

**FREEDOM AND DIGNITY PROJECT**  
**Learning Experience Module**  
**Linda Bouchey, Susan Rudoy, and Michelle Nieman**

**Topic: Eleanor Roosevelt – Human Rights Advocate**  
**Grade Level: 8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

**NY State Learning Standard(s) assessed:**

- Standard 1: History of the United States and New York
- Standard 2: World History
- Standard 5: Civics, Citizenship and Government

**Learning Objectives:**

Standard 1: Students will understand Eleanor Roosevelt's role as a political activist and how she impacted New York and the United States. As first lady of New York and the United States she used her political influence to help less fortunate Americans, such as women, youth, minorities and the poor. Eleanor Roosevelt was a human rights advocate.

Standard 2: Students will understand the impact Eleanor Roosevelt had on world history and they will learn how she earned the title 'First Lady of the World'. Eleanor Roosevelt served as a United Nations delegate after her husband's death and it was there that she did a significant amount of work for human rights as a member of the Human Rights Commission.

Standard 5: Students will appreciate the impact Eleanor Roosevelt had on civics, Citizenship and government worldwide. Eleanor Roosevelt believed that "government had a responsibility to defend the weak." This philosophy led to her greatest achievement: the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is this document that establishes an international standard for all people.

**Essential Question:** What evidence supports the idea that Eleanor Roosevelt was an advocate of human rights?

**Overview of the Learning Experience Module:**

- Teachers created a document-based activity that will familiarize students with the role Eleanor Roosevelt played as a human rights activist.
- This activity will be done as part of a thematic Civil Rights Unit that covers Reconstruction to present day.
- This activity will prepare 8<sup>th</sup> grade students for our annual fall field trip to Val-Kill National Historic Site.
- This activity will also provide a link to our annual field trip to the FDR Library/Museum and Springwood.

- In essence, this activity will give students an understanding of Eleanor Roosevelt's contributions to the global community and it serves to continue the students' development of skills related to DBQ'S.

**Time Allotment (classroom time):** Two days (eighty minutes) and a homework assignment which is to be due the next day.

**Vocabulary (key terms):**

Advocate  
 Citizen  
 Civil rights  
 Civil Rights Movement  
 Community  
 Compassionate  
 Daughters of the American Revolution  
 Delegate  
 Democracy  
 Dignity  
 Feminist  
 Gender  
 Global  
 Great Depression  
 Human rights  
 Humane  
 Humanitarian  
 Impoverished  
 Minority  
 Moral  
 My Day  
 Poverty  
 Press conference  
 Racial discrimination  
 Social justice  
 United Nations

**Materials/Resources:**

- An activity packet which includes key terms, focus questions and a graphic organizer.
- A primary and secondary source document packet that comprehensively addresses the essential question.
- Included are a variety of documents that addresses all learning abilities and styles.

**Procedure:**

- Students will define key terms and answer the focus questions by using information in the document packets.

- Students will complete a graphic organizer that answers the essential question.
- Teachers will facilitate a discussion which addresses the students' findings. This discussion will enable students to answer the broader essential question.

**Assessment:**

- Students are required to actively participate in the completion and discussion of the vocabulary activity.
- Students are to analyze and interpret documents that are part of the document based activity. All findings are to be recorded on an answer sheet.
- Students will then use their findings to create a graphic organizer that will help write a document-based essay. The teacher may either grade the graphic organizer or grade the essay by using the DBQ rubric from the social studies 8 intermediate state test.

