

# ENGLISH LEARNING FOR CURIOUS MINDS





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## Episode #296

### Osama Bin Laden | The World's Most Wanted Man

#### 9th Sep, 2022

[00:00:00] Hello, hello hello, and welcome to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:00:12] The show where you can listen to fascinating stories, and learn weird and wonderful things about the world at the same time as improving your English.

[00:00:21] I'm Alastair Budge, and today we are going to be talking about one of the most **infamous**<sup>1</sup> terrorists of the modern era, Osama bin Laden.

[00:00:31] No doubt you know the name Osama bin Laden, you know exactly what he looks like, and know that he was responsible for the 9/11 attacks.

[00:00:39] But in this episode, we are going to go a little deeper, we are going to try to go beyond the headlines and ask the question of who actually was Osama bin Laden.

[00:00:50] What experiences or beliefs shaped his world view, what did he actually want, and did he achieve what he set out to do?

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<sup>1</sup> famous for something bad

[00:00:59] OK then, Osama bin Laden.

[00:01:03] Our story starts in March of 1957.

[00:01:07] In Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, a baby boy takes his first breath.

[00:01:14] He is given the name of Osama bin Mohammed bin Awad bin Laden.

[00:01:19] His father was a construction [magnate](#)<sup>2</sup>, a wealthy businessman in the construction industry.

[00:01:25] His father did not come from wealth, he was born in a poor family in Yemen, but had travelled to Saudi Arabia as a young man and made his fortune in the construction industry.

[00:01:39] Not only did Osama bin Laden's father have a lot of money, he had a lot of wives and children.

[00:01:46] Osama bin Laden was thought to be his 17th child, and he went on to have 52 children from 11 different wives.

[00:01:56] Shortly after Osama bin Laden was born, his parents [divorced](#)<sup>3</sup>, and he went to live with his mother.

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<sup>2</sup> wealthy businessman

<sup>3</sup> ended their marriage

[00:02:03] This was no doubt an important event in the young man's life, but it would be followed by an even more important one, his father's death, when the boy was a [mere](#)<sup>4</sup> 10 years old.

[00:02:16] This is believed to have brought the young boy further towards religion, and he would spend an increasing amount of time praying and studying the Koran.

[00:02:27] While most of his brothers went on to study abroad, in Europe and in the United States, Osama bin Laden stayed in Saudi Arabia.

[00:02:36] It's perhaps hard to imagine that a man who would become the world's most famous terrorist would spend much time at university lecture halls listening to professors talking about [balance sheets](#)<sup>5</sup> and profit margins, but Osama bin Laden did go to university, remaining in Saudi Arabia, where he studied economics and business.

[00:02:59] It's not clear whether he actually graduated, whether he actually completed the course, but he clearly learned some valuable skills that would come in [handy](#)<sup>6</sup> later on.

[00:03:11] And when he left university in 1979, his [initial](#)<sup>7</sup> plan was to join the family business, which, let's remember, is a multibillion dollar construction company.

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<sup>4</sup> just, only

<sup>5</sup> financial statements of a company

<sup>6</sup> useful

<sup>7</sup> existing at the beginning

[00:03:23] Bin Laden was clearly intelligent, and he had a obvious route to great riches and power simply by doing what was expected of him and joining the family business.

[00:03:36] As we know, this was not the route he chose.

[00:03:41] Now, let's take a step back for a minute to understand what's happening in the world at this time, as the events of the late 1970s will cause the life of Osama bin Laden, and you could argue modern history, to take a different path.

[00:03:58] [Culminating](#)<sup>8</sup> in February of 1979, the Iranian revolution [overthrew](#)<sup>9</sup> the more Western Shah of Iran. Our Iranian listeners will know all too well what this meant for the country, but in short it meant the creation of an Islamic Republic ruled by the all-powerful Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini.

