken from: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/second-world-war/darkest-hour-the-people-who-helped-shape-the-future-of-britain-in-may-1940>. Last access: 21.04.26.

⁵ anchoring the pound to a fixed weight of gold, which facilitated stable exchange rates and international trade throughout the 19th century. The system was suspended during WWI

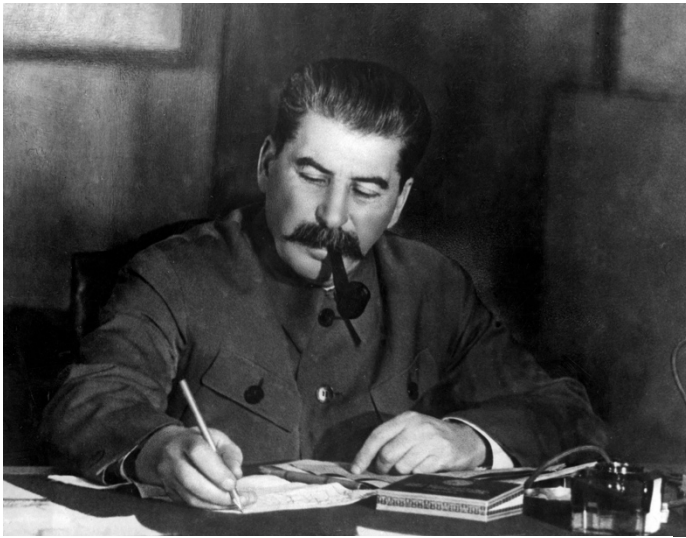
⁶ "Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat": (May 13, 1940): Delivered upon becoming Prime Minister, this speech declared his aim as victory at all costs., "We Shall Fight on the Beaches": (June 4, 1940): Following the Dunkirk evacuation, he asserted, "we shall never surrender", "Their Finest Hour": (June 18, 1940): Aimed at preparing Britain for the Battle of Britain, telling the nation to brace for the conflict.

However, Labour leader Clement Attlee's unexpected General Election victory in 1945 saw Churchill out of office and once again concentrating on public speaking. In his 1946 speech in the USA, the instinctive pro-American famously declared that "an iron curtain has descended across the Continent" and warned of the continued danger from a powerful Soviet Russia.

By his re-election in 1951, Churchill was, in the words of Roy Jenkins, "gloriously unfit for office". Ageing and increasingly unwell, he often conducted business from his bedside, and while his powerful personality and oratory ability endured, the Prime Minister's leadership was less decisive than during the war. His second term was most notable for the Conservative Party's acceptance of Labour's newly created Welfare State, and Churchill's effect on domestic policy was limited. His later attempts at decreasing the developing Cold War through personal diplomacy failed to produce significant results, and poor health forced him to resign in 1955, making way for his Foreign Secretary and Deputy Prime Minister, Anthony Eden.

Churchill died in 1965 and was honoured with a state funeral.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/history/past-prime-ministers/winston-churchill>



Unknown author. Public Domain.

Biography Joseph Stalin⁷

Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin (né Dzhugashvili; 18 December [O.S. 6 December] 1878 – 5 March 1953) was a Soviet revolutionary and politician who led the Soviet Union from 1924 until his death in 1953. He held office as general secretary of the Communist Party from 1922 to 1952 and as premier from 1941 until his death. Despite initially governing the country as part of a collective leadership, he eventually consolidated power to become a dictator by the 1930s. Stalin

codified the Communist Party's official interpretation of Marxism as Marxism–Leninism, and his version of it is referred to as Stalinism.

Born into a poor Georgian family in Gori, Russian Empire, Stalin attended the Tiflis Theological Seminary before joining the Marxist Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. He raised funds for Vladimir Lenin's Bolshevik faction through bank robberies and other crimes, and edited the party's newspaper, Pravda. He was repeatedly arrested and underwent several exiles to Siberia. After the Bolsheviks seized power in the October Revolution of 1917, Stalin served as a member of the Politburo, and from 1922 used his position as General Secretary to gain control over the party bureaucracy. After Lenin's death in 1924, Stalin won the leadership struggle over rivals including Leon Trotsky. Stalin's doctrine of socialism in one country became central to the party's ideology, and his five-year plans starting in 1928 led to forced agricultural collectivisation, rapid industrialisation, and a centralised command economy. His policies contributed to a famine in 1932–1933 which killed millions, including in the Holodomor in Ukraine. Between 1936 and 1938, Stalin executed hundreds of thousands of his real and perceived political opponents in the Great Purge. During his rule, an estimated 18 million people passed through the Gulag system of forced concentration and labour camps, and more than six million people, including kulaks⁸ and entire ethnic groups, were deported to remote areas of the country.

