

Lesson Plan

Finding the Big Idea

Book: *Franklin D. Roosevelt*

Series: Influential Presidents

Level: Beacon

Objective

To help students analyze how the information in each chapter of a book relates to the book's central idea.

Supplies

- *Franklin D. Roosevelt* book
- Pencils and paper

Before the Activity

Read through the *Franklin D. Roosevelt* book, or assign it to students to read on their own.

Activity

When writing books, authors often focus on one main point or central idea. For example, *Franklin D. Roosevelt* is a biography. This type of book tells the story of a person's life. When writing biographies, authors try to help readers understand what a person was like and why that person was famous or important. To do this, authors give details about events or actions from the person's life.

In this activity, students will explore how each chapter of *Franklin D. Roosevelt* contributes to the book's main idea. For each chapter, students should write answers to the following questions on a piece of paper:

- What part of Roosevelt's life does this chapter describe?
- What events or actions does the author provide details about in this chapter?
- What do these events or actions help readers learn about Roosevelt?

Evaluation

Use the following sample answers to award students 1 point for each correct answer, for up to 12 points total. (Note: It's okay if students' answers differ from the sample answers as long as their answers seem reasonable.)

Chapter 1: Nothing to Fear

1. This chapter describes the start of Roosevelt's first term as US president.
2. The author describes the hard times Americans were facing as a result of the Great Depression and the first speech Roosevelt gave as president.
3. Readers learn about the problems the country was facing when Roosevelt became president and what he said he'd do to help.

Chapter 2: Working for Change

1. This chapter describes Roosevelt's early life and the jobs he had before he became president.
2. The author describes some of the events (such as World War I and the Great Depression) that were happening during this time and a few of the programs and changes Roosevelt made in response.
3. Readers learn about Roosevelt's goals and values, as well as the kinds of problems he worked to solve.

Chapter 3: The New Deal

1. This chapter talks about the changes that Roosevelt made in his first term as president, as well as the start of his second term.
2. The author describes programs that Roosevelt created as part of the New Deal, such as changing rules for banks and starting projects that gave people jobs.
3. Readers learn how Roosevelt's programs affected the country and how they helped him win votes and elections.

Chapter 4: A Nation at War

1. This chapter describes Roosevelt's actions during World War II, which took place during his third and fourth terms.
2. The author writes about how, even though he was sick, Roosevelt worked hard to lead his country. Examples include preparing to fight in the war and helping to start the United Nations.
3. Readers learn about Roosevelt's lasting impacts and which actions he's best known for.

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' reading standards for informational text, grade 4 (RI 4.1, 4.2, 4.5).