[00:04:20] To Osama bin Laden, this was a sign of an Islamic movement [overthrowing](#)<sup>10</sup> a more Western and [liberal](#)<sup>11</sup> one, and offered a [glimpse](#)<sup>12</sup> of opportunity.

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<sup>8</sup> reaching its highest point of activity

<sup>9</sup> removed

<sup>10</sup> removing

<sup>11</sup> allowing many different types of beliefs and behaviour

<sup>12</sup> quick view

[00:04:32] And later that year, on Christmas Eve of 1979, Soviet forces [rolled into](#)<sup>13</sup> Afghanistan, [kickstarting](#)<sup>14</sup> a [conflict](#)<sup>15</sup> that would last 10 years and cost an estimated million lives.

[00:04:48] In an effort to defend Afghanistan from the Soviets, Islamic fighters from all over the Arab world, also known as mujahideen, travelled to the country to support the resistance.

[00:05:01] One was the subject of today's episode, Osama bin Laden.

[00:05:06] It's thought that he first travelled to Pakistan, where he used his money and his knowledge of business and administration to help organise training camps and work on the [logistics](#)<sup>16</sup> of the resistance.

[00:05:20] Later, he would travel to Afghanistan itself, and make a name for himself as a [fearless](#)<sup>17</sup> fighter, someone who would fight on the [frontline](#)<sup>18</sup> and show absolutely no fear of death.

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<sup>13</sup> appeared in large numbers

<sup>14</sup> making it start

<sup>15</sup> fight, war

<sup>16</sup> organisation

<sup>17</sup> showing no fear, brave

<sup>18</sup> the military line that was closest to the enemy

[00:05:34] Although he would later be [painted](#)<sup>19</sup> by the West as a [fearful](#)<sup>20</sup> [coward](#)<sup>21</sup> who hid in caves, his battlefield experience in Afghanistan in the 1980s suggested to his followers that this was not the case, and that he was no [coward](#).

[00:05:51] Indeed, bin Laden seemed completely unafraid of dying, as he believed dying fighting in this holy war would be a [surefire](#)<sup>22</sup> route to heaven, even telling his followers that one day in Afghanistan was like 1,000 days of praying in an ordinary mosque.

[00:06:10] And in Afghanistan, bin Laden and the mujahideen were far from the only people who wanted the Soviets defeated and out of the country.

[00:06:20] The other powerful force that was fighting the Soviets, [albeit](#)<sup>23</sup> indirectly, was the one that would become bin Laden's next target, the United States.

[00:06:30] The CIA, the American intelligence agency, provided billions of dollars of weapons and aid to the resistance fighters in Afghanistan.

[00:06:40] This, remember, was just one of the many [proxy wars](#)<sup>24</sup> in the Cold War, with the United States supporting whoever was fighting the Soviets.

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<sup>19</sup> represented, described

<sup>20</sup> frightened, showing fear

<sup>21</sup> not brave, running away from danger

<sup>22</sup> certain

<sup>23</sup> although

<sup>24</sup> wars fought between groups or smaller countries that each represented the interests of larger powers

[00:06:51] Some people have claimed that the CIA actually provided Osama bin Laden and the so-called mujahadeen, the freedom fighters, with cash and weapons directly, although this has been [disputed](#)<sup>25</sup>.

[00:07:04] In any case, Afghanistan lived up to its [nickname](#)<sup>26</sup> as being the “[graveyard](#)<sup>27</sup> of empires”, and in February of 1989, Soviet forces had left the country.

[00:07:16] Later that year, the Berlin Wall fell, and within two years the entire Soviet Union would have collapsed.

[00:07:25] But at the same time, another [conflict](#) was [brewing](#)<sup>28</sup>.

[00:07:29] And while the Soviet-Afghan war might have provided Osama bin Laden with the perfect training ground for a life as the head of a global terrorist organisation, and the opportunity to make his name for himself, the events of 1990 would provide him with the reason.