## **SUGGESTED PROCEDURES FOR TEACHING “ELEANOR ROOSEVELT: ADVOCATE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS”**

1. Students will define key terms by using the *Vocabulary* sheet. Students will be divided into teams. Each team will be responsible for defining a column of vocabulary words as assigned by the teacher. Students will share their answers with the group at large.
2. Students will read “The Life of Eleanor Roosevelt” aloud. This is an opportunity to provide a historical context for the students.
3. Students will then participate in a group activity in which they will analyze and interpret documents that support the idea that Eleanor Roosevelt was an advocate of human rights. The documents can be categorized into five topics: civil rights, local community, global issues, women and youth. Therefore, the class should be divided into five groups for this task. Teachers may categorize and number the documents according to their professional judgment. Students may record their findings on the Essential Question Sheet.
4. Teachers may then provide a graphic organizer which students are required to complete in preparation for a DBQ essay. Teachers and students should refer to their “Part B Essay” sheet for guidance in preparing the graphic organizer and in writing the essay.
5. Teachers are to refer to the New York State Social Studies 8 Scoring Rubric to assess student work.

**DIRECTIONS:** Using the word bank, place the appropriate word with its definition. These terms will help you better understand the documents associated with this packet.

**WORD BANK:**

Advocate	Citizen	Civil Rights
Civil Rights Movement	Community	Compassionate
DAR*	Delegate	Democracy
Dignity	Feminist	Gender
Global	Great Depression	Human Rights
Humane	Humanitarian	Impoverished
Minority	Moral	My Day
Poverty	Press Conference	Racial Discrimination
Social Justice	United Nations	

\*Daughters of the American Revolution

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- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. A worldwide peacekeeping organization that was established in 1945.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. A newspaper column written by Eleanor Roosevelt written from 1936 until her death in 1962.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. A period from 1929-1939 in which the United States was faced with economic hardship.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. One group in a society that is regarded as being different from the larger group of which it is a part. (Example: African-Americans)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. A society of women descended from American patriots of the Revolutionary War.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. When a public official meets with members of the media to address specific issues and to answer questions.  
Dignity
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Respect and honor associated with an important position.  
Moral
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. When an individual acts within established standards of society that have been derived from a sense of right and wrong.  
Social Justice

- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Moral rightness associated with honor and fairness.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. A social group having common interests.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Relating to or including the entire world.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. When an individual or group is deprived of basic needs and is reduced to poverty.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. The state of being poor; when individuals are unable to provide for their material needs or comforts.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. When individuals have qualities of kindness, mercy or compassion.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Feeling or showing sympathy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Refers to being masculine or feminine.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. To show prejudice against a certain group or race.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. A person who acts as a representative for an organization.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. A person who advocates equal rights for women.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Someone that is concerned with the needs of mankind and attempts to alleviate suffering.
- Human Rights
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. The fundamental belief that all people are entitled to equal treatment and should be entitled to the pursuit of life, liberty and property.
- Civil Rights
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. A government by the people exercised either directly or through elected representatives.

## ***THE LIFE OF ELEANOR ROOSEVELT***

Eleanor Roosevelt was the United States' longest serving First Lady. Her dedicated efforts as a humanitarian and social justice advocate have made her an icon to millions. She possessed an uncompromising commitment to the inherent worth of every human being. Mrs. Roosevelt believed that a caring government could bring about a more humane and just society. Her own words were "government has a responsibility to defend the weak," such as youth, minorities, poor and women. Eleanor Roosevelt's admirers saw her as an inspirational figure, a woman of compassion who listened with sympathy and understanding to the concerns of ordinary people.



## WOMEN ONLY IN THE WHITE HOUSE

When President Roosevelt took office, the United States was suffering through the Great Depression, which lasted from 1929 to 1942. Many people were unemployed, and women reporters were in danger of losing their jobs to men. Eleanor Roosevelt thought her press conferences could help women reporters keep their jobs. The journalists would be given information not available to male reporters. She also believed that women readers might understand legislative and political life better if they read articles written by women.

Mrs. Roosevelt did not want the public to think that she was speaking for the President. Consequently, she gave the reporters news about her own activities, which included working for peace and women's rights and helping the aged, youth and minorities.





