



The new PM smiled as she arrived at Downing Street. Just days later, she stood here in sadness to pay final respects to the queen.

IN LIZ WE TRUSS?

THE UK HAS A NEW PRIME MINISTER

The UK has a new prime minister, the country's fourth in six years (all from the same party). In this bonus article, we take a quick look at how Liz Truss came to replace Boris Johnson and what it might mean for Britain.

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The Fall of Boris Johnson

The first question you might be asking is, what on Earth happened to Boris Johnson? Wasn't he incredibly popular? It's true that he won a very big election victory in 2019.

(1) _____ Partly, this was the bad luck of the covid-19 pandemic. Other problems were self-made, such as a number of corruption scandals and problems connected to Brexit.

The scandal that finally brought Johnson down, known as "partygate",

might seem rather silly from the outside. A number of parties took place in 10 Downing Street (the prime minister's address, though it also includes dozens of offices and meeting rooms) during covid-19 lockdowns. Very symbolically, one of these parties took place the day before the funeral of the queen's husband, when the queen was photographed sitting alone because of social distancing. Many people felt angry that "they" (the people in power)

were partying while the rest of the country suffered.

Johnson tried to cover up the scandal and even gave untrue statements in parliament.

(2) _____ This also meant resigning as prime minister. The Conservatives then needed to choose a new leader, who will now be prime minister until the next election - which might be another two years away.

Choosing a New Leader

Conservative (also called Tory) members of parliament put forward the names of people they wanted to lead the party.

(3) _____ After that, the vote went to members of the party itself (private persons who pay a membership fee each year).

In the end, 141,725 party members voted, choosing between Rishi Sunak (the former

finance minister) and Liz Truss (former minister of foreign affairs). This is equal to 0.3% of the UK's electorate. Of those, 81,326 people voted for Liz Truss, so the prime minister for the next two years was elected by around 0.18% of the UK electorate.

Neither Truss nor the government are very popular. However, the Conservative party still has a very large majority in parliament. (4) ____ It is also up to the prime minister when to call an election (though it has to be in the next two years). Truss is unlikely to call an election when her party is likely to lose.

Who Is the New Prime Minister?

Liz Truss has quite an unusual history, for a Conservative. Her parents were (well, still are) left-wing Labour Party supporters. (5) ____ As a student, she was active in the Liberal Democrats, a centrist party traditionally seen as being between Labour and the Tories. She joined the Conservatives, but was originally seen as a moderate. She supported Remain in the EU referendum.



According to his biographer Sir Anthony Seldon, Boris Johnson was Britain's most scandalous prime minister in a century: "He thought he could make up his own rules."

As a member of Johnson's government, however, she built a new power base on the right of the party. (6) ____ On the other hand, she follows Johnson's lead in being highly supportive of Ukraine in its defensive war against Russia.

Her new cabinet as PM (that is, her chosen government ministers) are mostly

people who are right-wing on economics (in favour of low taxes and cutting regulations). (7) ____ Many of the politicians who were loyal to Johnson or who supported her opponent in the leadership race have been sacked.

What Happens Next?

Truss' new government faces a lot of challenges in addition to things facing all leaders (such as the climate crisis, covid-19 and a cost-of-living crisis). (8) ____ There's the difficulty of adjusting to a new king. There are strikes among workers in under-funded public services (from railways to the criminal justice system). There's a staffing crisis in the national health service. And those are just for starters!

Truss won the leadership election by promising to cut taxes, but it's hard to see how she will be able to solve any of the big national problems without money. Truss has also not won the confidence of the country, or even of her own party. (9) ____ Johnson himself has hinted at this: in his farewell speech he compared himself to Cincinnatus, a Roman leader who retired but then came back to power later.

(10) ____ Will Liz Truss prove to be the strong and stable leader Britain needs?

TASK

Ten sentences have been removed from the text. Choose the best sentence from the list below to fit each numbered gap. There are two sentences you will not use.

- A The Tory MPs then held a series of votes, reducing the list of possible people to two.
- B She became strongly pro-Brexit and has been very critical of EU leaders, especially France's Emmanuel Macron.
- C As we head towards a winter of economic and political crises, Brits are holding their breath.
- D Most are opposed to strong action on climate change and active on so-called "culture wars" issues.
- E Covid-19 also made existing problems worse, especially those connected with Brexit and trade.
- F Truss herself remembers holding left-wing opinions when she was young.
- G Some Conservatives are talking about bringing Johnson back.
- H However, Johnson and his government were then hit by a lot of scandals and problems.
- I The more centrist candidates were pushed out, although so were a couple of more right-wing candidates.
- J Truss has the power to do almost anything - as long as her party's MPs continue to support her.
- K For example, there are continuing problems with Northern Ireland.
- L When this was revealed, he was forced to resign as leader of his political party, the Conservatives.