[00:07:47] And that reason would come on August 2nd of 1990, when Saddam Hussein’s Iraqi forces [rolled into](#) Iraq’s tiny but oil-rich neighbour, Kuwait.

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<sup>25</sup> questioned, doubted

<sup>26</sup> informal name

<sup>27</sup> place where dead people are buried

<sup>28</sup> beginning to develop



[00:07:59] Within a couple of days, Kuwait had fallen, and Saddam Hussein declared that Kuwait was the 19th province of Iraq.

[00:08:09] Now, as a quick reminder of Middle Eastern geography, Iraq is directly north of Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait is located to the southeast of Iraq, [sandwiched](#)<sup>29</sup> between Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

[00:08:24] So, Kuwait was taken, and there was the very real fear that Saddam Hussein might direct his forces south and take Saudi Arabia.

[00:08:34] Osama bin Laden offered his services to the Saudi rulers, the House of Saud, promising that his soldiers and money could help defend Saudi Arabia in the event of an Iraqi invasion.

[00:08:46] By this time, Osama bin Laden had made quite a reputation as a [fearless](#) fighter, and had developed a strong reputation and network in the area.

[00:08:57] But the Saudis refused.

[00:09:00] Instead, they allowed American forces to use Saudi Arabia as a [launchpad](#)<sup>30</sup> for an invasion of Kuwait, in what would be called the First Gulf War.

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<sup>29</sup> being between them

<sup>30</sup> base from which the attack was made

[00:09:10] This [incensed](#)<sup>31</sup> Osama bin Laden, it [drove him mad](#)<sup>32</sup>.

[00:09:16] And the reason for it, according to commentators, has little to do with the belief that the United States is [inferior](#)<sup>33</sup> or that Western culture is [incompatible](#)<sup>34</sup> with Islam, it actually comes from his belief that there should only be one religion in Saudi Arabia, Islam.

[00:09:35] Bin Laden would later teach his followers that the Prophet Mohammed, on his [deathbed](#)<sup>35</sup>, said that there should only ever be one religion in Saudi Arabia.

[00:09:45] By allowing Western troops into Saudi Arabia, no matter whether the [intentions](#)<sup>36</sup> were to fight Saddam Hussein, and defend Saudi Arabia, this was going directly against the wishes of the prophet, at least in Osama bin Laden's [interpretation](#)<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> made him very angry

<sup>32</sup> made him very angry

<sup>33</sup> not as good as them

<sup>34</sup> not able to exist together

<sup>35</sup> the bed on which he was dying

<sup>36</sup> goals, purpose

<sup>37</sup> explanation, opinion

[00:10:01] So, Osama bin Laden [set out](#)<sup>38</sup> on his lifelong mission to get US troops out of the Middle East.

[00:10:09] On this mission, it's hard to argue that he succeeded, as there is no individual in history who has done more to increase the Western presence in the Middle East than Osama bin Laden. We'll come on to discuss this more in a minute.

[00:10:25] So, what did this mean in practice?

[00:10:28] It meant the [build up](#)<sup>39</sup> of the group Al Qaeda, the group that had grown out of the Soviet-Afghan war. From 1992 to 1996, Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda were based in Sudan, after the Islamist [coup d'état](#)<sup>40</sup> in the country.

[00:10:47] He had been forced to leave Saudi Arabia after [criticising](#)<sup>41</sup> the [regime](#)<sup>42</sup>, and his Saudi passport and citizenship were taken away in 1994.

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<sup>38</sup> began, started

<sup>39</sup> preparation, development

<sup>40</sup> sudden violent occupation, revolution

<sup>41</sup> expressing his disapproval of

<sup>42</sup> government

[00:10:58] Although one could perhaps [trace](#)<sup>43</sup> his path to global terrorism back to when he was a much younger man, it was in the 1990s, when he was in his mid 30s, when he made the [transition](#)<sup>44</sup> from regional [nuisance](#)<sup>45</sup> to global terrorist threat.