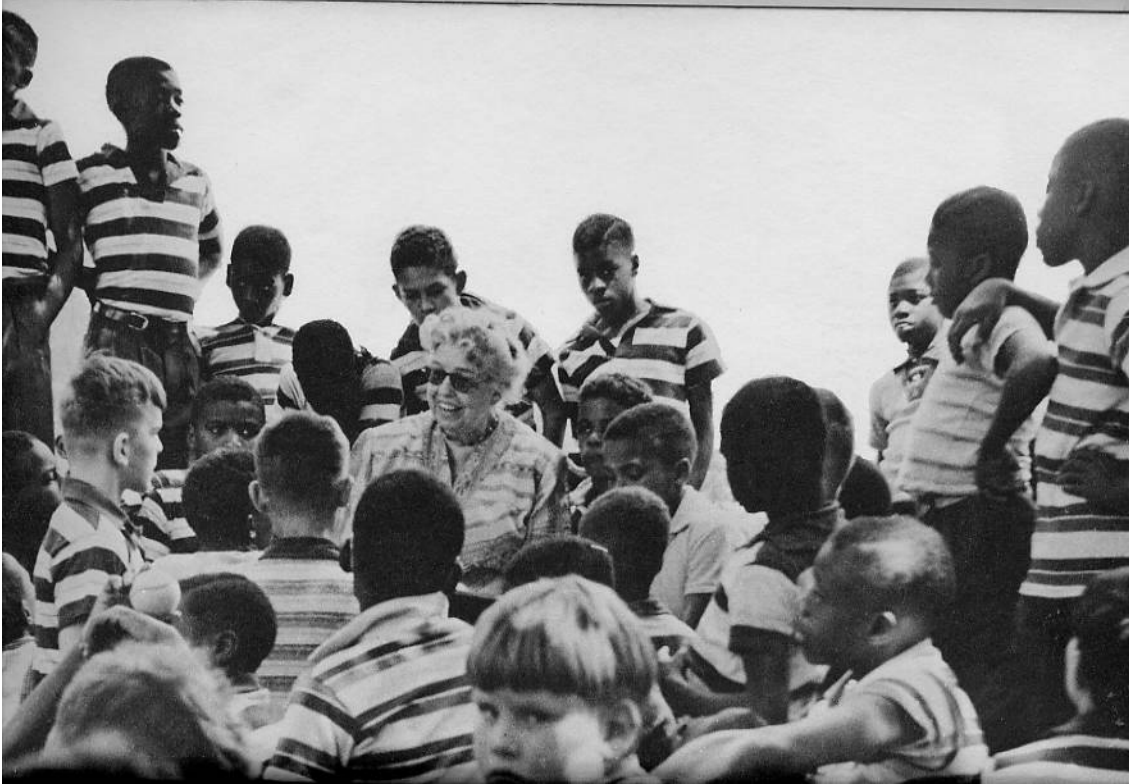
*With educator Mary McLeod Bethune at a Washington conference organized by the National Youth Administration.*

In 1939, Eleanor attended a meeting of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference for Human Welfare in Birmingham, Alabama. When she arrived at the auditorium with black educator, Mary McLeod Bethune, she was told that blacks and whites were not allowed to sit together at public gatherings in Birmingham. They were required by law to sit on opposite sides of an auditorium's center aisle. The First Lady refused to obey the segregation order. When the police told her that she was violating the law, she had a chair placed in the center aisle and sat there.

It may be easier to develop leaders in a private school because more attention is possible for individual pupils. Whether this is achieved or not, one thing must be done, namely, there must be developed men and women who shall take an interest in, and have an understanding of, every group of citizens and every phase of our national life, and this is more difficult to accomplish in private schools because the children are more sheltered.

As the great majority of our children are being educated in public schools, it is all-important that the standards of citizenship should be of the best. Whether we send our children to private school or public school we should take a constant interest in all educational institutions and remember that on the public school largely depends the success or the failure of our great experiment in government "by the people, for the people."

the Eleanor Roosevelt papers  
The Eleanor Roosevelt and Human Rights Project



## ELEANOR AND YOUTH

Every summer Mrs. Roosevelt hosted a picnic at Val-Kill for the boys from the Wiltwyck School in West Park, NY. She took special delight in entertaining these boys who came from troubled backgrounds in New York City. She remembered her own “very miserable childhood” and knew that “to have a friend who knows you by name gives you a sense that you are not alone in the world.”

