

Case Study: Eleanor Roosevelt and Human Rights

The Individual in History: Actions and Legacies

The goals of this case study are to:

- Use Eleanor Roosevelt and human rights to
 - Evaluate the “flawed peace” and effectiveness of the UN in reducing international tensions and conflicts
 - Examine new international power relations surrounding the founding of the UN, noting the differences in political ideologies of the West and the Soviet bloc
- Introduce students to some essential history thinking skills including
 - Using secondary sources to establish a historical context
 - Working effectively with primary sources

National History Standards

U.S. History – Era 9: Postwar United States (1945 to early 1970s)

Standard 2A: Understand the international origins and domestic consequences of the Cold War

World History – Era 9: The 20th Century Since 1945: Promises and Paradoxes

Standard 1B: Understand why global power shifts took place and the Cold War broke out in the aftermath of World War II.

Grade Level

This longer case study could be used by high school US and World History teachers, as well as middle school teachers with modifications. For middle school students: identify and define challenging vocabulary, take more time to model primary source analysis, and reduce number of primary sources and/or excerpt these sources. Time estimated for high school: two to three class periods, and for middle schools three to four class periods.

Key events related to Eleanor Roosevelt and Human Rights

1941

- FDR outlines Four Freedoms: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, and freedom from fear of armed aggression – that should be guaranteed throughout the world after World War II.

1945

- (February) Yalta Conference at which FDR, Churchill, and Stalin decide on terms for Germany’s surrender, postwar conditions for Eastern Europe, and an April meeting in San Francisco to create the United Nations.
- (April) Conference in San Francisco drafts and adopts the Charter establishing the United Nations.
- World War II ends: VE Day May 8, VJ Day August 15
- (December) President Harry Truman appoints Eleanor Roosevelt as one of the US delegates to the first session of the United Nations General Assembly

1946

- ER serves as a US delegate to the UN General Assembly and is also selected to be the US representative on the Human Rights Commission. This nine-member committee meets and elects ER its chairman.

1947

- Truman Doctrine put into effect for Greece and Turkey
- In the Middle East the UN recommends partition of the British mandate in Palestine into Arab and Jewish states.

1948

- Marshall Plan (European Recovery Program) goes into effect (1948-1951)
- US, USSR, and UN recognize Israel and first Arab-Israeli War breaks out
- Civil War in China between Mao's Communists and the Kuomintang
- Iron Curtain descends on Eastern Europe, Soviet Union blockades land and water traffic in and out of Berlin – and Truman orders a full-scale airlift
- Dec. 10 UN General Assembly approves Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

1949

- NATO is formed
- Atomic bomb is successfully tested by Soviet Union
- Peoples Republic of China is founded

1950

- In US Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-Wisconsin) conducts hearings
- Julius and Ethel Rosenberg found guilty of providing atomic secrets to the Soviet Union. They are executed in 1953.

Strategy

1. Start with what students know, or think they know, about the United Nations – particularly about its founding after World War II – by asking them what their thoughts, associations, etc. are and write these on the board or newsprint.
2. Provide students with key events from 1941-50 (on overhead or via computer). Together read, highlight, and discuss these events – but do not yet include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The teacher can use this activity as a preview or review, depending whether students are just beginning or have already studied this period. Either way, this is a good place to have students consult secondary sources, including their textbook, to (re)introduce themselves to the people, places, and issues of this period. Compare students' beginning thoughts and associations about the UN with key events list.
3. Once students have at least a basic familiarity with these events, ask them to make some predictions about creating a declaration of human rights. Given that there were 58 countries in the UN in 1948 that varied widely in size, power, history, and culture, what conflicts might their representatives have had about what should and should not be included in a declaration of human rights? What skills and experience would have been required by the chairman and the members of the drafting committee to

accomplish their task? Record students' predictions and save for use later in the lesson.