Stalin promoted Marxism–Leninism abroad through the Communist International and supported European anti-fascist movements. In 1939, his government signed the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact with Germany, enabling the Soviet invasion of Poland at

⁷ Picture taken from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Soviet_Union_%281927–1953%29. Last access: 21.04.26.

⁸ relatively prosperous peasants in the Russian Empire and early Soviet Union, characterized by land ownership, hiring labour, and owning livestock

the start of World War II. Germany broke the pact by invading the Soviet Union in 1941, leading Stalin to join the Allies. The Red Army, with Stalin as its commander-in-chief, repelled the German invasion and captured Berlin in 1945, ending the war in Europe. The Soviet Union established Soviet-aligned states in Eastern Europe, and with the United States emerged as a superpower, with the two countries entering a period of rivalry known as the Cold War. Stalin presided over post-war reconstruction and the first Soviet atomic bomb test in 1949. During these years, the country experienced another famine and a state-sponsored antisemitic campaign culminating in the "doctors' plot"⁹. In 1953, Stalin died after a stroke. He was succeeded as leader by Georgy Malenkov and eventually Nikita Khrushchev, who in 1956 denounced Stalin's rule and began a campaign of "de-Stalinisation".

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Stalin

⁹ In 1951–1953, a majority-Jewish group of doctors from Moscow were accused of a conspiracy to assassinate Soviet leaders. Stalin ordered the imprisonment and execution of hundreds of the best Soviet doctors.

Lesson Material for Churchill in Moscow

Pre-Watching Material

1) The Art of Debate

Analyzing a Cartoon

- Describe the cartoon „Talkshow“ by Hauck&Bauer to each other in pairs. Be careful to only describe what you can see and not to interpret.
- Now analyze and interpret the cartoon in class.¹⁰ Give reasons for your interpretation.
- In Pair/Share: Establish guidelines for a healthy debate culture.
- Compare the original German text with the English translation in the speech bubble. What stands out? Identify another key factor for fostering a healthy culture of debate.¹¹

(Lassen Sie mich bitte ausschreien! Ich habe Sie auch ausschreien lassen!)



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¹⁰ Possible lead questions: Who could those people be? What do they represent? What are they doing? What are their roles? Who is talking to whom? What might they be talking about? ... Focus on clothes, facial impressions, body language...

¹¹ Some elements of language are more difficult to translate: i.e. idioms, metaphors or word plays

¹² Hauck & Bauer: „Talkshow“, in: Übermedien, 22.04.2016, online unter: [https://uebermedien.de/4338/ausschreien/\(zuletzt abgerufen am 20.04.2026\)](https://uebermedien.de/4338/ausschreien/(zuletzt%20abgerufen%20am%2020.04.2026)).

Originaltext: Lassen Sie mich bitte ausschreien! Ich habe Sie auch ausschreien lassen!

2) Getting to know the play

The play we're about to deal with is called "Churchill in Moscow" by Howard Brenton.

- a) Gather what you already know about Winston Churchill. If you feel you do not know much, do a quick search to get an idea about who he was and what he had to deal with in his career.
- b) Discuss the meaning of the play's title. What's the deal with Moscow? When is the play possibly set?

Scene One: 'The Crocodile'

- a) Read the introduction to the scene and sum up its contents. Compare the scene to your earlier assumptions about "Churchill in Moscow".
- b) Discuss what the introduction tells us about Churchill's and Stalin's relationship.
- c) Make assumptions about the next few lines of the play. How might the first scene proceed?
- d)
 - Get into groups of seven (one per character and one director). Discuss how to act out the introduction to the play. Think about body language, distance and proximity, and consider everything that is written.
 - Assign the roles and rehearse. The director observes from the sidelines, offering feedback and corrections to the actors.
 - Present to the group. Afterward, the director explains the artistic decisions in two or three brief sentences.