Whether it was children from the Encampment for Citizenship or girls from the Women’s House of Detention, Eleanor always gave young people her special attention. (Women of Quality, Stella Hershan, 1970).

“We must make our young people realize that their job of the future is not only to help continue to strengthen their nation along traditional lines, but to try to discover new ways in which they may eventually build a new world. (Her Star Still Shines, a Franklin D. Roosevelt Library Publication, 1995)

# The Hyde Park Times

FEB. 28, 1939, HYDE PARK - Eleanor Roosevelt made her position on racial discrimination clear yesterday when she publicly announced her resignation from the Daughters of the American Revolution in her syndicated "My Day" column. "My Day" appears in hundreds of daily newspapers and is read by millions of Americans.

Although Mrs. Roosevelt never specifically mentioned the DAR nor a specific racial incident in yesterday's column, her opposition to that organization's racial policies is so well known to the American public that this veiled protest is thin indeed.

Just weeks ago, the DAR forbade Black-American contralto Marian Anderson to perform at Constitution Hall in downtown Washington, D.C. because of the color of her skin. The DAR's action solicited wide national interest, and both press and public waited for a response from the White House, more specifically from the First Lady who is known to be outspoken on civil rights issues. We now have our response.

Ms. Anderson is at present scheduled to appear at a massive public rally and performance at the foot of the Lincoln Monument. When questioned about this rally, a White House spokesperson stated that Mrs. Roosevelt had no official connection with the arrangements for this concert.

FROM UNITED FEATURE SYNDICATE, INC.  
220 East 42nd Street, New York, N.Y.

FOR RELEASE MONDAY FEBRUARY 27, 1939 AND THEREAFTER

## MY DAY.

I have been debating in my mind for some time, a question which I have had to debate with myself once or twice before in my life. Usually I have decided differently from the way in which I am deciding now. The question is, if you belong to an organization and disapprove of an action which is typical of a policy, should you resign or is it better to work for a changed point of view within the organization? In the past, when I was able to work actively in any organization to which I belonged, I have usually stayed in until I had at least made a fight and had been defeated.

Even then, I have, as a rule, accepted my defeat and decided I was wrong or, perhaps, a little too far ahead of the thinking of the majority at that time. I have often found that the thing in which I was interested was done some years later. But, in this case, I belong to an organization in which I can do no active work. They have taken an action which has been widely talked of in the press. To remain as a member implies approval of that action, and therefore I am resigning.

excerpt from Mrs. Roosevelt's letter of resigning from the DAR

However, I am in complete disagreement with the attitude taken in refusing Constitution Hall to a great artist. You have set an example which seems to me unfortunate, and I feel obliged to send in to you my resignation. You had an opportunity to lead in an enlightened way and it seems to me that your organization has failed.



Eleanor Roosevelt

“... brain has no gender.”

“In numbers there is strength, and we in America must help the women of the world.” (“My Day,” October 22, 1946)

“Every now and then I am reminded that even though the need for being a feminist is gradually disappearing in this country, we haven’t quite reached the millennium.” (“My Day.” February 22, 1945)

“No, I have never wanted to be a man. I have often wanted to be more effective as a woman, but I have never felt that trousers would do the trick!” (If You Ask Me, 1940)

- A TREE GROWS IN MANHATTAN -



"Where after all, do human rights begin? In small places, close to home---so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any map of the world, Yet, they "are" the world of individual persons: the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world."

