

Notes for the Eleanor Roosevelt Slide Show



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We will try to present Eleanor Roosevelt in as honest a fashion as we can--her strengths and weaknesses. We will also try to show why she is called the First Lady of the World. Please note the following:

the numbers correspond to the slide number

the name in capital letters is the person (people), place or thing in the slide

this information is in "note form", not complete sentences or thoughts

the content may need to be edited for your students

1. Title
2. ELLIOTT ROOSEVELT--younger brother of Theodore Roosevelt. He was a sensitive compassionate man. In a polo accident, after he married, he broke his leg. His leg had to be re-broken after it was healed. He developed a dependency on morphine as well as being an alcoholic because of his medical problems. When ER was 5, Elliott's substance abuse problems started to have a serious impact on their family life. He was banned from the home until he could 'clean up'. Elliott was never able to overcome his addictions. He died from a drunken fall when ER was 10.
3. ANNA ELEANOR HALL--ER is named after both parents. Eleanor is the female name for Elliott. Anna was a Livingston from Tivoli, NY as well as from NYC. Both of ER's parents came from very wealthy families and they lived off of their inheritances. Until the time of Elliott's substance abuse problem, they were member's of NYC's high society. Just before ER turned 8 her mother had to go in for surgery on an 'unknown illness'. She survived the surgery but died soon after from diphtheria.
4. ELLIOTT AND ANNA--On their honeymoon in Switzerland. They will separate when ER is 7. Anna will have Elliott declared insane to protect her and the children's financial security.

5. ELEANOR AS A YOUNG GIRL--notice the finger in the mouth; ER was very timid and shy. Anna called ER "Granny" because she acted so old-fashioned. ER spent much of her first years being taken care of by her French nurse. She learned to speak French before she learned English.
6. HALL MANSION IN TIVOLI—called Oak Terrace. Overlooks the Hudson on Livingston's Clermont property. When Anna Roosevelt died ER was sent to live with her Grandmother Hall. ER learned how to ride horses here, a hobby she would enjoy for life.
7. ER AND HALL—Anna and Elliott had three children. ER was the oldest, brother Elliott, Jr. was in the middle and Hall was the youngest. Elliott (Ellie) died of diphtheria when he was three. (The same illness Anna died from.) By the time ER was 10 she had lost her mother, father, and brother. This photo was taken just before ER left for Allenswood School in London at the age of 15. (1899-1902)
8. Mlle SOUVESTRE--She was the headmistress at Allenswood and strongly influenced ER's life. She was considered one of the great educators of the 19th century advocating French liberal ideas. She taught students to think for themselves and required a student to argue both sides of a question. She instructed ER to be everything she could be, to serve mankind. ER considered her stay at Allenswood some of the best times of her life.
9. ER JUST BEFORE HER 18TH BIRTHDAY— After spending three years at Allenswood, ER's grandmother decided that ER should come home. Mrs. Hall believed she should have her "coming out party" and although ER hated the process she agreed. It was not only a young woman's introduction to society but the goal was to find a husband. It is hard to imagine that ER accepted this rite of passage, but it shows how Victorian in many ways she was at this point, and how greatly she would change in later years.
10. ER AND FDR--they were 5th cousins once removed (the parent is 5th cousin so child is once removed), and could not have been more unlike. He was charismatic, fun loving, very secure. She was reserved, serious, and very insecure. It is interesting that ER's parents were FDR's godparents. Also note that ER is physically holding her self-back in this photo while FDR is active and involved. Those roles will be reversed when she is forced to keep his name alive while he was recovering from Polio.