[00:11:15] Al Qaeda, the terrorist group he was head of, continued to grow, and with it, the attacks.

[00:11:22] The first attack that he is believed to have been involved with came in 1992, in Aden, the capital of Yemen.

[00:11:31] But it wouldn't be until 1998, with the twin bombings of the US embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi, that his face became known [the world over](#)<sup>46</sup>, and in June of 1999 the FBI would decide that he was such a threat that his name would be put on its list of Ten Most Wanted.

[00:11:53] As you might imagine, he was never removed from this list alive.

[00:11:58] So, back to our story.

[00:12:00] Osama bin Laden is now one of the world's most wanted men, and has had to move out of Sudan, now to Afghanistan, the one country that will actually take him.

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<sup>43</sup> find the origins or beginning of

<sup>44</sup> change (from one situation to another)

<sup>45</sup> annoying person

<sup>46</sup> everywhere on the Earth

[00:12:12] He is head of a terrorist group that has carried out attacks across Africa and the Middle East.

[00:12:18] We know this for sure, but what was not clear to everyone was “why”.

[00:12:25] The [simplistic](#)<sup>47</sup> answer that was [plastered](#)<sup>48</sup> all over American cable TV was that he hated American freedoms, but it was slightly more complicated than that.

[00:12:36] The rare pieces of evidence that we have of Osama bin Laden suggest a man [fixated](#)<sup>49</sup> on one thing, one goal: removing the Western military presence from the Middle East.

[00:12:49] He even said this in an interview with CNN, perhaps the most famous American news network, which took place in 1997.

[00:12:59] Perhaps [ominously](#)<sup>50</sup>, when asked “what are your future plans”, he responded “you’ll see them and hear about them in the media, [god willing](#)<sup>51</sup>”.

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<sup>47</sup> not well-thought, simplified

<sup>48</sup> displayed widely

<sup>49</sup> not able to stop thinking about it

<sup>50</sup> in a way that suggested that something bad was going to happen

<sup>51</sup> if that's what God wants



[00:13:09] Four years later, on September 11th of 2001, the world saw the [culmination](#)<sup>52</sup> of his plan, as two planes [struck](#)<sup>53</sup> the World Trade Center in New York, and another crashed into the Pentagon.

[00:13:22] 2,977 people in total were killed, making Osama bin Laden responsible for the deadliest attack on US soil.

[00:13:33] The objective, let's remember, was to push the United States out of the Middle East, to frighten the United States government into removing its troops from Saudi Arabia.

[00:13:45] Osama bin Laden thought there would be widespread opposition to entering a foreign [conflict](#), and he remembered the public opposition to the war in Vietnam.

[00:13:56] Although Osama bin Laden was clearly an intelligent man in many ways, this was a huge miscalculation on his part.

[00:14:05] Not only did the 9/11 attacks result in the US-led invasion of Afghanistan and [subsequent](#)<sup>54</sup> 20-year occupation of the country, which had strong domestic support [initially](#)<sup>55</sup>, let's remember, but they also made him the highest profile criminal in the world.

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<sup>52</sup> highest point

<sup>53</sup> hit

<sup>54</sup> following

<sup>55</sup> at the beginning

[00:14:23] There was a \$25 million [bounty](#)<sup>56</sup> placed on his head, a reward for his [capture](#)<sup>57</sup>, and soon it became incredibly hard for him to control his group's activities.

[00:14:36] For obvious reasons, it's hard to know exactly what he was doing and where he was in the period immediately after the 9/11 attacks - we are talking about the world's most wanted man here - but American intelligence services believe that he spent most of the following years moving from [safehouse](#)<sup>58</sup> to [safehouse](#) in the border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

[00:15:01] Now, you probably know how this story ends, or rather, how the life of Osama Bin Laden ends.

[00:15:07] The United States did manage to [track him down](#)<sup>59</sup>, to find him, and on May 2nd of 2011, just after one o' clock in the morning, a helicopter with an [elite](#)<sup>60</sup> team of US forces descended on a [compound](#)<sup>61</sup> in Abbottabad, in Pakistan, where they found, shot and killed Osama bin Laden.

