The 1930s were a threatening period for Britain. Germany, led by a ruthless and extreme dictator had emerged as a threat to European peace. Japan was intent on creating a new empire in the Far East and was threatening China. Italy was ruled by an expansionist dictator, there was a civil war in Spain and a communist regime in Russia was imprisoning and killing large numbers of their own people. Europe and the USA were suffering from the worst economic depression in history.

In this type of situation, it was thought that Churchill might thrive and be needed as a daring and imaginative political leader with a great experience of government. However, this was not the case. Churchill was still associated with his past decisions (including Gallipoli campaign during the first world war and returning Britain to the Gold Standard when he was Chancellor of the exchequer in 1925). He was also seen as unhelpful in providing a calm and united government for foreign investors and markets. There was no room for him in the national government, made up of labour, conservatives and the liberals, to tackle Britain’s economic crisis. Churchill also lost huge savings on the stock market and was forced to write for a living in order to maintain his beloved home Chartwell, in Kent.

Other issues included:

- His views on India
- His views on the abdication of king Edward VIII
- Rearmament
- Concessions to Hitler