11. SARA ROOSEVELT--Sara was not a mean mother, but very protective. After James, her husband died, leaving her with a teenage son, she moved to Boston to be near him while he attended Harvard. It was from her that FDR learned not only great self-confidence but also to keep hidden his emotions.
12. TEDDY ROOSEVELT--New York City March 17th, 1905. Teddy was ER's uncle, her father's brother. Teddy gave ER away.
13. ER IN HER WEDDING GOWN--It was the lace from her mother's wedding gown and the wedding was on her mother's birthday.
14. HONEYMOON IN VENICE--FDR took this photo of an already pregnant bride. ER said that for the first 10 years of her marriage she was either pregnant or getting over being pregnant. They had 6 children.
15. SIDE BY SIDE BROWNSTONE— Sara's is on the left and ER/FDR's is on the right. Sara choose the furnishings and the servants and there were inter-connecting doors on all floors.
16. FAMILY PORTRAIT IN HYDE PARK--ER appears to be submissive with her dead down and with the children surrounding Granny. Elliott is holding ER's hand. The children jumped through the golden hoop to get to her love and her largess. That included FDR who received over 1 million dollars from his mother to run the White House while he was president.
17. ER AND FDR IN HYDE PARK--1910. En route to Albany after FDR was elected state Senator from Dutchess County. This was the first time ER was away from Ma'ma. When FDR was chosen as a candidate--and the party leadership didn't really think he could win, he was reported to have said that first he had to speak to his mother.
18. FDR INSPECTING THE NAVAL FLEET. In 1913 FDR became the Assistant Secretary of the Navy under President Wilson. This photo was taken after the end of WW I.
19. SWIMMING AT CAMPOBELLO--1921 This was reported to be the last photo of FDR taken when he is standing on his own, he was paralyzed by polio shortly after.

20. LOUIS HOWE—Political advisor to ER and FDR from 1912 to 1936. Political genius, campaign manager and advisor. Howe brought ER into FDR's campaign by asking her about the speeches and for her opinion on campaign issues. He taught ER public speaking skills. He taught her to keep her head up, her voice strong, and not to laugh nervously. His advice was: "Have something to say, say it, and then sit down."
21. MARIAN DICKERMAN, NANCY COOK AND ER--1920's. Feminists. Great friends of ER and FDR. They met in the Women's Division of the Democratic Party. Marion and Nan were well educated and involved in advancing the rights of women. These women would later build Val-Kill and Val-Kill Industries with ER.
22. ESTER LAPE AND ER--1924, to convince the Senate to acknowledge the BOK peace award, which had been offered by the Ladies Home Journal Magazine for the best peace plan, to remake the League of Nations which the US had not joined. Ester Lape was a college professor and worked for the League of Women Voters, where the two met.
23. CONSTRUCTION OF VAL-KILL--1925. "A shack in the woods" FDR said, Toombs was the architect, total construction cost was \$12,000. Not on Ma'ma's land.
24. COMPLETED COTTAGE WITH SWIMMING POOL FOR FDR
25. VAL-KILL INDUSTRIES--started in 1927 to train local men for jobs other than farming. Prototype for Arthurdale, West Virginia.
26. ELEANOR THE TEACHER--1927-1933, Dickerman, Caroline O'Day and ER. Eleanor was the Vice Principal, and teacher of current events, history and literature. ER said, "I suppose if I were asked what is the best thing one can expect in life, I would say the privilege of being useful."
27. ER DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S LEADER IN THE 1920'S--supported Al Smith in 1928. Smith was the first Catholic to seek the Presidency. FDR ran for governor.

28. FRANCIS PERKINS--Al Smith had picked her for membership on New York State's Industrial Commission. ER suggested in 1929 that FDR pick her for Labor Commissioner. She became the Secretary of Labor under FDR, the first woman to ever serve in a President's cabinet.
29. 1932 NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION—FDR was nominated for President. Eleanor did not go.
30. INAUGURATION DAY--MARCH 4TH 1933--ER walked partially from her hotel to the White House unprotected, no secret service. "What can I do to help you?" was the question ER asked FDR when he became President.
31. ER AND WOMEN REPORTERS--male reporters laughed at press conferences. She had a press meeting before FDR did. ER only allowed female reporters to interview her at the White House, this helped to promote female reporters in the news world.
32. THE FIRST FIRST LADY TO FLY ACROSS THE COUNTRY. ER was sent out into the country to be FDR's 'eyes and ears'; he was unable to travel easily and wanted an honest and astute evaluation of the living and working conditions in the country.
33. 1935 ER THE JOURNALIST--Lorena Hickok was a reporter for the Associated Press on the campaign train. She suggested that ER write a newspaper column about her experiences as First Lady. ER continued to write "My Day" articles until a few weeks before her death in 1962. She used the column to promote desegregation, the work of Martin Luther King, Jr., Equal rights legislation. ER earned more money than FDR through writing and speeches. After the Atomic Bomb was dropped she wrote: "We have only two alternative choices: destruction and death--or construction and life."
34. ER IN COAL MINE— "Oh, my gosh! Here comes Eleanor" the caption of this picture stated. A coal mine in West Virginia where Eleanor toured to see first hand the working conditions of miners. She found that these people who were often unemployed during the depression were some of the poorest people in America.
35. ARTHURDALE--A government planned community and a pet project (homes built, jobs created, schools built). Her opponents accused her of being a Communist because Arthurdale was a government sponsored project.