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<sup>56</sup> money paid as a reward for

<sup>57</sup> arrest

<sup>58</sup> a house in a secret location, used for hiding in

<sup>59</sup> find him

<sup>60</sup> selected, the best

<sup>61</sup> a group of buildings surrounded by a fence or barriers

[00:15:30] This much you probably know already, but what is more interesting to [dwell](#)  
[on](#)<sup>62</sup>, to talk about, is what was discovered during the [raid](#)<sup>63</sup>.

[00:15:41] In the [compound](#) where bin Laden was hiding, the US forces discovered a  
[treasure trove](#)<sup>64</sup> of information, hard drives containing 470,000 different files that give  
us some indication of what bin Laden had been doing, and help us to understand bin  
Laden the man.

[00:16:01] So, what do they tell us?

[00:16:04] Firstly, and perhaps unsurprisingly, given how wanted he was, he was  
incredibly [cut off](#)<sup>65</sup> from Al Qaeda, the group he was [nominally](#)<sup>66</sup> [in charge of](#)<sup>67</sup>.

[00:16:15] He had no internet or telephone line, and was only able to communicate with  
people via letters. And clearly, if you're trying to run what is essentially a multinational  
21st century business, this makes communication very difficult.

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<sup>62</sup> talk about

<sup>63</sup> sudden attack

<sup>64</sup> a place full of something good

<sup>65</sup> disconnected

<sup>66</sup> in name only, not in fact

<sup>67</sup> responsible for

[00:16:33] Secondly, and despite how difficult it was to communicate with the outside world, he was a serious [micromanager](#)<sup>68</sup>. He [obsessed](#)<sup>69</sup> over details, and would leave nothing up to chance. He would send letters to trusted associates, but these would be handwritten, then scanned and put onto an [encrypted](#)<sup>70</sup> flash drive and taken, physically, to whoever needed to receive them.

[00:17:00] Thirdly, and this is in [stark](#)<sup>71</sup> contrast to many [portrayals](#)<sup>72</sup> of him, he did seem to put great trust in his wives and daughters. He is thought to have married five times, and at the time of his death he was found with three of his wives. These three were all highly intelligent women, all with PhDs, doctorate qualifications, and the files found at his house show that he [turned to them](#)<sup>73</sup> for advice on a wide variety of matters. And it was a similar case with his daughters.

[00:17:37] The fourth thing, which is related to the third point actually, because it was a frequent topic of conversation between him and his wives, is how [troubled](#)<sup>74</sup> he was by the Arab Spring, the revolutions in the Arab world that started in 2010.

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<sup>68</sup> someone who wanted to control every part of the situation and gave special attention to detail

<sup>69</sup> thought about them all the time

<sup>70</sup> requiring a secret code in order to be understood

<sup>71</sup> complete, absolute

<sup>72</sup> descriptions, presentations

<sup>73</sup> asked them (for help)

<sup>74</sup> worried

[00:17:53] Now, why was he [disturbed](#)<sup>75</sup> by this, you might ask?

[00:17:56] You might have thought that it presented an opportunity, as [corrupt](#)<sup>76</sup> rulers were being [toppled](#)<sup>77</sup>, were being [overturned](#)<sup>78</sup>.

[00:18:05] Indeed, bin Laden did write that the chaos could present an opportunity for Al Qaeda thoughts and ideas to spread.

[00:18:14] But, more importantly, it seemed that he wasn't sure where the Arab Spring left Al Qaeda. If Western-backed [regimes](#)<sup>79</sup> could be [toppled](#) peacefully, or at least relatively peacefully compared to bombings and the deaths of Muslim civilians, then what was the role of Al Qaeda?

[00:18:35] Where did it fit in?