4. Tell students that they will have a chance to check out their predictions by examining some primary sources. (Be sure they understand how primary sources differ from secondary sources.) But before students begin to work on their own, model the notice/question/context process with students. Ask students to **notice** and jot down what they see in each document and record any **questions** they have about the document. Suggest that they consider who wrote or created the document, the purpose and intended audience, and do a close reading (what is said and the language used to say it). Students should also begin to put the document into **context**, situating it and the events it reports in a place and time.
 - Eleanor Roosevelt Accepts Appointment to the United Nations: see excerpt at end of this case study from ER's *Autobiography*, 299.
 - Read aloud or have students read it to themselves, then have them do a think/pair/share on what they **notice** and note what **questions** they have and consider what the **context** is. Share out findings as a group.

See **Teacher Notes** at end of this case study for examples of what students might notice and question, as well as some context for this passage and the other primary sources listed below.

5. Next direct students to work in pairs or small groups to examine a selection of primary source documents to see how the UDHR was created – what it actually took in terms of individual and group skills and experience – and how this task was accomplished. Students in pairs or small groups can work with all the documents or the teacher can distribute different documents to each pair or group. Another option is to set up stations around the classroom each with one or two documents (depending on their length) and have newsprint and markers for students to list what they notice for each document and the questions they have. Primary sources for students are as follows (they are included at the end of this case study):
 - Truman letter to ER (officially appointing her to the UN) 21 December 1945, *Eleanor Roosevelt Papers*, Vol. 1, 158. Courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.
 - The cartoon: “Eleanor Roosevelt, to her class on human rights...” 1947, from Alois Derso and Emery Kelen, *United Nations Sketchbook: A Cartoon History of the United Nations*.
 - Verbatim Report of the First Meeting of the Commission on Human Rights [excerpt]. 27 January 1947, *Eleanor Roosevelt Papers*, Vol. 1, 489-490.
 - Proposing Ground Rules for Committee Debates on Human Rights – excerpts from Verbatim Record, 4 February 1947, *Eleanor Roosevelt Papers*, Vol. 1, 505-509.
 - Photo: “ER, Dulles, Marshall, and Austin often disagreed...” *Eleanor Roosevelt Papers*, Vol.1, 705. Courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

- “The Russians Are Tough” *Look* 18 February 1947, *Eleanor Roosevelt Papers*, Vol. 1, 511-512 [excerpts].
6. Students report out their findings: what did they notice and what questions do they have about each source? If the class used the circulate-to-stations option, each pair or small group could share out a composite report using the newsprint.
 7. Next, the teacher should use **Teacher Notes** to supplement, correct, and expand on students’ observations. Tell students that, even in this challenging international and national climate, the UDHR was passed in the UN General Assembly on December 10, 1948 with 48 countries voting yes, none opposed, and 8 abstaining – including the Soviet Union, South Africa, and Saudi Arabia. Compare what students now know to what they earlier predicted: how was the actual experience similar? Different?
 8. At this point have students examine the actual UDHR, available online at <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/teaching/documents/udhr.cfm> It might be useful to have students read it on their own first, then read it in class and elaborate aloud, paying attention to the language selected, especially on controversial articles (work, freedom of movement, changing religion, etc.) and explain the importance of having both civil/political and economic/social rights as an integral part of the whole UDHR.
 9. At this point, ask students to consider key events that occurred after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948. Point out that, while the UDHR was non-binding and the legally binding Covenants of Civil and Political Rights, and of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights took years to be ratified (see below) and many countries did not join, the UDHR has had major and far reaching legacy.

Key events after the UDHR was adopted

1950

- European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms is adopted using the UDHR’s provisions on civil and political rights.

1950-1953

- Korean War is fought

1952

- Eleanor Roosevelt resigns as UN delegate after Dwight Eisenhower elected president.

1975

- At Helsinki Accords the Soviet Union and many Eastern European countries sign an agreement which included human rights provisions modeled on the UDHR.

1976

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, created in 1966, is adopted. The US does not ratify it until 1992 and then only with reservations.
- International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights is adopted. The US has still not ratified this.

10. Finally, share with students Eleanor Roosevelt's answer to the question: Where, after all, do universal human rights begin?

“In small places close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or 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 concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.”

Remarks at the UN presenting the pamphlet *In Your Hands: A Guide for Community Action*, (NY: Church Peace Union, 1958).