36. GRADUATION SPEAKER AT ARTHURDALE. ER had the best educators enlisted to work here. She failed however to convince the community to integrate. Many of the same families descendants still live in this West Virginia community.
37. ER SUPPORTS AFRICAN AMERICANS--Mary McLeod Bethune and ER became friends. Eleanor realized that she was no longer prejudice when one day she kissed her friend in greeting and hadn't thought anything racial. Mrs. Bethune, the founder of Bethune College in Florida went to a meeting in Birmingham, Alabama in 1939 at a segregated auditorium: ER tried to sit with her black friend, but they were forced to separate because it was illegal for whites to sit with blacks. ER insisted on having a chair to sit on in the middle of the aisle and by the end of the meeting she had moved her chair closer to the black side of the aisle.
38. 1939 --Marian Anderson was not permitted to sing at Constitution Hall in Washington, DC. Eleanor spoke to the Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes and Ms. Anderson was allowed to perform on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. 75,000 people attended that concert which began with America and ended with "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen." Eleanor resigned from the DAR because of her opposition to their racist position and 67 % of the American people approved of her decision. 1939.
39. KING GEORGE AND QUEEN MARY IN HYDE PARK, June, 1939--the Queen was terrified by FDR's driving. They had a typical US picnic at Top Cottage; served hot dogs, corn on the cob, potato salad, strawberry shortcake.
40. 1940 DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION— FDR asked Eleanor to encourage the delegates to draft him for a third nomination. She said, "This is the time when it is the US we fight for". As Commander-in-Chief, FDR was calling on men and women to serve their country and ER believed he had no right to decline such service himself although she dreaded 4 more years. Eleanor's classroom has expanded to the whole of the United States.
41. ER WITH AMERICAN TROOPS—within 2 years (1943) after the attack on Pearl Harbor ER visited troops to give them moral support and encouragement. She also visited the Japanese internment camps in Arizona.
42. ER VISITS THE WOUNDED--she would often take down names and addresses of the wounded and write, contact, or visit their parents back in the

43. ER GOES TO LONDON—1943 to inspect Nazi destruction of Great Britain.
44. ER INSPECTS THE LONDON TUBES (subway) USED DURING THE BLITZ
45. FOURTH TERM POLITICAL CARTOON (1944)--ER felt that FDR needed to remain in office to see that the United Nations was successfully launched when peace was established. In this cartoon two natives are bumping noses in the Ma' or i style of greeting. They had christened ER Ko'to ku--the white heron of the one flight which according to tradition is seen but once in a lifetime.
46. CHRISTMAS HYDE PARK 1944 FDR insisted all family be there, he was dying.
47. INAUGURATION JANUARY 1945--brief ceremony at White House. Man who lost leg is a victim of the war.
48. APRIL 15TH, 1945--FDR died on April 12th, in Warm Springs of a cerebral hemorrhage (stroke). His body was transported by train to Washington, DC for a brief ceremony at the White House. Then continued by train to Hyde Park. A horse drawn carriage brought his body from the Roosevelt's private train station beside the Hudson River to the rose garden at Springwood where he was buried.
49. HE STORY IS OVER--This was Eleanor's comment to a reporter shortly after FDR's death. She refused the offer of a \$5,000 year pension offered to widows of Presidents. She now turned to one of the most productive periods in her life. Her friends were Lorena Hickok, Earl Miller, Melvina Thompson, Walter White, Mary McLoed Bethune, Joseph Lash, and Eleanor Morgenthau.
50. ELEANOR TEACHES THE NEW PRESIDENT--June of 1945 President Truman asked Eleanor to be a delegate to the General Assembly meeting of the United Nations. "Oh, no! That's not possible". Her appointment was opposed by Senator Bilbo of Mississippi on the grounds of her radical racial views.

