

What makes a good or great leader?

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Everywhere around us, there are leaders; at school, at home, on the playground, sports field or in government. Leaders have a responsibility to lead their followers well and to be a good example to them. It is important to know who our leaders are and to be able to judge if they are good or bad leaders. In history, it is also important to study the stories of the leaders who have shaped our country and our world to look like it does today. When we study leaders, their achievements and their mistakes, we can learn from them to be better leaders ourselves.

What kinds of leaders do you get?

The word leader can have different meanings. It can be somebody who guides others in a certain direction. In other words, a leader can show people where to go, what to do and how to do it. It can also be somebody who controls or rules a group. For example, the leader of a country, like the president, is the one who rules the country. Sometimes a leader can be the most important person in specific group, like the leader of a company, who is the boss of everybody who works there. At the same time, a leader represents the people he leads. For example, the South African government represents all the people of the country. The South African ambassador in Germany represents the government, and so also all the South Africans, in Germany.

There are many leaders all around us. There are leaders at school, in your family, in the governments of the country, province and city, in your community, and maybe even in your circle of friends. Some cultures in our country have their own kings or queens. We call them traditional leaders.

Let's look at some of the different kinds of leaders:

1. At school, the school principal, your teacher, your prefects and your class captain are all leaders.
2. At home, your parents can be the leaders of your family.
3. The coach and the captain of your sports team are leaders.
4. You might have a religious or spiritual leader, like a rabbi or a minister.
5. At your mom or dad's work, her or his boss is a leader.
6. Political leaders include the president, ministers, premier of your province and the leaders of political parties.
7. Somebody who organises a public protest or campaign is a leader.

8. The leader of your city or town is the mayor.
9. Somebody who starts a project by which the community can benefit, like a soup kitchen, a charity organisation, building schools and other community buildings, even create a lovely park in which we can relax and enjoy the environment.

Throughout history, there have been many leaders who have influenced people and events. When we study history, we often study the people who were important leaders, like kings and queens, army generals, and important explorers or inventors. It is important to know about the leaders of your country, and those who were important in history. But it is also important to remember that it is not only the most obvious leaders who make history happen the way it does. There are and have been many other men and women who played an important role in history. Their names might not be on the list of the greatest leaders in history, but in a small or big way their lives could have influenced others to make a difference. When we study them, we can then also learn a lot from them. Their actions and values can serve as an example to us. So it is important to know what makes a good leader, so that we can recognise good leaders and learn from them.

What makes a good leader?

Leaders *have a great responsibility*. They should always be a *good example* to the people they lead. If they are elected by the people, they should take special care not to *go against the will* of the people that chose them as their leaders. There isn't a specific set of rules for good leaders, or points on what a good leader should be and do. But there are some basic principles that most people feel a good leader should follow. Here are some of them:

A good leader:

1. *Listens* to his people
2. Is a *servant* of the people and works for the good of others
3. *Works with a team*
4. Has *courage*
5. Is *brave*
6. Is dedicated and is wholeheartedly *committed* to his or her beliefs
7. Is *dedicated* and is wholeheartedly committed to others
8. Is prepared to *sacrifice* or give up something for the sake of others.

So being a leader does not only mean people have to listen to you, or that you are popular and important. These things may be true, but being a leader also means that you have to work hard and live a good life.