

**Grades: 9-12**

**The Roosevelts: An Intimate History,**  
**“Part 6: The Common Cause”**

The lives of the three great Roosevelts -- Teddy, Franklin and Eleanor -- are captured in this series. Ken Burns and producer, Paul Barnes describe the lives and times of these three American icons who influenced 20th century American history more than perhaps any other family. Through wars, revolutions, depressions, movements, the three led the country through what was called America's century. At times they had little in common but for one thing they always had in common . . . their ability, desire and conviction to lead.

FDR shatters the third-term tradition, struggles to prepare a reluctant country to enter World War II and, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, helps set the course toward Allied victory. Meanwhile, Eleanor struggles to keep New Deal reforms alive in wartime and travels the Pacific to comfort wounded servicemen. Diagnosed with congestive heart failure in 1943 and with the war still raging, FDR resolves to conceal his condition and run for a fourth term.

**After watching this episode, choose from the following questions and/or tasks to extend your learning**

**Question Box 1**

- What evidence does the TV show director give to support his or her central idea?
- What is this program “saying”? Cite evidence to support your analysis.
- Which details support the key idea? Look for the who? What? When? Where? Why? How much? How many?
- How did FDR shatter the third-term tradition?
- What struggles does FDR encounter when preparing a reluctant country to enter World War II?
- What struggles does FDR encounter after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor?
- How does FDR help set the course toward Allied victory?
- What struggles does Eleanor encounter while trying to keep New Deal reforms alive in wartime and travels the Pacific to comfort wounded servicemen?
- What health condition does FDR choose to keep private because the war was still raging? Did his condition affect his ability to run the country?

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## **Question Box 2**

- How much did you know about the subject before we started?
- How do you feel about this program? Why?
- If someone else were looking at this program, what might they learn?
- What is one thing you would like to add to this topic?

## **Box 3 (Tasks)**

- Create a timeline of FDR policies that inch FDR closer to war.
- Create a timeline of FDR's fireside chats
- Presidents today can only run for two terms. Research the reasons behind this and the role the Roosevelts played in limiting presidential terms.

## **Box 4 (Enrichment)**

- FDR had to convince the country to do something that was in its own best interest despite the fact that the country wanted no part of it. What tactics does FDR use to move the country to war? What's a time in your own life when you had to do something similar? How were your tactics similar to those?
- Watch a speech by governor Newsome and listen to a Fireside chat by FDR. What do they talk about? What tactics do they use to engage with you? How persuasive are they?
- Research the various fireside chats by FDR. Choose one and discuss why FDR felt it necessary to utilize a fireside chat. How effective was he in getting the message across?
- FDR was an avid fan of Ornithology, or the study of birds. Several close aides and friends often commented on his ability to identify birds simply by their songs and calls. Using the musical elements of pitch (high or low notes), tempo, and tone, try to describe each of the three bird sounds identified in the **Bird Song Spotlight** video below.

<https://academy.allaboutbirds.org/product/be-a-better-birder-how-to-identify-bird-songs/>

## **Box 5 (Extend/Real-Life)**

- Despite many odds against him, FDR persevered through difficult situations time and time again. Think about a time when you were faced with a difficult situation. What skills did you need to persevere through it? Write about the situation and how you handled it.