11. Wrap up/ assessment: select or adapt one of the options below for your students:

- “Between 1946 and 1948 the United Nations' Human Rights Commission under the leadership of Eleanor Roosevelt made essential and lasting progress toward achieving human rights for all.” To what extent is this an accurate statement? Use evidence from this case study in writing your answer.
- Looking back from the vantage point of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), write a feature story focusing on the role of Eleanor Roosevelt in the beginning of the UDHR.

References:

Web sites

The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Project, a chartered research center at The George Washington University, makes Eleanor Roosevelt's written and audio-visual record accessible to scholars, teachers, students, and policy makers around the world and to those actively engaged in defining human rights in their own time.

<http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/>

Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum

<http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu>

Books

Black, Allida, Editor, The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, Volume 1: The Human Rights Years, 1945-1948, (Detroit: Scribner's, 2007).

Glendon, Mary Ann, A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, (New York: Random House, 2001).

Roosevelt, Eleanor, The Autobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961).

Primary Sources for Students

Eleanor Roosevelt Accepts Appointment to the United Nations, excerpt from ER's *Autobiography*, 299.

December, 1945: When President Truman called to ask Eleanor Roosevelt if she would be a delegate to the UN:

“Oh, no! It would be impossible!” was my first reaction. How could I be a delegate to help organize the United Nations when I have no background or experience in international meetings?”

Miss Thompson urged me not to decline without giving the idea careful thought. I knew in a general way what had been done about organizing the United Nations. After the San Francisco meeting in 1945, when the Charter was written, it had been accepted by the various nations, including our own, through their constitutional procedures. I knew, too, that we had a group of people... working with representatives of other member nations in London to prepare for the formal organizing meeting. I believed the United Nations to be the one hope for a peaceful world. I knew that my husband had placed great importance on the establishment of this organization.

At last I accepted in fear and trembling. But I might not have done so if I had known at the time that President Truman could only nominate me as a delegate and that the nomination would have to be approved by the United States Senate, where certain senators would disapprove of me because of my attitude toward social problems and more especially youth problems.

Truman letter to ER (officially appointing her to the UN), 21 December 1945, *Eleanor Roosevelt Papers*, Vol. 1, 158. Courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

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. A complete list of this Government's Delegation is enclosed herewith.

The United States representation at the first meeting of the General Assembly will be headed by the Secretary of State as Senior Representative or in his absence by The Honorable Edward R. Stettinius, Jr.

In so far as the General Assembly will deal with matters covered by the report of the Preparatory Commission, the representatives of the United States will be expected to support the recommendations made therein unless the position of the United States on a particular recommendation is reserved, in which case the representatives will be guided by my special instructions. I am, however, authorizing the Senior Representative, after consultation with the other representatives, to agree to modifications of the Preparatory Commission's recommendations which in his opinion may be wise and necessary.

In so far as matters may arise which are not covered by the report of the Preparatory Commission,

I

Mrs. Anna Eleanor Roosevelt,
342 Madison Avenue,
New York 17, New York.

I shall transmit through the Senior Representative any further instructions as to the position which should be taken by the representatives of the United States.

I have instructed the Senior Representative to act as the principal spokesman for the United States in the General Assembly.

