# President Franklin Roosevelt

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was a distant cousin of another President of the U.S., Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt. Franklin Roosevelt was born on January 20, 1882 in New York State. While many future presidents have been born into families with ordinary means, Franklin Roosevelt, or FDR as he was later called, was born into a wealthy family. FDR was taught at home by private tutors and had made eight extended to trips to Europe by the time he was 14. Also at age 14 he had his own twenty-one-foot sailboat. But he did miss out on playing with other children. Also at age 14 he attended the fashionable Groton School in Massachusetts. He traveled to and from school in his parent's private railroad car.

FDR then attended Harvard College where he enjoyed editing the school newspaper. He dropped out of Columbia Law School but eventually passed the bar examination, which allowed him to practice law without a law degree. While he was at Harvard he met Anna Eleanor Roosevelt, a niece of Teddy Roosevelt. They were married on March 17, 1905 and had one daughter and four sons.

FDR began his political career by serving in the New York state legislature. In 1920, FDR became the Democratic Party's nominee for vice president, running with James Cox. That year, Warren Harding was elected as president instead of Cox.

Unfortunately, in 1921 FDR contracted polio, a disease that can cause paralysis. Polio affected his back, arms and hands and paralyzed both legs. Polio epidemics were common until Jonas Salk developed a vaccine to prevent the disease in the early 1950s. FDR spent much time in a wheelchair although he could walk for a short distance using leg braces and canes.

In the presidential election of 1928, New York governor Alfred Smith was the presidential nominee of the Democratic Party. He suggested that FDR run for the governorship of New York and he won by a small number of votes. In October of 1929, the stock market of the United States collapsed leaving many businesses and people bankrupt and the Great Depression of the 1930s had begun. Meanwhile, FDR was re-elected governor of New York, this time by a huge margin since he had become a popular governor. By the election of 1932, the Democratic Party made FDR their presidential candidate and FDR won by a landslide. His opponent won only six states.

## President Franklin Roosevelt (Cont'd)

As soon as he took office, FDR announced a banking holiday which meant that banks were closed until Congress could set up new rules for banking. In order to do something about the great number of people who were unemployed due to the Great Depression, FDR set up new programs at the federal level. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) provided money to unemployed workers like today's unemployment compensation. FDR then started the Works Progress Administration (WPA) to put people to work and earning a wage instead of just receiving unemployment money. Thousands of workers began constructing roads, schools and hospitals that would benefit the country.

Another program designed to create new jobs was the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) that put 2.5 million young men to work outdoors. Many of the buildings and improvements in the national parks were CCC projects.

Another of FDR's programs was the creation of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) centered on building dams on the Tennessee River to bring electricity to seven states. With cheap electric power, these states could then improve their standard of living and attract new industry.

All of these programs together were called the New Deal. Another part of the New Deal was Social Security. Social Security provided pensions for retired workers, benefits for survivors of workers who died, and benefits for disabled persons. All workers today continue to contribute to Social Security.

During the late 1930s, Hitler of Germany took over the neighboring countries of Austria and Czechoslovakia and Mussolini of Italy invaded Ethiopia in Africa. World War II began in September 1939 when Germany invaded Poland. Meanwhile, 1940 was a presidential election year and FDR was re-elected as president for a third term.

Finally, on December 7, 1941 Japanese planes attacked the American military base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. The United States was officially ay war with Japan and at war with Germany and Italy to help U.S. allies Great Britain and France. In 1944, FDR was re-elected for a fourth term but he died several months later on April 12, 1945. In 1952 an amendment was added to the U.S. Constitution to limit presidents to two terms in office.

Name_____     Date_____

## President Franklin Roosevelt Questions

Circle the correct answer.

1. Franklin Roosevelt served in which of these political offices?
   a. Governor, vice president, president
   b. State legislature, vice president, president
   c. State legislature, governor, president

2. Franklin Roosevelt was confined to a wheelchair because
   a. He had been in an accident on his sailboat
   b. He contracted polio
   c. None of the above

3. How many times was Franklin Roosevelt elected president?
   a. Two
   b. Three
   c. Four

4. Franklin Roosevelt was president during
   a. The Great Depression
   b. World War II
   c. Both a. and b. above

5. One of Franklin Roosevelt's programs that still is in effect today is
   a. Social Security
   b. Civilian Conservation Corps
   c. Work Progress Administration

6. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) projects
   a. Improved boating on the Tennessee River
   b. Brought electricity to seven states
   c. Focused on bringing tourists to the Tennessee River

7. What countries did the U.S. fight against in World War II?
   a. Germany, Austria and Great Britain
   b. Germany, Italy and Japan
   c. France, Italy and Japan

8. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) were designed to
   a. Create jobs for workers
   b. Provide money for unemployed workers
   c. Provide pensions for retired workers

## President Franklin Roosevelt Answers

### Multiple Choice

1. c.
2. b.
3. c.
4. c.
5. a.
6. b.
7. c.
8. a.