



BRIEFING PAPER

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Attendance of the Prime Minister at Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) since 1979

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The Prime Minister answers oral questions every Wednesday, when the House is sitting, from 12.00 noon to 12:30pm. On occasions when the Prime Minister is away on an official engagement, their deputy or a senior minister will answer questions during Prime Minister's Question Time.

Set times for PMQs were introduced in 1961. Until dissolution of the House of Commons in March 1997, PMQs took place twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays for 15 minutes. From the return of the House of Commons in May 1997, PMQs switched to one 30-minute session every Wednesday.

This list details the number of Prime Minister's Question Times attended by the Prime Minister since 1979.

- Table 1 shows the number of PMQs by Parliament and the number and percentage attended and missed by Prime Ministers.
- Table 2 lists the dates of PMQs missed by each Prime Minister. Reasons for missing PMQs are generally because the Prime Minister is overseas meeting other Heads of State, attending G8/G20 summits or, occasionally, because of personal emergencies.

Further information

The [Commons Library briefing on Prime Minister's Questions](#) details the procedures for the tabling of questions for Prime Minister's Question Time and provides a summary of the history of PMQs.

Use [Search parliamentary material](#) to search for PMQs by session, by Prime Minister or by topic.

Attendance of the Prime Minister at Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) since 1979

Table 1. No. of PMQs by Parliament and no. attended by the PM

Margaret Thatcher	No of PMQs	Attended	%	Missed	%
1979-83	268	250	93.3	18	6.7
1983-87	262	241	92.0	21	8.0
1987-90	222	203	91.4	19	8.6
Total	752	694	92.3	58	7.7
John Major	No of PMQs	Attended	%	Missed	%
1990-92	88	79	89.8	9	10.2
1992-97	310	272	87.7	38	12.3
Total	398	351	88.2	47	11.8
Tony Blair	No of PMQs	Attended	%	Missed	%
1997-01	140	134	95.7	6	4.3
2001-05	135	129	95.6	6	4.4
2005-07	68	63	92.6	5	7.4
Total	343	326	95.0	17	5.0
Gordon Brown	No of PMQs	Attended	%	Missed	%
2007-10	85	75	88.2	10	11.8
David Cameron	No of PMQs	Attended	%	Missed	%
2010-15	157	146	93.0	11	7.0
2015-16	33	31	93.9	2	6.1
2016-17 ¹	6	5	83.3	1	16.7
Theresa May	No of PMQs	Attended	%	Missed	%
2016-17	24	23	95.8	1	4.2
2017-19 ²	77	70	90.9	7	9.1
Boris Johnson	No of PMQs	Attended	%	Missed	%
2017-19	2	1	50.0	1	50.0
2019	2	2	100.0	0	0.0
2019-21*	31	29	93.5	2	6.5

Notes:

1. Theresa May became Prime Minister on 13 July 2016 following a Conservative Party leadership contest.

2. Boris Johnson succeeded Theresa May as Prime Minister following PMQs on 24 July 2019 after elections for a new leader were triggered on 24 May 2019.

* As at 16 October 2020

Sources: Parliamentary Search, Parliamentary Calendar, Hansard and Sessional Returns

Attendance of the Prime Minister at Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) since 1979