Scene One: 'The Crocodile'

The Kremlin, Moscow, on the evening of the 12th of August, 1942. A room in STALIN's apartments. STALIN and CHURCHILL stand facing each other.

Each has a translator. STALIN's is OLGA DOVZHENKO, CHURCHILL's is SALLY POWELL.

Both are in uniform - OLGA is a lieutenant in the Red Army, SALLY is a flight lieutenant in the RAF.¹³

Standing back are the Soviet Foreign Commissar, VYACHESLAV MOLOTOV, and the British Ambassador to Moscow, SIR ARCHIBALD CLARK KERR. Both wear suits and have big briefcases.

Two elaborate armchairs face each other, there is a plain hard chair beside each of them, slightly set back.

A silence. Great tension. All are still. The leaders look at each other, faces of stone. STALIN is in a peasant's shirt, loose trousers, knee-high leather boots. CHURCHILL is in his trademark boiler suit.

Then STALIN's face creases into smiles, he takes a step

forward, one foot before the other, almost leaning, and holds out his hand.

CHURCHILL immediately breaks too, smiles and takes STALIN's hand.

They hold the handshake.

And: the play begins with STALIN speaking to CHURCHILL in a Russian he cannot understand.

¹³ Royal Air Force

“The Crocodile” continued:

Read the rest of the first scene and sum up its content in class.

STALIN. *****

CHURCHILL. *(To SALLY.)* What?
Russian, dear God, sounds like a cat being sick.

SALLY *(translates to CHURCHILL)*. Mr Prime Minister, welcome to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. It is an honour to receive you at this dark time in the lives of our great nations.

CHURCHILL. *****

STALIN. English, argh, sounds like slimy, oozy bubbles.
(To OLGA.) Yes?

OLGA *(translates to STALIN)*. He said: Mr General Secretary, I thank you from my heart for making this meeting possible, in the hope we will find the way to more speedily confound the common foe of both our peoples.

They are still holding the handshake.

STALIN, having heard the translation, releases his hand, smiles, and indicates the chair to CHURCHILL. He has given an impression of impeccable good manners.

They sit. Another unnerving silence.

NB: from now on STALIN and CHURCHILL's responses overlap the discreet translations from OLGA and SALLY.

STALIN *(low, to OLGA)*. The "great" Churchill looks old.
(Loud to CHURCHILL.) Mr Prime Minister, I understand you flew from London to Gibraltar, then on to Cairo, then to Tehran, then to us.

SALLY *(translates)*.

STALIN. A journey that could fell an ox. We've met, exchanged greetings, marked this historic occasion. Why not rest now? We can begin our discussions in the morning.

SALLY *(translates)*.

CHURCHILL (*low to SALLY*). The 'great' Stalin. His teeth are terrible. (*Loud to STALIN*.) I thank you for your concern. But this ox is stamping the ground, raring to go¹⁴.

OLGA (*translates*).

STALIN *laughs at the 'raring to go' phrase*.

CHURCHILL. And I stopped in Cairo for a few days. To fire a general or two.

OLGA (*translates*).

STALIN receives the translation from OLGA and his face creases in good humour.

STALIN. Yes, it's always refreshing to shoot a few generals.

SALLY (*translates*).

CHURCHILL (*receives translation and laughs*). Well, we don't actually... (*To OLGA*.) Never mind.

SALLY (*low, to CHURCHILL*). He said you look old.

CHURCHILL (*not amused*). Did he.

OLGA (*Low to STALIN*). He said your teeth are bad.

STALIN (*not amused*). Did he.

Another silence.

CHURCHILL. So. Mr General Secretary, I have to tell you something that you will, I fear, not want to hear. Indeed, ah in this matter, I feel I bring a lump of ice to the North Pole.

OLGA (*translates*).

STALIN frowns.

STALIN (*to OLGA*). Ice? Why is he talking about ice?

OLGA. I think it is a metaphor, Comrade.

STALIN. He thinks I'm made of ice?

OLGA. He's trying to say he is bringing bad news to...

¹⁴ Es kaum erwarten können, loszulegen

She hesitates.

STALIN... to what, more bad news? I am bad news?
(*Darkening.*) The Soviet Union is bad news?

OLGA. There is an English town called Newcastle...

She continues to talk to STALIN. CHURCHILL and SALLY have been watching with concern.

CHURCHILL. What's wrong?

