

## Eleanor Roosevelt

Eleanor Roosevelt is among the most famous First Ladies in American history. She was born Anna Eleanor Roosevelt in New York City in 1884, but she preferred to use her middle name. Her family was quite wealthy, and when Eleanor was ten, she was sent to a finishing school in England. By that time, both of her parents had died and she had been sent to live with her grandmother. When she returned from England at age 17, she refused the activities of the upper class and began to work for the underprivileged. She taught in community centers and visited the poor.

Eleanor's uncle was President Theodore Roosevelt. At a White House reception in 1902, Eleanor was reintroduced to her father's fifth cousin, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The two began dating and were married in 1905. President Theodore Roosevelt gave the bride away. Eleanor and Franklin had six children over the next ten years while her husband pursued a career in politics. At first, Eleanor did not like being in the public eye. Franklin's political career took him from New York State Senator in 1910 to President of the United States in 1933. Eleanor Roosevelt was First Lady for the next twelve years. Her husband was elected four times, though he died in the first months of his fourth term.

Eleanor Roosevelt was often criticized for her social and business activities. In those days, most women were expected to simply be housewives and mothers. Though she traveled a lot during her twelve years as first lady, she did not want the protection of the Secret Service because she did not want to lose her privacy. She did have a bodyguard that her husband provided for her, however.

Mrs. Roosevelt was very active in calling attention to women's rights issues. In 1935, she began writing a column that appeared in newspapers across the country. The column was called "My Day." At first, she wrote mostly about women's issues. Later, she wrote about a variety of political subjects. She was also a great supporter of the Civil Rights Movement. Her support of civil rights provided a connection to the African American community that helped her

## Eleanor Roosevelt (cont'd)

husband's career as president. In addition, though she had always been opposed to war, she was active in boosting the country's morale during World War II. The war began in 1939 and lasted for the rest of her time as First Lady. In 1943, she traveled thousands of miles to visit American troops in field hospitals overseas.

Eleanor Roosevelt remained active and popular throughout the country after President Roosevelt died in 1945. One of her biggest achievements was to help put together the UN Declaration of Human Rights. The document declared that all human beings are born free and equal and should treat each other like brothers. President Harry S. Truman, who took office as president after Franklin Roosevelt died, called Eleanor "First Lady of the world" because she did so much to make the world a better place.

According to a respected survey, Eleanor Roosevelt is considered the ninth "most admired" person of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. She was one of most popular First Ladies in history, and she became even more popular after her tenure. For fifteen straight years following her term as First Lady, she was ranked as the most popular woman in America. She was awarded 35 honorary degrees during her lifetime. She also received a United Nations Human Rights Prize and was in the running for a Nobel Peace Prize after she died.

## Eleanor Roosevelt Questions

1. Eleanor Roosevelt was
  - a. born to a wealthy family.
  - b. educated in England.
  - c. raised by her grandmother after her parents died.
  - d. all of these.
  
2. Eleanor Roosevelt was
  - a. President Roosevelt's niece.
  - b. President Roosevelt's wife.
  - c. both a and b
  - d. neither a nor b
  
3. As a teenager, Eleanor was
  - a. more interested in social change than society life.
  - b. more interested in society life than in social change.
  - c. isolated from the common people.
  - d. already in the public eye.
  
4. Eleanor Roosevelt was First Lady for
  - a. four years.
  - b. eight years.
  - c. ten years.
  - d. twelve years.
  
5. As First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt was
  - a. mainly a housewife and mother.
  - b. active in politics.
  - c. the first president's wife to require Secret Service protection.
  - d. not very popular at first.

### Eleanor Roosevelt Questions (cont'd)

6. What was the name of Mrs. Roosevelt's newspaper column?
  
7. In her column, Eleanor Roosevelt wrote about
  - a. women's issues.
  - b. politics.
  - c. both.
  - d. neither.
  
8. Eleanor Roosevelt's work with the United Nations resulted in the creation of the UN Declaration of Human Rights. What did that document declare?
  
9. Surveys have shown that Eleanor Roosevelt
  - a. was the most popular person in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
  - b. was the most popular woman in America for many years.
  - c. both.
  - d. neither.
  
10. Eleanor Roosevelt
  - a. received 35 honorary degrees.
  - b. was awarded a Human Rights Prize from the United Nations.
  - c. won the Nobel Peace Prize after she died.
  - d. a and b
  - e. all of these

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Eleanor Roosevelt Answers

1. d
2. c
3. a
4. d
5. b
6. My Day
7. c
8. The document declared that all human beings are born free and equal and should treat each other like brothers.
9. b
10. d