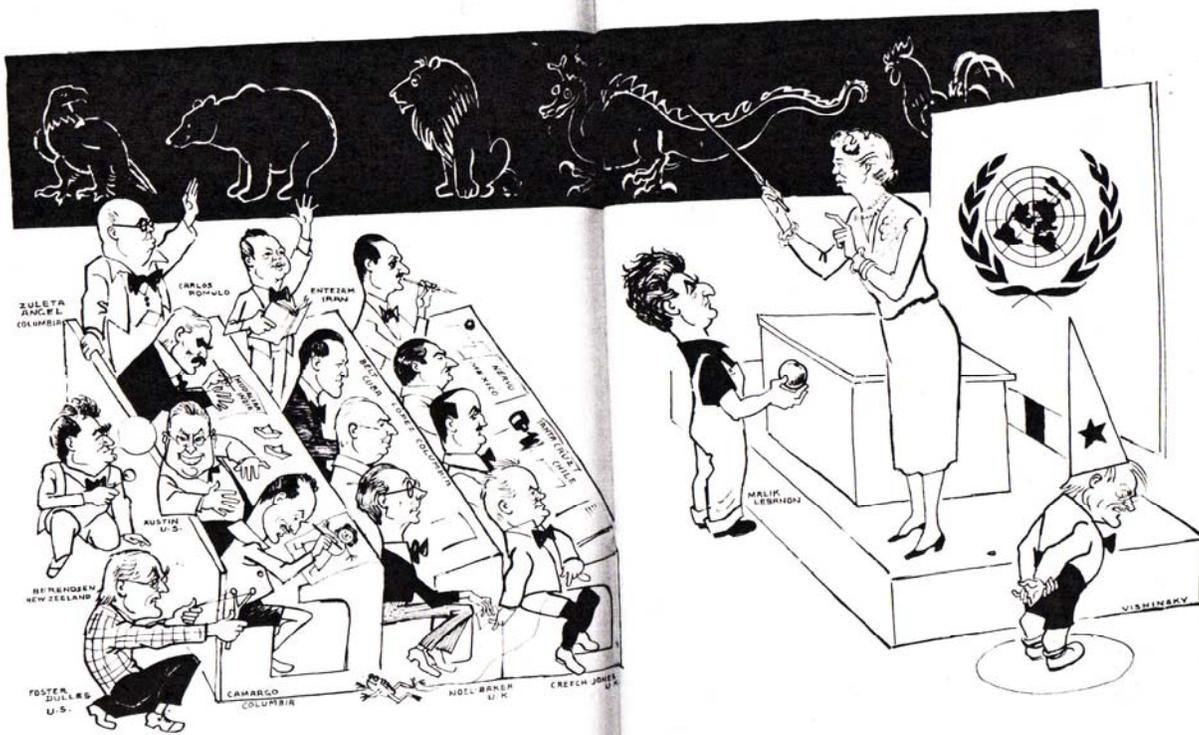
You, as a representative of the United States, will bear the grave responsibility of demonstrating the wholehearted support which this Government is pledged to give to the United Nations organization, to the end that the organization can become the means of preserving the international peace and of creating 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,

Enclosure:

List of U. S. Delegation

The cartoon: "Eleanor Roosevelt, to her class on human rights..." 1947, Derso and Kelen, *United Nations Sketchbook: A Cartoon History of the United Nations*.



Mrs. Roosevelt, to her class on Human Rights. "Now, children, all together: 'The rights of individual are above the rights of the state.'"

Verbatim Report of the First Meeting of the Commission on Human Rights
[excerpt]. 27 January 1947 *Eleanor Roosevelt Papers*, Vol. 1, 489-490.

Acting Chairman: Henri Laugier

Secretary: John Humphrey

Rapporteur: Charles Malik

(At this point in the proceeding Mrs. Roosevelt accepted the gavel from Mr. Laugier, and took the Chairman's seat.)

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Laugier, I want first of all to thank you very much for coming here this morning, because I know how difficult it was. In addition, I want to say what I know every Member of the Commission who listened to your speech this morning felt, that you had given us a very high standard, one that we will find, I hope, the ability and the courage among us, to live up to.

I think now I must thank the Members of the Commission for having elected me their Chairman. I am deeply conscious of the fact that I am not a very good Chairman. I know no parliamentary procedure, and I will have to proceed as I did in the Nuclear Commission, asking advice when the questions are difficult, and doing the best I can with what common sense I have ordinarily. It is very kind of you to trust me and I will do my best.

I would like to add that I feel very keenly the importance of this Commission. I think appeals have come to me from people and from groups of people that had to do with human rights, not in as great numbers as have come, perhaps, to the Commission, to the Secretary-General, but they have come to me in considerable numbers. I am conscious of that fact that human rights mean something to the people of the world, which is hope for a better opportunity for people in general to enjoy justice and freedom of opportunity.

