Fatima El Mansouri becomes Morocco's prime minister

LEVEL B2


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I. WARM-UP

1. What makes a good political leader in your view?
2. How common are female leaders in your country?
3. What are the pros and cons of having a king or queen?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

appoint
To officially choose someone for a job or position.

coalition
A group of political parties that agree to govern together.

monarchy
A system where a king or queen is head of state.

advocate
A person who publicly supports a cause or group.

negotiate
To discuss in order to reach an agreement.

opposition
Parties in parliament that do not form the government.

parliament
The elected group that makes national laws.

majority
More than half of the total number.

III. READING

Fatima Zahra El Mansouri was appointed Morocco's first female prime minister after her party, the Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM), won the most seats in last week's parliamentary elections. King Mohammed VI made the choice. Her appointment makes her only the third woman to lead a government in the Arab world.

El Mansouri, who is 50 and a lawyer by training, has been mayor of Marrakesh for years and served as a minister in the previous coalition government. She was preferred over Fouzi Lekjaa, a senior figure from the same party.

Morocco is a constitutional monarchy, and most power remains with the king, who appoints the head of government from the winning party. With 97 seats, PAM must negotiate a coalition to reach the 198 needed for an absolute majority in the 395-member parliament.

Relations with the National Rally of Independents are strained, while the Islamist Justice and Development Party rebounded to 54 seats and says it will stay in opposition. At a press event, El Mansouri praised the king as an advocate for women and avoided debate about religious ceremony protocols.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **BBC News***: "First female prime minister named in Morocco...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Who appointed El Mansouri as prime minister?
2. Which party won the most seats in the election?
3. How many seats does PAM have, and how many are needed to govern alone?
4. Who was the other leading candidate from PAM?
5. Which party said it will stay in opposition, and how many seats did it win?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Should a monarch appoint the head of government? Why or why not?
2. What are the strengths and risks of coalition governments?
3. How might a female prime minister affect policy priorities?
4. Should parties refuse coalitions on principle, or be flexible?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Relative clauses (non-defining)

Use commas and who/which to add extra, non-essential information. Non-defining clauses are separated by commas and use who for people and which for things, never that.

> *"El Mansouri,* **who is 50 and a lawyer by training**, *has been mayor of Marrakesh."*
>
> *"Most power remains with the king,* **who appoints the head of government**."

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Circle the correct option in each sentence.

1. PAM, (which / that) won 97 seats, must negotiate a coalition. _____
2. King Mohammed VI, (which / who) made the choice, holds power. _____
3. The National Rally of Independents, (which / who) has strained relations with PAM, may not join. _____
4. The Islamist party, (who / which) rebounded to 54 seats, stayed in opposition. _____
5. Fouzi Lekjaa, (who / which) is a senior PAM figure, was not chosen. _____

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.


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I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8–10 minutes warm-up, 10 minutes vocabulary, 12–15 minutes reading and comprehension, 8–10 minutes grammar, 10–12 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach or check: appoint, coalition, monarchy, advocate, negotiate, opposition, parliament, majority. Highlight how coalition numbers work.
- Run the reading in two passes: first for gist, then for details and numbers. Sensitivity: the story touches gender and religious ceremony norms; start discussion in pairs and allow students to comment on the news rather than personal beliefs.
- Differentiation: stronger students map possible coalitions from the seat numbers; others summarise El Mansouri's career in three key facts.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Take a quick show of hands, then pair students with different views to exchange reasons.
2. List two benefits and two risks on the board first to prompt deeper answers.
3. Invite examples from other countries, then ask which policies might shift and why.
4. Split the room: one side argues for principles, the other for pragmatism, then swap.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Debate: In teams, prepare and deliver a 90-second case for or against monarch appointment of the PM.

Writing: Write a 120-word briefing note outlining PAM's coalition options using the seat numbers.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Relative clauses (non-defining)

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

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These answers are for teachers only. Please do not share this page with students.


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IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Who appointed El Mansouri as prime minister?
   King Mohammed VI.
2. Which party won the most seats in the election?
   The Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM).
3. How many seats does PAM have, and how many are needed to govern alone?
   PAM has 97 seats; 198 are needed for a majority.
4. Who was the other leading candidate from PAM?
   Fouzi Lekjaa.
5. Which party said it will stay in opposition, and how many seats did it win?
   The Justice and Development Party; 54 seats.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Circle the correct option in each sentence.

1. PAM, (which / that) won 97 seats, must negotiate a coalition. **which**
2. King Mohammed VI, (which / who) made the choice, holds power. **who**
3. The National Rally of Independents, (which / who) has strained relations with PAM, may not join. **which**
4. The Islamist party, (who / which) rebounded to 54 seats, stayed in opposition. **which**
5. Fouzi Lekjaa, (who / which) is a senior PAM figure, was not chosen. **who**

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Use commas and who/which to add extra, non-essential information. Non-defining clauses are separated by commas and use who for people and which for things, never that. (Examples constructed.)

"El Mansouri, **who is 50 and a lawyer by training**, *has been mayor of Marrakesh."*

"Most power remains with the king, **who appoints the head of government**."