Name_____

Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister

Our younger years often help form our beliefs, and our experiences affect how we choose to live. Such is the case with Margaret Thatcher. She became the first woman to lead a western democracy. Thatcher grew up in a close community that had strong values. She learned self-reliance, honesty, and the value of charitable work. Thatcher took chemistry classes in college, but she had a greater interest in politics. While growing up, her father served as a counselor in their community and discussed current events and issues with her. Thatcher went to college at Oxford, where she was elected president of a student association. This was the beginning of her political experience.

Thatcher ran for the Labor seat at Dartford. She lost both times she ran but enjoyed the campaign and displayed strong public-speaking skills. She went on to train as a lawyer and was later elected to Parliament. Thatcher held a variety of political offices. She gained further experience as Education Minister. Five years later, she was elected as the leader of the Conservative party. The Conservatives won the majority in Parliament in 1979, and the next day, Margaret Thatcher became the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

During her terms of political leadership, Margaret Thatcher helped revive the economy. She spoke out against the mindset of decline that had prevailed since World War II, and she helped reshape the nation's foreign policy. Her reforms and policies contributed to the spread of democracy and the growth of free markets during the period following the Cold War. Even though Thatcher's leadership role was controversial, today she is viewed as an influential and respected world leader.

Text Questions

1. Which of the following is <u>not</u> an area in which Margaret Thatcher was influential?
   a. economic reforms
   b. foreign policy
   c. democratic ideals
   d. space exploration
2. Based on the passage, what can you conclude about Margaret Thatcher?
   a. She didn't understand economics.
   b. She was concerned about the welfare of her country.
   c. She wanted to become famous.
   d. She struggled to maintain her grades in college.
3. What does the word *decline* mean as it is used in the third paragraph?
   a. deterioration
   b. rejection
   c. acceptance
   d. descending
4. What background and experience did Thatcher bring to her role as prime minister?
   a. daughter of a counselor
   b. elected to Parliament
   c. lawyer
   d. all of the above
5. As a female political leader, what are some ways Margaret Thatcher might have a lasting influence?

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