[00:18:37] He was also concerned that [instability](#)<sup>80</sup> in the region would mean that US forces would move in, which was exactly the thing that he had always fought against.

[00:18:48] Clearly, he had reason to be [fearful](#).

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<sup>75</sup> upset, worried

<sup>76</sup> not honest or trustworthy, bad

<sup>77</sup> removed from power

<sup>78</sup> removed from power

<sup>79</sup> governments

<sup>80</sup> an unstable or uncertain situation



[00:18:51] The United States has left Afghanistan, but there are still reported to be between 45,000 and 65,000 American troops in the Middle East, [split](#)<sup>81</sup> between Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf nations.

[00:19:06] Of course, it's perfectly acceptable to debate whether these troops should be there, but the reality is that bin Laden thought that attacking the US would get them out, and in fact it did exactly the opposite.

[00:19:20] And his legacy is, well, it's complicated of course.

[00:19:25] On the one hand Al Qaeda is thankfully now significantly [weakened](#)<sup>82</sup>, although there are some commentators who suggest a newly Taliban-controlled Afghanistan will give it more [breathing room](#)<sup>83</sup>, and allow it to [build up](#)<sup>84</sup> strength.

[00:19:40] On the other hand, he became the [poster boy](#)<sup>85</sup> for Islamic terrorism, a hero and [icon](#)<sup>86</sup>, someone whose name attacks could be [carried out](#)<sup>87</sup> on behalf of.

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<sup>81</sup> separated, divided

<sup>82</sup> less strong

<sup>83</sup> a period of rest

<sup>84</sup> increase

<sup>85</sup> a man who represented their cause

<sup>86</sup> a person regarded as a symbol of a belief

<sup>87</sup> made

[00:19:53] When he was killed, although his body was quickly [disposed of](#)<sup>88</sup> at sea, he became a [martyr](#)<sup>89</sup> for jihadists, someone who [gave up](#)<sup>90</sup> his huge family riches and wealth in his “holy quest”.

[00:20:07] Let's be clear though, he was a violent terrorist, someone who was not afraid of killing men, women and children, muslims and non-muslims alike. There is no excusing or denying that, and one must underline that he was directly responsible for the deaths of thousands of people, and indirectly perhaps responsible for hundreds or thousands times more.

[00:20:31] But to [portray](#)<sup>91</sup> him as merely a simple [cave-dwelling](#)<sup>92</sup> Western-hating terrorist is to somewhat miss the point, and to only [scrape the surface](#)<sup>93</sup> of the complicated ideology and legacy of Osama bin Laden, the world's most wanted man.

[00:20:50] OK then, that is it for today's episode on Osama bin Laden.

[00:20:55] I hope it's been an interesting one, and even though I'm sure you knew a bit about him before, that you've learnt something new.

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<sup>88</sup> got rid of, thrown

<sup>89</sup> someone who suffered because of his beliefs

<sup>90</sup> stopped having it, surrendered

<sup>91</sup> describe, represent

<sup>92</sup> living in caves

<sup>93</sup> see only a very small part

[00:21:02] As always, I would love to know what you thought about this episode.

[00:21:05] Do you remember where you were when you first found out about Osama bin Laden?

[00:21:09] What do you think his medium and long term legacy will be?

[00:21:14] How do you think historians will look back on his impact on stability in the Middle East?

[00:21:19] I would love to know, so let's get this discussion started.

[00:21:23] You can head right into our community forum, which is at [community.leonardoenglish.com](http://community.leonardoenglish.com) and get chatting away to other curious minds.

[00:21:31] You've been listening to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:21:36] I'm Alastair Budge, you stay safe, and I'll catch you in the next episode.