SALLY. I think your metaphor misfired, sir.

CHURCHILL. Why? I thought it was rather good. I'm just trying to say...

And STALIN is speaking.

STALIN. ***** (*Then.*) New-castle?

SALLY. He says 'Are you bringing coals to Newcastle?'¹⁵

STALIN and CHURCHILL stare at each other and at the same time the two translators exchange nods of recognition.

STALIN. So what is your bad news?

- 3) Remember your guidelines. Analyze the debate culture in this scene. Give reasons for your conclusions.
- 4) Churchill uses a variation of an English idiom: selling ice to the Inuit. Instead, he says, "I feel I bring a lump of ice to the North Pole". Explain the meaning of the original idiom, why he changes it and why Stalin is offended by it.
- 5) Analyze Olga's role in the first of the scene of the play.
- 6) The exposition is the first act of a drama. It sets out the circumstances and conditions from which the tragic conflict arises. It provides information about the setting, time, context of the action, background, and backstory, and introduces the main characters. The primary purpose of the exposition is to inform the audience about the relationships and underlying elements that will give rise to conflict as the drama unfolds.
- 7) Collect all the information given in this first part of the first scene. Make assumptions about how the storyline will continue, how the different roles will develop and how the play might end.

¹⁵ Newcastle used to be a major coal-mining city and center for coal exports.

While-Watching Material

Quiz *Churchill in Moscow*

1. Where does Scene One take place?

- A. Buckingham Palace
- B. The Kremlin in Moscow
- C. A bunker in Berlin
- D. A café in Paris

2. What is Churchill's first reaction to hearing Russian spoken? (slightly humorous)

- A. He finds it elegant and poetic
- B. He says it sounds like music
- C. He compares it to "a cat being sick"
- D. He immediately understands it perfectly

3. Why does Stalin become confused about Churchill's "ice to the North Pole" metaphor?

- A. He thinks Churchill is talking about weather
- B. He believes Churchill is insulting the Soviet Union
- C. He doesn't understand metaphors well
- D. He thinks Churchill is literally bringing ice

4. What is Operation Torch, as explained by Churchill?

- A. A secret plan to invade Germany directly
- B. A defensive strategy to protect Britain
- C. An invasion of North Africa to attack the "soft underbelly" of Europe
- D. A naval blockade of the Soviet Union

5. Why does Stalin shout for paper and a pencil?

- A. He wants to write a letter to Roosevelt
- B. He plans to draw a map of Europe
- C. He wants Churchill to draw a crocodile
- D. He is testing the translators

6. What major disagreement causes tension between Churchill and Stalin?

- A. Whether to share intelligence
- B. Whether Britain will open a second front in France immediately
- C. Who has the better army uniforms
- D. Whether vodka or brandy is superior

7. What does the dusty sofa Olga and Sally sit down on most likely symbolize?

- A. The luxury of the Kremlin
- B. Neglect and the absence of rest in political life
- C. The wealth of Soviet society
- D. A hidden place for secret meetings

8. What does “knackered” mean, according to the conversation?

OLGA (laughs) No more talks tonight, our work is done. We deserve it.

SALLY takes her shoes off and begins to massage her feet,

OLGA watches then decides to follow SALLY's example.

I am knackered.

- A. Extremely happy
- B. Slightly confused
- C. Very tired (“pooped”)
- D. Hungry for dinner

9. What is implied when both translators are told to “get it right” by their superiors?

- A. They are trusted to be completely neutral
- B. They are expected to subtly manipulate meaning in favor of their side
- C. They are being tested on grammar
- D. They should translate word-for-word without thinking

10. What does the misunderstanding between SALLY and OLGA about leaders and fear reveal?

- A. That they cannot communicate at all
- B. That language barriers are the only issue between nations
- C. That deeper ideological differences persist even when language is shared
- D. That both women are inexperienced

11. Why is it significant that Churchill and Stalin can communicate without translators?

- A. It shows translation is unnecessary
- B. It suggests that power, intent, and shared goals can transcend language
- C. It proves they speak each other's languages secretly
- D. It means the translators have failed completely

The Importance of Language

- 1) In *Churchill in Moscow* the two male protagonists do not get along very well, partly because of ideology. The two female translators, however, understand each other well despite of being loyal to their government and the ideologies that accompany them.