We in this Commission know that many things will come up. We do not know at all, really, how we can enforce the things we may want to do. That is one of the things that has troubled me from the beginning. We have a mandate to write a Bill of Human Rights, and we really have not as yet any way to enforce our suggestions or our decisions. We have much to do, to first of all accomplish the things which have been laid down for us, and to think out the problems as they arise. I have a feeling that this Commission is so constituted that it will meet the problems and the work which lies before it, and do it adequately.

I ask your cooperation, and I will try to be not only an impartial Chairman, but perhaps at times a harsh driver. For if we are to do the work which lies before us, we will have to stick to the subjects we are discussing, and we will have to do it briefly and as consistently as possible, and we will have to do a great deal of work outside, as well as around this table.

I am not only asking your cooperation, but your forgiveness, if, at times, you think I am a harsh task master. And with that, I hope that we may now proceed to our work.

Proposing Ground Rules for Committee Debates on Human Rights and excerpts from Verbatim Record, 4 February 1947.

CHAIRMAN, Eleanor Roosevelt: "I would ask you to cooperate with me to this extent; to make an earnest effort, if your consciences will permit, to allow discussion to be handled in the manner which I ... suggest.

To sum up, my proposal is that we discuss first what rights should or should not be included; second, methods of implementation; third, form of the Bill. If this is not satisfactory, I propose that debate on our method of procedure be limited to speeches of not more than two minutes each.

MR. MALIK (Lebanon): What interests me most concerning this question of the Bill of Rights is the whole problem of personal liberty. Now, we are wont usually to use such phrases as personal liberty and freedom of speech and opinion, freedom of information and of the press, and freedom of religious worship, etc.... I think, many a time glibly, without full appreciation of the infinite importance of what these phrases really mean. I say this because, I think, if we fail in the formulation of our International Bill of rights, it is not going to be on the grounds of failing to state explicitly the rights of the individual for food and housing and work and migration, (etc.)... but rather on the grounds of our failing to allow sufficiently for this all-fundamental problem of personal liberty. ...

If I understand the present age correctly, this is our problem; the struggle between the human person and his own personality and freedom on the one hand, and the endless pressure of groups on the other, including, of course, his own nation.

For one must belong to a group today. He must have his identification papers. He must have social loyalties. He must belong to some association.

The claims of groups today (and particularly of states) ... are becoming increasingly dominant. These claims have a tendency to dictate to the person what he ought to think, what he ought to do, what even he ought to believe and hope for... The state does it by means of its laws, by psychological pressure, by economic pressure, by every possible means of propaganda and social pressure.

In my opinion, (this is the) deepest danger of the age, namely the extinction of the human person as such... and the disappearance of real freedom of choice.... [Malik then proposes four propositions to be recognized by the Commission.]

First, the human person... is inherently prior to any group to which he may belong... [by prior he means more important.]

Secondly, therefore, his mind and conscience are the most sacred and inviolable things about him, not his belonging to this or that class..., nation ... or religion.

[Thirdly], any social pressure coming from whatever direction which determines his consent automatically is wrong.

And in the fourth place, the group to which he belongs, whatever it be, be it his state, or his nation, or anything, the group can be wrong, just as the individual can be wrong. In either case, it is only the individual person in his own mind and conscience who is the competent judge of the rightness or wrongness involved.

MR. TEPLIAKOV (USSR): Madam Chairman, in connection with the remarks just made, may I say that I have to make a short observation in regard to the four principles presented. ... I oppose the adoption of such principles for the Bill of Human Rights...

First of all, these principles are wrong from the point of view that we are living as individuals in a community and a society, and we are working for the community and the society. The community has provided the material substance for our existence, first of all. ...

As far as freedom of expression is concerned, it is quite all right, and we (in the Soviet Union) have it in (our) Constitution. ... But what does our Lebanon colleague mean when he says the social suppression or oppression... on an individual? I really do not understand that. ...

I am against such instructions to the Commission and to the group who undertakes this task of formulating the first draft of the Bill of Human Rights. ...