[END OF EPISODE]

## Key vocabulary

Word	Definition
Infamous	famous for something bad
Magnate	wealthy businessman
Divorced	ended their marriage
Mere	just, only
Balance sheets	financial statements of a company
Handy	useful
Initial	existing at the beginning
Culminating	reaching its highest point of activity
Overthrew	removed
Overthrowing	removing
Liberal	allowing many different types of beliefs and behaviour
Glimpse	quick view

<b>Rolled into</b>	appeared in large numbers
<b>Kickstarting</b>	making it start
<b>Conflict</b>	fight, war
<b>Logistics</b>	organisation
<b>Fearless</b>	showing no fear, brave
<b>Frontline</b>	the military line that was closest to the enemy
<b>Painted</b>	represented, described
<b>Fearful</b>	frightened, showing fear
<b>Coward</b>	not brave, running away from danger
<b>Surefire</b>	certain
<b>Albeit</b>	although
<b>Proxy wars</b>	wars fought between groups or smaller countries that each represented the interests of larger powers
<b>Disputed</b>	questioned, doubted
<b>Nickname</b>	informal name
<b>Graveyard</b>	place where dead people are buried



<b>Brewing</b>	beginning to develop
<b>Sandwiched</b>	being between them
<b>Launchpad</b>	base from which the attack was made
<b>Incensed</b>	made him very angry
<b>Drove him mad</b>	made him very angry
<b>Inferior</b>	not as good as them
<b>Incompatible</b>	not able to exist together
<b>Deathbed</b>	the bed on which he was dying
<b>Intentions</b>	goals, purpose
<b>Interpretation</b>	explanation, opinion
<b>Set out</b>	began, started
<b>Build up</b>	preparation, development
<b>Coup d'état</b>	sudden violent occupation, revolution
<b>Criticising</b>	expressing his disapproval of
<b>Regime</b>	government

<b>Trace</b>	find the origins or beginning of
<b>Transition</b>	change (from one situation to another)
<b>Nuisance</b>	annoying person
<b>The world over</b>	everywhere on the Earth
<b>Simplistic</b>	not well-thought, simplified
<b>Plastered</b>	displayed widely
<b>Fixated</b>	not able to stop thinking about it
<b>Ominously</b>	in a way that suggested that something bad was going to happen
<b>God willing</b>	if that's what God wants
<b>Culmination</b>	highest point
<b>Struck</b>	hit
<b>Subsequent</b>	following
<b>Initially</b>	at the beginning
<b>Bounty</b>	money paid as a reward for
<b>Capture</b>	arrest

<b>Safehouse</b>	a house in a secret location, used for hiding in
<b>Track him down</b>	find him
<b>Elite</b>	selected, the best
<b>Compound</b>	a group of buildings surrounded by a fence or barriers
<b>Dwell on</b>	talk about
<b>Raid</b>	sudden attack
<b>Treasure trove</b>	a place full of something good
<b>Cut off</b>	disconnected
<b>Nominally</b>	in name only, not in fact
<b>In charge of</b>	responsible for
<b>Micromanager</b>	someone who wanted to control every part of the situation and gave special attention to detail
<b>Obsessed</b>	thought about them all the time
<b>Encrypted</b>	requiring a secret code in order to be understood
<b>Stark</b>	complete, absolute
<b>Portrayals</b>	descriptions, presentations

Turned to them	asked them (for help)
Troubled	worried
Disturbed	upset, worried
Corrupt	not honest or trustworthy, bad
Toppled	removed from power
Overtaken	removed from power
Regimes	governments
Instability	an unstable or uncertain situation
Split	separated, divided
Weakened	less strong
Breathing room	a period of rest
Build up	increase
Poster boy	a man who represented their cause
Icon	a person regarded as a symbol of a belief
Carried out	made

Disposed of	got rid of, thrown
Martyr	someone who suffered because of his beliefs
Gave up	stopped having it, surrendered
Portray	describe, represent
Cave-dwelling	living in caves
Scrape the surface	see only a very small part

*We'd love to get your feedback on this episode.*

*What did you like? What could we do better?*

*What did you struggle to understand?*

*Let us know in the forum [community.leonardoenglish.com](https://community.leonardoenglish.com)*