Table 2. Dates of PMQs missed by Prime Minister, by Parliament

Margaret Thatcher: 4 May 1979 - 28 November 1990

1979 Parliament	Minister deputising	Position
21/06/1979	William Whitelaw	Home Secretary/Deputy PM
28/06/1979	William Whitelaw	Home Secretary/Deputy PM
29/11/1979	William Whitelaw	Home Secretary/Deputy PM
18/12/1979	William Whitelaw	Home Secretary/Deputy PM
25/03/1980	Sir Keith Joseph	Secretary of State for Industry
08/05/1980	William Whitelaw	Home Secretary/Deputy PM
12/06/1980	William Whitelaw	Home Secretary/Deputy PM
02/12/1980	William Whitelaw	Home Secretary/Deputy PM
26/02/1981	William Whitelaw	Home Secretary/Deputy PM
24/03/1981	William Whitelaw	Home Secretary/Deputy PM
16/04/1981	William Whitelaw	Home Secretary/Deputy PM
30/06/1981	William Whitelaw	Home Secretary/Deputy PM
21/07/1981	William Whitelaw	Home Secretary/Deputy PM
22/10/1981	William Whitelaw	Home Secretary/Deputy PM
26/11/1981	William Whitelaw	Home Secretary/Deputy PM
30/03/1982	William Whitelaw	Home Secretary/Deputy PM
10/06/1982	William Whitelaw	Home Secretary/Deputy PM
22/03/1983	William Whitelaw	Home Secretary/Deputy PM
1983 Parliament	Minister deputising	Position
22/11/1983	John Biffen	Leader of the House (and Lord Privy Seal)
24/11/1983	John Biffen	Leader of the House (and Lord Privy Seal)
29/11/1983	John Biffen	Leader of the House (and Lord Privy Seal)
06/12/1983	John Biffen	Leader of the House (and Lord Privy Seal)
14/02/1984	John Biffen	Leader of the House (and Lord Privy Seal)
20/03/1984	John Biffen	Leader of the House (and Lord Privy Seal)
07/06/1984	John Biffen	Leader of the House (and Lord Privy Seal)
26/06/1984	John Biffen	Leader of the House (and Lord Privy Seal)
04/12/1984	John Biffen	Leader of the House (and Lord Privy Seal)
18/12/1984	John Biffen	Leader of the House (and Lord Privy Seal)
20/12/1984	John Biffen	Leader of the House (and Lord Privy Seal)
21/02/1985	John Biffen	Leader of the House (and Lord Privy Seal)
04/04/1985	John Biffen	Leader of the House (and Lord Privy Seal)
02/05/1985	John Biffen	Leader of the House (and Lord Privy Seal)
24/10/1985	John Biffen	Leader of the House (and Lord Privy Seal)
21/11/1985	John Biffen	Leader of the House (and Lord Privy Seal)
03/12/1985	John Biffen	Leader of the House (and Lord Privy Seal)
06/05/1986	John Biffen	Leader of the House (and Lord Privy Seal)
26/06/1986	John Biffen	Leader of the House (and Lord Privy Seal)
09/12/1986	John Biffen	Leader of the House (and Lord Privy Seal)
31/03/1987	John Biffen	Leader of the House (and Lord Privy Seal)
1987 Parliament	Minister deputising	Position
30/06/1987	John Wakeham	Leader of the House
11/02/1988	John Wakeham	Leader of the House
03/03/1988	John Wakeham	Leader of the House
21/06/1988	John Wakeham	Leader of the House
28/06/1988	John Wakeham	Leader of the House
03/11/1988	John Wakeham	Leader of the House
21/02/1989	John Wakeham	Leader of the House
06/04/1989	John Wakeham	Leader of the House
18/04/1989	John Wakeham	Leader of the House
27/06/1989	John Wakeham	Leader of the House
13/07/1989	John Wakeham	Leader of the House

17/10/1989	Geoffrey Howe	Deputy Prime Minister
19/10/1989	Geoffrey Howe	Deputy Prime Minister
24/10/1989	Geoffrey Howe	Deputy Prime Minister
07/06/1990	Geoffrey Howe	Deputy Prime Minister
26/06/1990	Geoffrey Howe	Deputy Prime Minister
05/07/1990	Geoffrey Howe	Deputy Prime Minister
10/07/1990	Geoffrey Howe	Deputy Prime Minister
20/11/1990	John MacGregor	Leader of the House

John Major: 28 November 1990 - 2 May 1997

05/03/1991	John MacGregor	Leader of the House
16/07/1991	John MacGregor	Leader of the House
18/07/1991	John MacGregor	Leader of the House
15/10/1991	John MacGregor	Leader of the House
17/10/1991	John MacGregor	Leader of the House
22/10/1991	John MacGregor	Leader of the House
07/11/1991	John MacGregor	Leader of the House
10/12/1991	John MacGregor	Leader of the House
30/01/1992	John MacGregor	Leader of the House

1992 Parliament Minister deputising Position

09/06/1992	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
11/06/1992	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
07/07/1992	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
09/07/1992	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
24/11/1992	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
01/12/1992	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
10/12/1992	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
26/01/1993	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
28/01/1993	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
25/02/1993	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
25/05/1993	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
22/06/1993	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
06/07/1993	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
08/07/1993	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
21/10/1993	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
09/12/1993	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
11/01/1994	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
15/02/1994	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
01/03/1994	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
23/06/1994	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
05/07/1994	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
06/12/1994	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
14/03/1995	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
04/04/1995	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
09/05/1995	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
15/06/1995	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
27/06/1995	Tony Newton	Leader of the House
24/10/1995	Michael Heseltine	Deputy Prime Minister
07/11/1995	Michael Heseltine	Deputy Prime Minister
14/12/1995	Michael Heseltine	Deputy Prime Minister
11/01/1996	Michael Heseltine	Deputy Prime Minister
29/02/1996	Michael Heseltine	Deputy Prime Minister
05/03/1996	Michael Heseltine	Deputy Prime Minister
18/04/1996	Michael Heseltine	Deputy Prime Minister
27/06/1996	Michael Heseltine	Deputy Prime Minister
11/07/1996	Michael Heseltine	Deputy Prime Minister
07/11/1996	Michael Heseltine	Deputy Prime Minister
14/01/1997	Michael Heseltine	Deputy Prime Minister