(Eleanor Roosevelt in a speech before the UN, 1958)

*The second sacrifice which we make for Democracy is to give our government an interested and intelligent participation. For instance, if a city, town or county meeting is called, we will not find something more interesting or attractive to do that evening. We will go to the meeting, take part in it and try to understand what the questions and issues are. Thus we start the machinery of Democracy working from the lowest rung upward.*

*We often make the mistake of believing that what happens at the bottom makes no difference. As a matter of fact, it is what we do at the bottom which decides what eventually happens at the top. If all the way down the line every able-bodied citizen attended to his or her duties, went to the community meetings, tried to find out about the people who were going to hold office, knew the questions that came before them, there would be a radical change in the quality of people who take active part in political work.*



Eleanor Roosevelt  
1940  
The Moral Basis of Democracy



## National Youth Administration (NYA)



Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

**Workers attending a class in auto mechanics organized by the National Youth Administration.**

Eleanor Roosevelt worried that long-term unemployment and borderline poverty would undermine young Americans' faith in democracy. She told the New York Times that "I live in real terror when I think we may be losing this generation. We have to bring these young people into the active life of the community and make them feel that they are necessary."

457-24  
excerpt from letter to Mrs. Roosevelt - appointment to United Nations

*Frederic*  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

December 21, 1945  
*Handwritten note: [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]*

My dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I am pleased to inform you that I have appointed you one of the representatives of the United States to the first part of the first session of the General Assembly of the United Nations to be held in London early in January 1946.

You, as a representative of the United States, will bear the grave responsibility of demonstrating the wholehearted support which this Government is pledged to give to the United Nations organization, to the end that the organization can become the means of preserving the international peace and of creating conditions of mutual trust and economic and social well-being among all peoples of the world. I am confident that you will do your best to assist the United States to accomplish these purposes in the first meeting of the General Assembly.

Sincerely yours,

*Handwritten signature: Harry Truman*

Enclosure:

List of U. S. Delegation



Eleanor Roosevelt and two of her friends (Marian Dickerman and Nancy Cook) decided to launch Val-Kill Industries, as ER later recalled in her autobiography, “primarily to carry out a theory” she and FDR shared “about establishing industries in agricultural counties to give men and boys a means of earning money in winter” and having “something interesting to do.” All parties hoped the factory, a nonprofit entity, would not only provide jobs for rural workers who were unemployed or underemployed, but would also provide rural youth training for new kinds of work.

## Arthurdale

Arthurdale, West Virginia, was the first of several planned New Deal resettlement towns designed to take impoverished laborers and move them to newly constructed rural communities to help them become economically self-sufficient.



**Arthurdale Cooperative Store**

Arthurdale Heritage Corporation

The idea for such a community originated when ER learned of a plan to relocate a group of West Virginia coal miners to a nearby farm with the intention that they could combine subsistence farming with simple industries to reclaim their economic footing. The first lady was so enthusiastic about the idea that she brought it to the attention of her husband, who decided to federalize the project by placing it under the direction of the Interior Department.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What evidence supports the idea that Eleanor Roosevelt was an advocate of human rights?**

**DIRECTIONS:** Using the document packet, answer the questions below and find evidence that supports the essential question.

1. Prior to the Civil Rights movement of the 1950's and '60's what actions did she take to show that she opposed segregation? Explain why.
2. What efforts were made by Eleanor Roosevelt to reach out to a local community? Why did she feel this was necessary?
3. During Eleanor Roosevelt's lifetime what evidence supports the idea that she was first lady of the world?
4. How did Eleanor Roosevelt encourage women to participate in public life? Why?
5. How did Mrs. Roosevelt reach out to youth? Why was education so important?

**DIRECTIONS:** Using the Constructive Schematic, organize the evidence that supports the idea that Eleanor Roosevelt was, in fact, a human rights advocate. Be sure to follow the instructions that were given in class. This assignment will be collected and graded.

## PART B Essay

### Eleanor Roosevelt - Advocate for Human Rights

**Directions:** Write a well-organized essay that includes an introduction, at least three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Use evidence from at least **four (4)** documents in the body of the essay. Support your response with relevant facts, examples, and details. Include additional related information.