Discuss the differences between the two mismatched couples. Why do the translators get along easily while the politicians don't?

- 2) Sally and Olga have different views on their professional responsibilities. Read the excerpt below. Name and explain the stylistic device Sally and Olga use and explain the difference in both of their views.

SALLY. (...)

But translators are meant to be windows, aren't we, language windows, through which our countries can see each other clearly. We're not there to do the subtext. Put in stained glass. Colour things.

OLGA. But we look through the window and see what is meant, in ways they don't.

- 3) Take a stance. Which of the women do you think is right, and why? Be sure to refer to the play.

Post-Watching Material

CONTEST

What there is to do:

Based on *Churchill in Moscow*, **create your own caricature!**

You can draw it by hand, design it using Canva, or use any other tools you're familiar with. The important thing is that you design it yourself!

If you'd like to read a scene from the play again, contact us at education@english-theatre.de! We'd be happy to send you the relevant excerpt.

Where to send it:

Send your caricature with your name to education@english-theatre.de!

We'll randomly select caricatures from the submissions and post them on our social media channels.

Deadline:

Send it to us by **May 17th 2026** to be considered for the contest.

Prize:

As a prize, for every caricature we post, you'll receive two free tickets for our next play, "**Dracula.**"

How to create your own political cartoon

Cartoonists use five main elements to convey their point of view:

Read the list below and make sure you understand what they mean.

- **symbolism** - using an object to stand for an idea. Ege. Doves or olive branches for *peace*, or the the flag or Uncle Sam for *The United States of America*
- **captioning and labels** - used for clarity and emphasis
- **analogy** - a comparison between two unlike things that share some characteristics
- **irony** - the difference between the way things are and the way things should be or the way things are expected to be
- **exaggeration** - overstating or magnifying a problem or a physical feature or habit: big nose, bushy eyebrows, large ears, baldness¹⁶

Let's get creative! Below, you'll find 10 easy steps to creating your own caricature:

Step 1:

Look at some examples. Before you begin to create your political cartoon you might want to take some time to look at some examples. By looking at some examples of published political cartoons you can get a good idea of the common elements, themes, and ideas behind this type of cartoon.

- Political cartoons aim to illustrate a certain issue and represent a viewpoint regarding it.
- Political cartoons generally make use of simple artwork to get their point across quickly and cleanly.
- Most political cartoons aim to illustrate perceived problems or defend political positions.

Step 2:

Think about your message. The focus of your political cartoon will be the message. Political cartoons focus on a certain issue, either attacking or defending it using various artistic elements. Think about what you want to say and how you might want to say it.

- Consider the issue you want to cover in your cartoon.
- Think of what you want to say about the issue.
- Imagine how you might represent the issue in your cartoon.
-

¹⁶ <https://presidentlincoln.illinois.gov/Resources/2153d707-f07c-4893-89f2-be838a6a8705/analyzing-political-cartoons.pdf>. Last access: 21.04.21.

Step 3:

Consider what symbolism you want to include. A common technique that political cartoons make use of is symbolism. Symbols are images that represent larger ideas and can be a direct way to include big or complex ideas in the space of your cartoon. Make sure the people who will look at the drawing will know who is who in your cartoon.

- Elephants and donkeys are good examples of commonly used symbols to represent political parties in the United States of America.
- Eagles are used to represent the United States of America itself.

Step 4:

Think about including exaggerations. Political cartoons often make use of exaggeration when including well-known public figures. Exaggeration is most commonly used when including a caricature of a political figure, highlighting unique physical features that they might possess.

- Exaggerating a person's features can help make them more recognizable.
- You can use exaggeration to make someone appear in a certain light, depending on the message you want to send.
- Generally, caricatures are used to make fun of someone or their message.

Step 5:

Label elements in your comic. Most other forms of cartoons and art don't make heavy use of labels. However, political cartoons include labels to increase the impact of their message, making the narrative of the cartoon clear. Try including labels on figures or things that might otherwise be unclear as to what they represent.

- Using labels can be a good technique to make the message of the comic clear.
- Although labels are acceptable in political cartoons, try not to overuse them.
- Label only important aspects of your comic.

Step 6:

Make use of analogies. One technique that political cartoons often make use of is analogy. An analogy is used to relate one concept to another, often in an attempt to make an issue or message more understandable. Consider using analogies in your comic to help your readers see the issue from another perspective.