CHAIRMAN: I think perhaps I would like to say a word about what was said by the representative from Lebanon. It seems to me that in much that is before us, the rights of the individual are extremely important. It is not exactly that you set the individual apart from his society, but you recognize that within any society the individual must have rights that are guarded. And while we may, many of us, differ on exact interpretations, I think that is something, in writing a bill of human rights, that you have to think of rather carefully.

Many of us believe that an organized society in the form of a government, exists for the good of the individual; others believe that an organized society in the form of a government, exists for the benefit of a group. We may not have to decide that particular point, but I think we do have to make sure, in writing a bill of human rights, that we safeguard the fundamental freedoms of the individual. If you do not do that, in the long run, it seems to me, that you run the risk of having certain conditions which we have just tried to prevent at great cost in human life, paramount in various groups. So I do think that what the representative from Lebanon said should be very carefully taken into consideration when the drafting committee meets, as well, of course, as every other thing that has been said around this table...

Photo: “ER, Dulles, Marshall, and Austin often disagreed...” *Eleanor Roosevelt Papers*, Vol. 1, 705. Courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.



“The Russians Are Tough” *Look* 18 February 1947, *Eleanor Roosevelt Papers*, Vol. 1, 511-512 [excerpts].

I was leaving in the early morning by Army plane for Berlin. The argument on displaced persons had dragged itself out until a very late hour. When the vote was finally taken and adjournment was finally announced, I made my way over to my opponent, Mr. Vishinsky, the delegate from the U.S.S.R. I did not want to leave with bad feeling between us. I said, “I hope the day will come, sir, when you and I are on the same side of a dispute, for I admire your fighting qualities.” His answer shot back: “And I, yours.”

That was February, 1946. When I saw Mr. Vishinsky again, it was October, 1946. He came to join his delegation at the second session of the United Nations General Assembly in Flushing, New York. I realized that we might again have some acrimonious discussions. But I had no personal bitterness. I have never had any personal bitterness against any of the people in any of the Eastern European group. I have had, nevertheless, to argue at some length with them because we could not agree on fundamental problems.

I have found that it takes patience and equal firmness and equal conviction to work with the Russians. One must be alert since if they cannot win success for their point of view in one way, they are still going to try to win in any other way that seems to them possible.

For example, the Eastern European group has but one interest in the International Refugee Organization set up to deal with displaced persons in Europe: the repatriation of as many of their nationals as possible. We, on the other hand, while agreeing that repatriation is desirable, feel there will be people who do not wish to return to their home countries. And our belief in the fundamental right of human beings to decide what they want to do must impel us to try to prevent any use of force against displaced persons. We must find the opportunity, if we possibly can, for people to carry out new plans for resettlement somewhere in the world.

I have worked over this and similar questions with the Russians at two meetings of the General Assembly of the United Nations. They are a disciplined group. They take orders and they carry them out. When they have no orders they delay—and they are masterful in finding reasons for delay. They are resourceful and I think they really have an oriental streak—which one finds in many people—which comes to the fore in their enjoyment of bargaining day after day.

When they find themselves outside their own country in international meetings or even in individual relationships, they realize they have been cut off from other nations. They are not familiar with the customs and the thinking of other peoples. This makes them somewhat insecure and, I think, leads them at times to take an exaggerated, self-assertive stand which other people may think somewhat rude. I think it is only an attempt to make the rest of the world see that they are proud of their own ways of doing things.

I always remember that my husband, after one effort to make me useful since I knew a little Italian, relegated me to sight-seeing while he did the buying in old book shops in Italy. He said I had no gift for bargaining! Perhaps that is one of my weaknesses. I am impatient when, once I think the intention of a thing is clear, the details take a long time to work out. Gradually, however, I am coming to realize that the details of words and expressions are important in public documents.

I admire the Russians' tenacity, though it is slightly annoying to start at the very beginning each time you meet and cover the same ground all over again. I have come to accept this as inevitable. It means one hasn't convinced one's opponent that the argument presented was valid. It is perhaps only fair, therefore, that they should go on until they either decide it is useless to continue or one is able to convince them that the opposing stand has truth in it. ...

There are many factors which make working with representatives of the U.S.S.R. difficult. Their background and their recent experiences force upon them fears which we do not understand. They are enormously proud to be Russians and are also proud of the advance of their country over the past 25 years.