#### Historical Context:

Eleanor Roosevelt was the United States' longest serving First Lady. Her dedicated efforts as a humanitarian and social justice advocate have made her an icon to millions. She possessed an uncompromising commitment to the inherent worth of every human being. Mrs. Roosevelt believed that a caring government could bring about a more humane and just society. Her own words were "government has a responsibility to defend the weak", such as youth, minorities, poor and women. Eleanor Roosevelt's admirers saw her as an inspirational figure, a woman of compassion who listened with sympathy and understanding to the concerns of ordinary people.

#### Task:

Using information from the documents and your knowledge of social studies, write an essay in which you are asked:

- **What evidence supports the idea that Eleanor Roosevelt was an advocate of human rights?**
- **Describe at least 3 groups that demonstrate Eleanor Roosevelt's work as an advocate of human rights.**

#### Guidelines:

**In your essay, be sure to:**

Address all aspects of the *Task* by accurately analyzing and interpreting at least **four** documents; **be sure to state document number when you refer to a document**

Incorporate information from the documents in the body of the essay

Incorporate relevant outside information

Support the theme with relevant facts, examples, and details

Use a logical and clear plan of organization

Introduce the theme by establishing a framework that is beyond a simple restatement of the *Task* or *Historical Context* and conclude with a summation of the theme Task

## Social Studies Document-Based Question

### Score of 5:

- Thoroughly addresses all aspects of the Task by accurately analyzing and interpreting at least 4 documents
- Incorporates information from the documents in the body of the essay
- Incorporates relevant outside information
- Richly supports the theme or problem with relevant facts, examples, and details
- Is a well-developed essay, consistently demonstrating a logical and clear plan or organization
- Introduces the theme or problem by establishing a framework that is beyond a simple restatement of the Task or Historical Content and concludes with a summation of the theme or problem

### Score of 4:

- Addresses all aspects of the Task by accurately analyzing and interpreting at least 4 documents
- Incorporates information from the documents in the body of the essay
- Incorporates relevant outside information
- Includes relevant facts, examples, and details, but discussion may be more descriptive than analytical
- Is well-developed essay, demonstrating a logical and clear plan or organization
- Introduces the theme or problem by establishing a framework that is beyond a simple restatement of the Task or Historical and concludes with a summation of the theme or problem

### Score of 3:

- Addresses most aspects of the Task or addresses all aspects of Task in a limited way, using some of the documents
- Incorporates some information from the documents in the body of the essay
- Incorporates limited or no relevant outside information
- Includes some facts, examples, and details, but discussion is more descriptive than analytical
- Is a satisfactorily developed essay, demonstrating a general plan of organization
- Introduces the theme or problem by repeating the Task or Historical Context and concludes by simply repeating the theme or problem

### Score of 2:

- Attempts to address some aspects of the Task, making limited use of the documents
- Presents no relevant outside information
- Includes few facts, examples, and details; discussion restates contents of the documents
- Is a poorly organized essay, lacking focus
- Fails to introduce or summarize the theme or problem

### Score of 1:

- Shows limited understanding of the Task with vague, unclear references to the documents
- Presents no relevant outside information
- Includes little or no accurate or relevant facts, details, or examples
- Attempts to complete the Task, but demonstrates a major weakness in organization
- Fails to introduce or summarize the theme or problem

### Score of 0:

- Fails to address the Task, is illegible or is a blank paper



## Suggested Teacher Resources

Beasely, Maurine H., Holly C. Shulman and Henry R. Beasely. The Eleanor Roosevelt Encyclopedia. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001.

Black, Allida. Casting Her Own Shadow: Eleanor Roosevelt and The Shaping of Postwar Liberalism. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

Cain, Richard R. Eleanor Roosevelt's VALKILL. Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2002.

Cook, Blanche Wiesen. Eleanor Roosevelt: Volume 2 1933-1938. New York: Viking Penguin, 1999.

Eleanor Roosevelt. Sue Williams. The American Experience, 2000.

Freedman, Russell. Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life of Discovery. New York: Clarion Books, 1993.

[www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu](http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu)

[www.nps.gov/elro/teaching.htm](http://www.nps.gov/elro/teaching.htm)