- Think in terms of "like".
- For example, international disputes about borders could be like children arguing on a playground about who owns the slide.

Step 7:

Create a rough draft of your comic. Once you have your message in mind and have settled on the elements you want to use to express it you can begin to create your comic. Creating a basic layout for your comic will allow you to get a feel for how it will look visually and how well it conveys your message.

- Think about how best to use your space.
- Ask yourself what elements are most important. Give them the most space and attention in your layout.
- You might find that some original ideas don't fit or are cluttering the comics' intended message. Consider removing these extraneous elements.

Step 8:

Draw the outlines. After you have decided on the rough layout of your comic you can begin to sketch the outlines that will make up the completed comic. Don't worry about forming the lines perfectly as you will be able to improve them as you work. Take your time and enjoy creating the cartoon that you are designing.^[2]

- Start outlining with a pencil, allowing you to make changes later on.
- Once you are happy with how the sketch looks begin to clean up your lines.
- Clean your lines by either making them bold or by erasing any rough areas and drawing them smoothly.
- It's okay to make some last minute changes and add some finishing touches.
- If you are happy with how your comic looks you can finalize your lines using black ink.

Step 9:

Add any dialogue. Many political cartoons make use of dialogue which is featured in what is called a speech "bubble" or "balloon". These "bubbles" hold the text in an empty white space, allowing the audience to clearly read it. Draw speech "bubbles" and place your text inside of them now to represent any dialogue you wanted to include.^[3]

- Speech bubbles are generally smooth and oval shaped, with a triangular extension that points towards the person speaking.
- You may also want to use thought bubbles. Thought bubbles are like speech bubbles but appear as small clouds, holding your characters inner dialogue within them.

Step 10:

Color your comic in. If your comic calls for color you can add it after your lines have been finished. Adding color can be a great way to make your comic stand out and may even allow for further symbolism or messages to be conveyed. Think carefully about which colors you might want to include and take your time when adding them.

- Colors can carry meaning. For example, the Democratic party of the United States uses blue.
- You can use any coloring tools you feel comfortable with including colored pencils, ink, or even crayons.
- You may also consider scanning your black and white image into a computer and digitally coloring it.¹⁷

Last but not least: Share your comic with the world and send to us: education@english-theatre.de

Further tips on how to create a caricature can be found here:

<https://www.moadoph.gov.au/learn/activities-and-resources/draw-a-caricature>
https://archive.nytimes.com/learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/09/17/drawing-for-change-analyzing-and-making-political-cartoons/?_r=0

¹⁷ <https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Political-Cartoon>. Last access: 21.04.26.

Appendix:

HOW TO ... work with cartoons and pictures

STEP 1: INTRODUCTION

Your introduction should answer the following questions:

- What type of image is it (cartoon / photo / painting / etc.)?
- Who is the artist (painter / cartoonist / photographer / etc.)?
- Does it have a title? If yes – make sure to include the title.
- Where is the image from? (newspaper / internet / art gallery / etc. ...)?
- What is the picture (photo / painting / cartoon / etc.) about?
- What is your first impression of the image? (serious / humorous / ironic / exaggerated / eye-catching / realistic / abstract / alienated / etc.)

Language help:

a) *The cartoon (include the title if the cartoon has a title)*

** was drawn by [name of cartoonist] / was published in / appeared in [newspaper] on [date] / was created as a response to [event, item in the news]*

** It shows/ presents / depicts / deals with / alludes to / refers to / criticises / [an event, problem, trend]*

** is directed at / comments on / targets [an attitude, policy, way of thinking]*

b) *The photo (include the title if the photo has a title)*

** was taken by / made by [name of photographer] / was published in / appeared in [newspaper] on [date] / is / was used to illustrate [event, item in the news]*

c) *The painting / drawing / sketch – or name of the painting*

** is a watercolour painting / an oil painting / pen and ink drawing / a pencil sketch / etc. / * it was painted / drawn / created / made by [name of artist] /*

** It was created in [date] and is on display / on exhibition in / can be seen in...*

STEP 2: DESCRIPTION

Look at the image carefully, then describe it systematically, e.g. from the centre to the corners, from the foreground to the background, from left to right or from top to bottom. → Describe what you can **see in** the picture – don't analyse the elements.