They also labor under one great disadvantage. Communism started out as a world revolution and undoubtedly supported groups in the other nations of the world which were trying to instill communist beliefs. Leaders of communism today in Russia may or may not believe the whole world should hold the same political and economic ideas. They do realize that for the time being, they have all that they can well do in their own areas. Though they wish to influence the governments of neighboring states to insure safety from aggression, they no longer think it possible to convert the world to communism at present. ...

Words alone will never convince the Soviet leaders that democracy is not only as strong, but stronger than communism. I believe, however, that if we maintain as firm an attitude on our convictions as the Russians maintain on theirs, and can prove that democracy can serve the best interests of the people as a whole, we will be giving an effective demonstration to every Soviet representative coming to this country.

We know that democracy in our own country is not perfect. The Russians know that while communism has given them much more than they had under the Czar, it's not perfect. ...

It is true, I believe, that official representative of the U.S.S.R. know that they cannot commit their country without agreement with the Kremlin on some special program of action. It makes them extremely careful in private conversation. We who feel we can express our opinions on every subject find a Soviet representative unsatisfactory on a personal basis. This might not be the case if we met just plain, unofficial Russians who felt they had no responsibility and could converse freely on any subject with a plain American citizen!

We undoubtedly consider the individual more important than the Russians do. Individual liberty seems to us one of the essentials of life in peacetime. We must bear this in mind when we work with the Russians; we cannot accept their proposals without careful scrutiny. We know the fundamental differences which exist between us. But I am hoping that as time goes on, the differences will be less important, that we will find more points of agreement and so think less about our points of disagreement. ...

Teacher Notes

	Notice	Question	Context
ER accepts appointment to UN December 1945	Tone is personal & conversational. Surprising that ER thought she wasn't qualified. She was afraid to accept this appointment but did so because she was very committed to the UN as the means to peace.	Who was Miss Thompson? Tommy Thompson worked beside ER for 40 years as her personal secretary, gatekeeper, editor, confidante, and traveling companion. Who were the senators who would disapprove of ER and why? Group of southern senators who disapproved of her work on behalf of African Americans and young people.	Describes ER's thinking in 1945 but she wrote it in 1961, thus with a later perspective. This assignment was one of ER's first & most important post-FDR roles. It gave her an opportunity to shape the post WWII world.
Truman letter to ER, 21 December 1945	Tone is official and for public record. Appointment is for the 1 st part of the 1 st session of the UN. Sets out her official tasks: she will be an official rep of the US & take orders from the State Dept & the Pres. UN is seen as means of preserving international peace and ER's role is to wholeheartedly support this.	Who else was part of the delegation? There were 4 other reps and 6 alternates, intentionally bipartisan: Sec. of State Byrnes and former Sec. of State Stettinius, Connally (D-Tex), Vandenberg (R-MI), and alts included John Foster Dulles.	Truman chose ER because he needed the support of liberals like her on his political team. With the failed League of Nations, Wilson made the mistake of only asking Democrats, so FDR and later Truman were careful to ask both Democrats and Republicans to join the effort.
The cartoon: "Eleanor Roosevelt, to her class on human rights..." 1947	Tone is satirical. Caption: Mrs. R to her class on Human Rights, "now children...the rights of the individual are above the rights of the state." ER is caricatured as schoolmarm. UN	What's the meaning of the caption? Which countries were likely to agree/disagree with this view? Why was ER caricatured as schoolmarm? Who were these people – specifically: Malik, Vishinsky, Dulles?	Cartoonists Derso & Kelen observed diplomats from 1920s-1940s & viewed them critically, believed they were seeing only masks. Malik of Lebanon had key roles in HR commission (kept minutes,

