



Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial Washington, D.C.

Introduction and Instructions

The longest-serving president, FDR (as he was commonly known) served a record four consecutive terms and led the United States through most of the Great Depression and World War II. What else do you know about the thirty-second president? In addition to any prior knowledge you may have, use your research skills and the resources provided here to answer the questions below.



Learn more about FDR's life and election to the presidency.

READ: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/franklin-d-roosevelt>

1. What is his relationship to Theodore Roosevelt, the twenty-sixth president?

Answer: Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt were fifth cousins.

2. Before becoming president, what other political offices did Franklin Delano Roosevelt hold?

Answer: New York Senator in 1910. President Wilson appointed him Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and he was the Democratic nominee for Vice President in 1920. In 1928, he became the governor of New York.

3. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was in a wheelchair for the duration of his presidency. How did he lose the use of his legs?

Answer: In 1921, he contracted poliomyelitis – polio



Take a virtual walk through the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial.

READ: <https://freetoursbyfoot.com/fdr-memorial/#3>

4. The design of the memorial was thoughtfully completed, keeping in mind President Roosevelt's disability. What considerations were made in the construction of the memorial?

Answer: The memorial is wheelchair accessible and includes a system of low ramps, tactile reliefs, and Braille writing.

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5. Explain the symbolism of water and the sculptures throughout the memorial.

Answer: Water is an integral part of this memorial. In some rooms, you will find the water to be peaceful. In other rooms, the water is crashing over rocks. The water is a symbol of the tough times surrounding FDR's presidency, marked by the Great Depression, World War II, and Roosevelt's death in 1945. The stone walls also reflect these historical changes, becoming more rough-hewn as visitors move through FDR's four terms.

There are sculptures such as the breadline and fireside chat as well as a sculpture of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. There are 21 quotes from FDR's speeches. The inscriptions on the ground as you move from room to room mark the transition from each of his terms as president.



What was life like in the 1930s? Watch this video to learn more about it!

WATCH: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gkAfjRoINCI>

6. The first room covers the first term of his presidency, from 1933-1937. In 1932, our country was going through the Great Depression. What was life like in the United States when Franklin Delano Roosevelt became president?

Answer: Answers will vary. They may include statements about unemployment, entertainment, hardship, and sacrifices that were made.

7. The second room covers his second term, from 1937-1941, where President Roosevelt rolled out the New Deal. Summarize how the New Deal was meant to stimulate the economy and put people back to work.

Answer: Answers will vary. Students should talk about the various government programs that employed civilians such as the PWA and the CCC along with the TVA. Students may also mention the protections on the banking industry.

8. The third room covers his third term, from 1941-1945. The waterfall in this room is the most turbulent. Why do you think this is? (Hint: Think about what was going on in our country during this time!)

Answer: World War II



Read this article to learn more about Eleanor Roosevelt and her role at the United Nations.

READ: <https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/ARaxRSs->

9. The fourth room only covers 1945, as President Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945. This room features calm waters and a sculpture featuring the funeral procession. It also holds a statue of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt standing next to an emblem of the United Nations. Why do you think this symbol is here?

Answer: She accepted President Truman's request and joined the United States delegation to the United Nations, becoming the first woman to represent the United States at the United Nations.

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WHAT DO YOU THINK? *This is your chance to share your opinions, make connections, and apply what you've learned!*



Read about the controversy surrounding the statue in the area called the Prologue Room in the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial.
READ: <https://freetoursbyfoot.com/fdr-memorial/#3>

1. Why do you think it was important that President Roosevelt be depicted in his wheelchair? Explain.

Answers will vary.

2. In the first room at the memorial is the quote, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Explain what this quote meant back then and why it is also true today.

Answers will vary.

3. In Room Two is the "Breadline" sculpture, depicting men standing in line for bread and soup. During the Great Depression, soup kitchens were places operated by the government to feed the hungry. Since many people were unemployed at the time, it was their only means to obtain food. Imagine how those people felt in those lines. Describe your thoughts.

Answers will vary.

4. During Franklin Delano Roosevelt's presidency, radio was a new technology. He used this technology in his Fireside Chats. Other presidents have used television to "talk" to citizens. How do presidents communicate with the public today? How has communication changed in the past century? Provide multiple examples to support your thoughts.

Answers will vary.

5. Often, visitors think it is okay to go into the memorial's water displays and climb on the statues. Why do you think this should not be done?

Answers will vary, but students should recognize that to climb on the statues and in the waterfalls would be dangerous and disrespectful to the memorial.