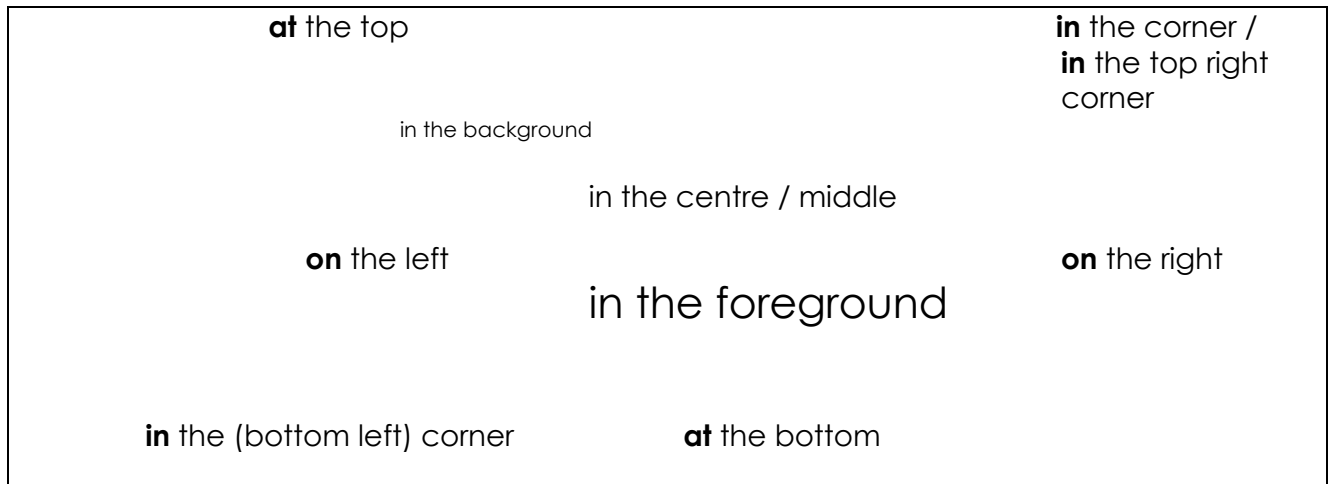
Use the **simple present** to describe the scenery and the **present progressive** for activities / movement.

Pay attention to the details:

- the setting (place/time)

- the striking features of the objects
- the characters and their appearances, their body language and their facial expressions.

Language help:



- *The photo / cartoon / painting describes / shows / illustrates*
- *The photo / the cartoon / the painting / etc. is divided into...*
- ***In** the picture / photo / painting / cartoon / ...*
- *In the centre / foreground / background of the photo / cartoon /*
- *On the right / left side of the cartoon / painting / ...*
- *The speech bubble / caption / sign / etc. reads*
- *There is a contrast between ...*
- *The eye is drawn to ...*

STEP 3: ANALYSIS

Now it is time to analyse the cartoon – the following questions might help to decipher the message:

- Who are the characters in the image? Are the people well-known? How did you find out who they are (→ see description / facial features / appearance etc.)? What is their role in this image / their connection to topic?
- Are there any symbols / eye-catching elements in the cartoon / painting / etc.? What do they stand for and what is their connection to the content?
- Does the artist make use of irony / exaggeration / a certain perspective (especially in photographs) – explain!
- How do the different elements interact?
- Which pictorial elements are used to get the message across / to produce the effect?
- What is the atmosphere like in the image? Are the pictorial elements shown in a positive or negative light? How is it done? What is the effect of it?

Language help:

- *The topic addressed by the cartoon is...*
- *The figures / elements stand for / represent / symbolize...*
- *The title / caption / speech bubble suggests / implies / underlines / points out...*
- *The cartoon / photo / painting is meant to show / expresses sth / points out that / illustrates....*
- *An element in the picture / cartoon / painting / photo... represents / stands for / symbolises / ... is stressed / is exaggerated ...*
- *The character... is a caricature of ... /... the stereotypical ... / ...is ridiculed / ...is caricatured*
- *The ... is a caricature of ...*
- *The humour lies in the difference / misunderstanding / discrepancy / contrast parallels between...*
- *... is very eye-catching because of its use of...*
- *The artist draws attention to / ridicules / stresses /*

STEP 4: EVALUATION

Do you think that the image is effective in getting the message to the target group?