51. THE UNITED NATIONS DELEGATION—She is with Adlai Stevenson and John Foster Dulles in this picture. John Foster Dulles, one of the other delegates, later said, “I feel I must tell you that when you were appointed I thought it terrible and now I think your work here has been fine.” Eleanor wrote in her diary after this comment, “And so against odds, the women move forward.”

52. DELEGATE ROOSEVELT--She was assigned to Committee 3 which was in charge of humanitarian issues including refugees. There were 6 women out of 750 delegates (only US woman).

53. CHAIRWOMAN ROOSEVELT— One of ER’s assignments was to chair the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Her greatest life achievement. She saw the Declaration as still furthering FDR’s goals, particularly of the Four Freedoms--freedom from fear, freedom from want, freedom of speech and freedom of religion. We see how far Mrs. Roosevelt had come in the course of her life when one reads the Declaration. It deals with equality of minorities (including women), rights of education, health, social security for the sick and elderly.

54. ER THE WORLD TRAVELER--After Eisenhower’s Election (who supposedly disliked her as much as J. Edgar Hoover who had compiled the largest dossier of any private citizen in American history) She had time however to speak out against Senator Joseph McCarthy. She said, “We find ourselves living in the atmosphere of a police state” She denounced his investigations of Communism as “ludicrous” and excoriated the big Hollywood producers for being too “chicken-hearted” to speak up for the freedom of their industry. No other political liberal in America--not the cautious Adlai Stevenson, not John Kennedy who evaded the question, not Robert Kennedy who actually worked as a researcher for McCarthy’s staff, not Hubert Humphrey who sought passage of the Communist Control Act of 1954, none of these possessed Eleanor’s courage to take on the Senate bully. People, she said, in such a time of crisis had to “stand up and be counted”. While other political leaders cowered in silence this elderly woman spoke out for freedom and for the Bill of Rights.

55. ER WITH WORLD LEADERS--Golda Meier, Prime Minister of Israel. Eleanor never forgot what she saw in the Jewish camps after WWII. After reading The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank, Eleanor wrote that “war’s greatest evil is the degradation of the human spirit.” As the Palestine Question came before the United Nations in the late 1940’s Eleanor wrote, “More and more, the other delegates seem to believe that we should think in terms of going it alone, rather than in terms of building up a leadership within the United Nations.” She continued, “Only here and in other free democracies can we criticize our Government and have the freedom to think independently. It is, I believe a very precious freedom, but it requires of us something more than apathetic citizenship. LISTEN CLOSELY. We cannot live in fear of either Fascism or Communism (or of terrorism). We have to be certain that the majority of our people recognize the benefits of democracy and therefore are loyal to it”. Eleanor believed all of her life not just in times of crisis that people must get involved with their government, must voice their opinions to their elected officials, must speak out.

56. VAL-KILL PICNIC--Wiltwyck School, located in West Park. It was one of her favorite charities and she served on their Board of Directors. It also gave her an opportunity to demonstrate her feelings about race in her own backyard. In the 1950’s the American Red Cross would ask, “Is your blood white, black or yellow?” when Americans donated their blood and would duly record the color on the donor cards. “Human blood is all alike, regardless of race,” Eleanor hotly asserted in a “My Day” column.

57. OFFICIAL POLITICAL PHOTO 1960. It is interesting to note that Eleanor is supporting a Catholic for high office again, even though Kennedy’s father and FDR had not gotten along politically. JFK visited her at Val-Kill.

58. ELEANOR DIED IN 1962--November. She had requested in her will that there be no flowers and that her coffin be covered with the American flag and pine boughs from Val-Kill.

59. THE ROSE GARDEN AT SPRINGWOOD--JFK, Truman and Eisenhower, VP Johnson and their wives and Tubby Curnan (ER’s chauffeur) in the company of the Presidents.

60. Credit

And so ended a story of an unhappy child, an anorexic adult, a woman who suffered great bouts of depression and feelings of being unloved. Yet Eleanor Roosevelt is a woman still known and admired around the world.