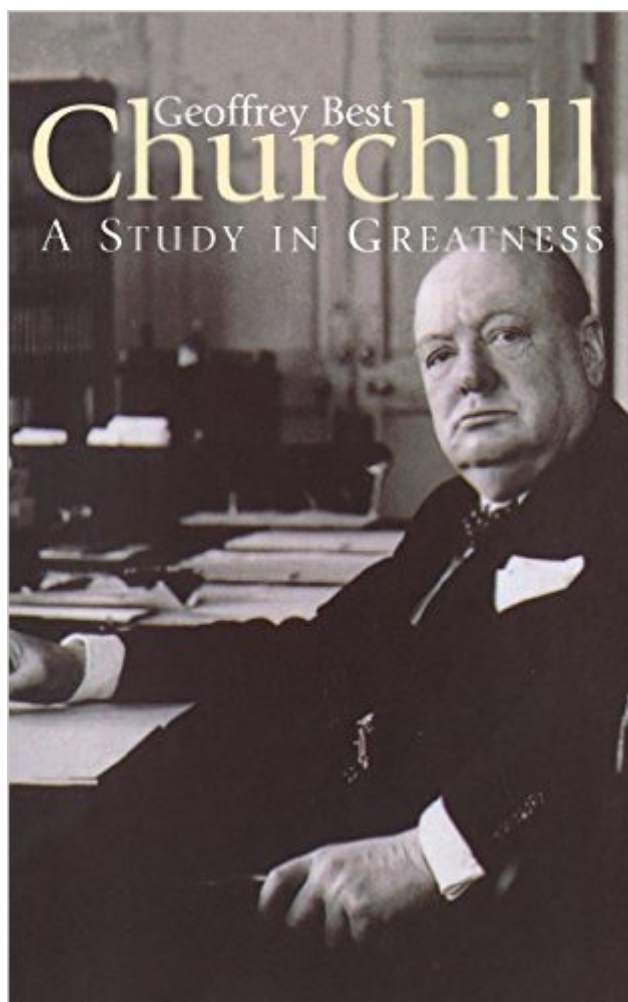


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# Churchill: A Study In Greatness



## Synopsis

Winston Churchill's inspiring leadership in the Second World War once put him above criticism. In recent years his record has come under attack. In *Churchill: A Study in Greatness*, one of Britain's most distinguished historians makes sense of this extraordinary man and his long, controversial, colourful, contradictory and heroic career. What was at the heart of him? Was he a romantic or a realist? How central was his part in Britain's survival and in the defeat of Hitler? Geoffrey Best brings out both his strengths and his weaknesses, looking past the many received versions of Churchill in a biography that balances the private and the public man and offers a fresh insight into his character.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 370 pages

Publisher: Bloomsbury Academic (2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1852852534

ISBN-13: 978-1852852535

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 0.9 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.7 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (24 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #327,420 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #40 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Leaders & Notable People > Presidents & Heads of State > U.K. Prime Ministers](#) #808 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Europe > Great Britain](#) #1932 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Leaders & Notable People > Political](#)

## Customer Reviews

A compact biography (384 pages) by Oxford Historian Geoffrey Best is far and away the best I have read on Churchill. The many facets of Churchill's life are covered in a series of essays from the author. Best summarizes Churchill's life with clarity and high degree of accuracy. If you're looking for a comprehensive study on Churchill, this isn't it. You won't find page after page of stilted verbiage here, but you will find a well written presentation of this fascinating man, perhaps the savior of England. If it is possible to write a detailed account of such a varied figure within the brevity of such a small volume, the author has done so admirably. Though the author clearly admires the subject, this isn't just another "I love Churchill" book. Best gives a fair and balanced account of many areas where Churchill may have erred, such as Gallipoli. The book is fair, and it is no-nonsense, to the

point, without a lot of ambivalent inflection. I have a number of volumes on the life and times of Churchill. I may go to other volumes for research purposes, but this is probably the most enjoyable read I have encountered on the man. Monty Rainey[...]

Mr. Geoffrey Best is a remarkable historian and, possibly as important to the reader, a talented writer. Of course the subject of his study, Winston Churchill, is a captivating one: he was the most important politician in the most important country in those days, and the time he had to live through was plenty with momentous events. There are, at least, three reasons which qualify the book as splendid: First, it is magnificently written, so it's a pleasure to read. Second, it condenses the life of W.C. in just over 300 pages, which is a notable feat considering such a rich and interesting life (of course most of the details cannot be dealt with), and, third, wherever the author comes across a historically conflictive subject -for example the battle of Gallipoli- he gives a balanced opinion. So Mr. Geoffrey Best succeeds in conveying to us a vivid image of a character whose actions and words are still reflected in our time.

Geoffrey Best undertakes an unenviable task with this book. He attempts to capture the life of one of England's greatest leaders in one book. Best is successful in his attempt. While it is obviously impossible to list all of Churchill's great stories and accomplishments in just over 300 pages, Best is entertaining in his approach. While this chronological tale may be a bit dry to the average reader, those who enjoy history will embrace this book. Best documents Churchill's attitude that he was destined for greatness early in life, discusses many of his war strategies, and is thorough enough to look into Churchill's family and personal life. Many people are unaware of the tragic lives of his three children, all of which are alluded to in this book. There truly is more to this man than is demonstrated in the common pictures history books record of him. Churchill worked toward bettering England and world almost until his death. This man who was largely self taught played a large role in shaping contemporary Europe even when he was no longer the Prime Minister. Even when his idea of the United States of Europe failed, he continued to be an early proponent of arms control and ending communism. The chapters which discuss his later years are among the most fascinating parts of this book. Books on the life of Churchill can go into much greater detail than this. This book is an excellent starter for learning about the life of Churchill.

Not a true biography but more than just a compilation of essays concerning Churchill's life and times, the author provides us with a 300+ page synopsis/chronology with a sprinkling of his

thoughts, insights and conclusions. I found nothing new or "earth-shattering" here. On the other hand it makes a nice supplement, (i.e. much like Meachem's book on FDR and Churchill), to biographies/books I have read. If you are looking for a full-fledged bio start elsewhere, (Manchester or Gilbert), and if your interest is piqued as mine was, come back to this one.

Geoffrey Best has realized an impressive tour de force in concisely narrating the life of Winston Churchill in less than 350 pages. Best excels at making a cogent analysis of Churchill's strengths and weaknesses. Churchill knew early on that he was called to great things and made his best to make it happen. Churchill's road to destiny was not straightforward in part because of his own personality. "Churchill: A Study in Greatness" is an invitation to know more about an exceptional man who stands out in world history while most of his critics and detractors have sunk into total oblivion.

The author (Geoffrey Best) is British and that stands out clearly in this volume, especially in the first few chapters. He comes across stuffy, somewhat pompous, and perhaps too conservative. However, as the work progresses the substance of the story of the Great Man and the events surrounding his life come to the fore, and the author falls to the rear. All told, one ends up in possession of a fine, well balanced biography, though lacking in depth. I found the work entirely suitable to my need for an introduction to Churchill. This book is a broad brush of not an in-depth study.

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