What effect does the image have on you?

Language help:

- *The effect of the picture is... because..*
- *The picture reminds me of ...*
- *The cartoon achieves its aim of [doing sth]. It skilfully / effectively shows...*
- *The point / message of the cartoon is lost on me / fails to work for me because...*
- *The cartoon / painting / etc. appeals/ does not appeal to me.*
- *In my opinion it is... detailed / well-made / very-clever / effective / of high quality / convincing / confusing / exaggerated / unfair / ...*

WORDBANK ... facial expressions useful for cartoon analysis

FACE:

forehead, cheek, jaw, chin, temple, eyes, eyebrows, nose, neck
round, long, boyish / girlish, heart-shaped, pale / white

skin: irritated skin, pimples, spots, freckles, wrinkles; fair skin (helle Haut), coloured skin (farbige Haut), dark complexion (dunkelfarbige Haut), wrinkled skin (runzelige Haut)

DESCRIPTION

→ What it looks like

- long face
- to pull a face
- to pull a wry face
- blank face / poker face
- to keep a straight face
- grim faced (= finster dreinblicken)

EYES

eye lid, eye lash(es), eye ball, pupil, iris, eyebrow, round, almond shaped, open, closed, cat's eyes, button eyes, dark eyes,

Things you do with your eyes:

wink (zwinkern), blink (blinzeln), leer (anzüglich grinsen), stare (starren), glare (=angry stare), scowl (düster dreinschauen, finster blicken)

Things you do with your eyebrows:

To raise one's eyebrows – die Stirn runzeln, die Augenbrauen heben

furrowed brow – gerunzelte Stirn

to frown – die Stirn runzeln, die Stirn in Falten legen / finster / böse drein blicken

to frown at sb. – jnd. schräg anschauen / missbilligend anschauen

to frown on / upon sth. – etwas missbilligen.

DESCRIPTION

→ What it looks like

- narrow eyes
- angel eyes
- bloodshot eyes (blutunterlaufene Augen)
- blank eyes (ausdruckslose Augen), empty eyes
- bedroom eyes (Schlafzimmerblick)
- watery eyes
- bulgy eyes (Glotzaugen), pop eye (Glubschaugen)

NOSE:

nostril, beak nose (Adlernase), beaked nose (Hakennase), bulbous nose (Knollennase), snub nose / button nose (Stupsnase)

Things you do with your nose:

To wrinkle one's nose – Nase rümpfen, to sniff / to snoop – schnüffeln (auch herumschnüffeln)

DESCRIPTION

→ What it looks like

- to wrinkle up

- to wrinkle one's nose

MOUTH:

lips – thick lips/ thin lips / pursed lips / pouty lips (Schmollmund) / compressed lips
tooth, teeth (pl.), false teeth, artificial teeth, decayed teeth, gum (Zahnfleisch),
tongue, corner of the mouth / corner of one's mouth (Mundwinkel),

Things you do with your mouth:

smile, grin, laugh, smirk (grinsen, schmunzeln), sneer (höhnisch grinsen, böse grinsen)

DESCRIPTION

➔ What it looks like

- wide open
- covered mouth
- compressed lips
- to bare one's teeth

EARS:

earlobe, external ear / outer ear (Ohrmuschel), sticky-out ears, jug ears,

HAIR

long, short, straight, curly, blond, red / ginger, brown, black, bald (Glatze), wavy hair,
greasy hair, crew cut (Bürstenhaarschnitt), corn rows, braids (geflochtene Zöpfe),
pigtails (Zöpfe), ponytail,
bangs / fringe (Pony / Stirnfransen), dreadlocks, Afro hairdo, mohawk haircut

You can convey **EMOTIONS** with your facial expression:

- at ease
- happy, amused
- cheerful
- smug, vain
- surprised, amazed
- disinterested
- doubtful
- miserable, frustrated
- aggressive, angry
- bored
- grateful
- nervous, anxious, worried
- thrilled, excited

¹⁸ Both documents are taken from: <https://lernarchiv.bildung.hessen.de/sek/englisch/skills/cartoon-analysis/index.html>. Last access: 21.04.26.

Correct Answers *Churchill in Moscow* Quiz

1. B
2. C
3. B
4. C
5. C
6. B
7. B
8. C
9. B
10. C
11. B