Tony Blair: 2 May 1997 - 27 June 2007

1997 Parliament	Minister deputising	Position
08/04/1998	John Prescott	Deputy Prime Minister
24/03/1999	John Prescott	Deputy Prime Minister
14/04/1999	John Prescott	Deputy Prime Minister
30/06/1999	John Prescott	Deputy Prime Minister
24/05/2000	John Prescott	Deputy Prime Minister
13/12/2000	John Prescott	Deputy Prime Minister

2001 Parliament	Minister deputising	Position
11/07/2001	Robin Cook	Leader of the House
31/10/2001	John Prescott	Deputy Prime Minister
26/06/2002	Robin Cook	Leader of the House
24/03/2004	John Prescott	Deputy Prime Minister
09/06/2004	John Prescott	Deputy Prime Minister
23/03/2005	John Prescott	Deputy Prime Minister

2005 Parliament	Minister deputising	Position
06/07/2005	John Prescott	Deputy Prime Minister
26/10/2005	Geoff Hoon	Leader of the House
29/03/2006	John Prescott	Deputy Prime Minister
29/11/2006	John Prescott	Deputy Prime Minister
16/05/2007	John Prescott	Deputy Prime Minister

Gordon Brown: 27 June 2007 - 11 May 2010

02/04/2008	Harriet Harman	Leader of the House
09/07/2008	Harriet Harman	Leader of the House
15/10/2008	Harriet Harman	Leader of the House
17/12/2008	Harriet Harman	Leader of the House
04/03/2009	Harriet Harman	Leader of the House
25/03/2009	Harriet Harman	Leader of the House
08/07/2009	Harriet Harman	Leader of the House
16/12/2009	Harriet Harman	Leader of the House
27/01/2010	Harriet Harman	Leader of the House
03/03/2010	Harriet Harman	Leader of the House

David Cameron: 11 May 2010 - 13 July 2016

2010 Parliament	Minister deputising	Position
21/07/2010	Nick Clegg	Deputy Prime Minister
08/09/2010	Nick Clegg	Deputy Prime Minister
10/11/2010	Nick Clegg	Deputy Prime Minister
14/03/2012	Nick Clegg	Deputy Prime Minister
20/06/2012	William Hague	Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
07/11/2012	Nick Clegg	Deputy Prime Minister
15/05/2013	Nick Clegg	Deputy Prime Minister
04/12/2013	Nick Clegg	Deputy Prime Minister
12/03/2014	Nick Clegg	Deputy Prime Minister
10-Sep-14	William Hague	Leader of the House
10-Dec-14	Nick Clegg	Deputy Prime Minister

2015 Parliament	Minister deputising	Position
17-Jun-15	George Osborne	First Secretary of State and Chancellor of the Exchequer
09-Dec-15	George Osborne	First Secretary of State and Chancellor of the Exchequer
25-May-16	George Osborne	First Secretary of State and Chancellor of the Exchequer
Theresa May: 13 July 2016 - 24 July 2019		
07-Dec-16	David Lidington	Leader of the House
2017 Parliament	Minister deputising	Position
12/07/2017	Damian Green	First Secretary of State and Minister for the Cabinet Office
29/11/2017	Damian Green	First Secretary of State and Minister for the Cabinet Office
31/01/2018	David Lidington	Minister for the Cabinet Office and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
11/07/2018	David Lidington	Minister for the Cabinet Office and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
06/02/2019	David Lidington	Minister for the Cabinet Office and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
24/04/2019	David Lidington	Minister for the Cabinet Office and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
05/06/2019	David Lidington	Minister for the Cabinet Office and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
Boris Johnson: 24 July 2019 - Present		
02/10/2019	Dominic Raab	Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and First Secretary of State
2019 Parliament	Minister deputising	Position
22/04/2020	Dominic Raab	Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and First Secretary of State
29/04/2020	Dominic Raab	Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and First Secretary of State

Note: Due to the death of David Cameron's son, PPQs on 25/02/09 PMQs were not held but the statements given by Gordon Brown, William Hague and Vincent Cable are included in the total number of PMQs

Sources: Parliamentary Search, Parliamentary Calendar, Hansard and Sessional Returns/

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