

Gordon Brown – leader by default

During the 20th century alone, 10 other British prime ministers have assumed power following the resignation, retirement or death of the incumbent – without having been elected into the post by the electorate

Gordon Brown LAB 2007-
Succeeds three-term PM **Tony Blair**

John Major CON 1990-97
Won Conservative leadership after ousting of **Margaret Thatcher**. Re-elected 1992 ❌

James Callaghan LAB 1976-79
After surprise resignation of **Harold Wilson**
Lost 1979 General Election

Sir Alec Douglas-Home CON 1963-64
Lost 1964 General Election

Harold Macmillan CON 1957-63
Assumed office after Suez crisis prompted resignation of **Eden**. Re-elected 1959 ❌



Winston Churchill CON 1940-45
Called on to lead wartime coalition
Lost 1945 post-war General Election but won a further term in 1951

Neville Chamberlain CON 1937-40
Succeeded **Stanley Baldwin's** third term after **Edward VIII** abdication crisis.
Resigned in 1940 during World War II

Stanley Baldwin CON 1923-24
Followed retirement of **Andrew Bonar Law**. Called and won 1923 election but lost vote of confidence in first session ❌

David Lloyd George LIB 1916-22
Engineered fall of **Asquith** to lead wartime coalition. Re-elected 1918 ❌

Herbert Henry Asquith LIB 1908-16
Followed **Henry Campbell-Bannerman** after resignation. Formed minority government after 1910 elections ❌

Arthur Balfour CON 1902-05
Succeeded his uncle, **Lord Salisbury**.
Lost 1905 General Election