	<p>delegates seen mostly as misbehaving boys (dunce, slingshot, frog, note-passing) except Malik. Cartoonists did not think much of the diplomats they observed.</p>	<p>How does this cartoon compare to the actual record of the way ER ran these meetings and behaved with her contentious fellow delegates? See other documents.</p>	<p>expressed seminal POV of Arab and Christian world, later acted as chair), Vishinsky (one of several Soviet delegates, argued often for rights of the state).</p>
<p>Verbatim Report of the First Meeting of the Commission on Human Rights [excerpt]. 27 January 1947</p>	<p>Official document. As newly elected chair ER sets a pragmatic courteous tone for their work. They have a mandate to create a bill of rights but no enforcement. To accomplish the goal she will try to be impartial and maybe a “harsh driver.”</p>	<p>How did ER get to be chairman?</p> <p>What are the “appeals” mentioned that have come from people and groups of people? There were many complaints, often involving people displaced during WWII, but this commission was not a court and had no powers to investigate claims.</p>	<p>ER served on the Nuclear Commission that set up the HRC, where others so respected her work that she was unanimously voted chair of the full HRC.</p>
<p>Proposing Ground Rules for Committee Debates on Human Rights, 4 February 1947</p>	<p>Official document. ER sets up a process so that 18 members can discuss whether each right listed in the drafts should be included in their bill of rights. Noting that there will be disagreement, she limits each speaker to 2 minutes.</p> <p>Clear disagreement emerges: Malik (Lebanon) personal liberty is most important, he fears that pressures of the community on the individual could lead</p>	<p>What are the drafts referred to? A comprehensive list of all possible rights was drawn up by John Humphrey who consulted existing and historical rights documents.</p> <p>Who were Malik and Tepliakov? (See Notice)</p>	<p>This key disagreement permeated the debates of the HRC, and was often expressed as civil and political rights (freedom of expression, etc.) vs. economic and social rights (rights to food, housing, etc.). The US and Western Europe often spoke for the first group, while the USSR and Eastern Europe spoke for the second group.</p>

	<p>to extinction of the individual – so need to protect individuals. Tepliakov (USSR) sees the individual in community, society, so need to protect the group.</p> <p>ER recognized both views: those who “believe that an organized society in the form of a government, exists for the good of the individual,” and those who believe the government exists for the benefit of the group.</p>		
<p>Photo: “ER, Dulles, Marshall, and Austin often disagreed...”</p> <p>1948</p>	<p>The three men are leaning in and listening to ER at a UN meeting.</p> <p>She appears to be the only woman in this photo. All those in the photo appear to be white men.</p> <p>There are headphones on the table (used for simultaneous translation).</p>	<p>Who were these three men? John Foster Dulles, a Republican foreign policy expert, had opposed Truman’s choice of ER but later told her he found her “good to work with ... and would be happy to do so again.”</p> <p>George Marshall was Army chief of staff during WWII and later Truman’s Sec. of State who helped create the Marshall Plan.</p> <p>Warren Austin, a Republican senator from Vermont, served as chief delegate to the UN under Truman.</p>	<p>ER consulted frequently with representatives of the State Department though they did not always agree. In particular she sought their advice on whether to present a declaration of human rights separate from a covenant (enforceable by law). Dulles argued for presenting these separately, noting that agreement on a covenant would be much harder than on a declaration.</p>

<p>“The Russians Are Tough” <i>Look</i> 18 February 1947</p>	<p>Writing for a general American audience ER here assesses the character and strength of her opponents, seeks to understand what motivates them, and expresses hope that it will eventually be possible to work more constructively together. She notes that they take orders & carry them out, are disciplined and insecure, like to bargain, and are not monolithic (all the same). ER: “We undoubtedly consider the individual more important than the Russians do.”</p>	<p>Who were the displaced persons or refugees? (see Context)</p> <p>Which countries did ER include as the Eastern European group? The Soviet Union, Poland, Byelorussia, Ukraine, and Yugoslavia.</p>	<p>WWII had just ended in 1945 and as a result of this war thousands of people found themselves in refugee or Displaced Persons camps. Some wanted to return to their original countries while others did not. An early Cold War dispute arose about what to do with these people. ER visited several of these camps in Germany and was very concerned about conditions there and the future of these people. The Russians and Eastern Europeans wanted their nationals in the camps to be returned, while the American and Western Europeans supported the right of the people to decide for themselves and opposed the use of force to make them return to their homelands.</p>
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