ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

Eleanor Roosevelt was an important person in the United States and in the world. She worked to make things better for other people. During her life, she worked very hard to help women, African Americans, and poor people. She also helped write the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Eleanor was born in New York City in 1884. When she was a young girl, both of her parents died. It was a hard time for Eleanor. She lived with her grandmother and then went to a school in England. Even though there were many sad days, she studied hard.

In 1902, Eleanor Roosevelt returned to New York. She did what a young woman from a rich family was expected to do. She went to parties and attended teas. But Eleanor also taught classes for immigrants. She tried to find ways to help people working under bad conditions. She visited garment factories and the homes of poor people.

Around this time, one of Eleanor’s distant cousins, Franklin Roosevelt, graduated from college. He wanted to go into politics. Eleanor told him about the poor people she met. They discussed how to make things better. In 1906, Franklin and Eleanor got married. Soon Eleanor was very busy as a mother. Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt had six children over the next eleven years.

Franklin was elected to be a state senator. Later he worked as Assistant Secretary of the Navy. Eleanor took care of her family. She also volunteered at a hospital and helped the International Congress of Working Women.

In 1921, Franklin got sick. He had a disease called polio. He slowly recovered but had trouble walking. Even though he was physically weak, his mind was as strong as ever. Eleanor helped her husband with his decision that he would continue in his political career. She helped him with his work. At the same time, Eleanor also opened a school for girls. She taught history and government. Her days were long: caring for her family, helping Franklin, and teaching.
ELEANOR ROOSEVELT, continued

After Franklin Roosevelt was elected President of the United States in 1932, Franklin and his family moved into the White House. Eleanor stopped teaching, but she did other things. As First Lady, she began traveling. Franklin could not travel because of his health. Eleanor went places and met many people, and she told Franklin about the people that she met. Eleanor also began writing a daily column for newspapers. Six days every week she wrote a 500-word column called “My Day” about her life and ideas.

Franklin was re-elected President. The country had many problems during these years. There was the Great Depression. Later the US entered World War II. Many people liked Franklin Roosevelt as the country’s leader. They also liked Eleanor. She visited U.S. soldiers in the South Pacific. She worked with African Americans in the Civil Rights movement. Franklin and Eleanor wanted to make the country better.

Franklin died in 1945. Eleanor thought that her life would become slower. Instead, she was asked to work for the United Nations. She was in charge of the United Nations Human Rights Commission. Eleanor worked with people from many countries. They wrote the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The declaration stated that all people should have certain rights. These rights included liberty, education, and safety.

After the declaration was finished, Eleanor kept working to help people. She talked with leaders in other countries. She gave support to minorities in her own country. People all over the world knew about Eleanor. Many countries made stamps to honor her. When Eleanor died in 1962, the world mourned. She was a great woman.
ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ABOUT ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

1. Eleanor Roosevelt went to a boarding school in
   a. Washington, D.C.
   b. England
   c. South Pacific
   d. Boston

2. She worked as
   a. a teacher
   b. a volunteer
   c. a newspaper writer
   d. all of these

3. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights includes
   a. the right to education
   b. the right to pay taxes
   c. the right to bear arms
   d. the right to own property

4. The Civil Rights movement supported
   a. women’s right to vote
   b. the right to civil disobedience
   c. equality for African Americans
   d. the right to be civil

5. Franklin Roosevelt was president of the United States from
   a. 1935 – 1943
   b. 1921 – 1945
   c. 1932 – 1936
   d. 1932 – 1945

Eleanor Roosevelt worked for the rights of others. She supported her husband in his work. She raised a family. She worked for the United Nations. What do you think is the most important thing she did in her life? Why do you think so?

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Eleanor Roosevelt once said, “Friendship with oneself is all-important, because without it one cannot be friends with anyone else in the world.”

What does it mean to be a friend with yourself? Do you think that you are as a good a friend to yourself as you are to other people? Write a 500-word column (like Eleanor’s “My Day” column) about this topic.

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FINDING FACTS

Franklin Roosevelt had *poliomyelitis*. People often call this disease *polio*. Polio is a virus that attacks nerve cells. Can you find more information about this disease? Do people still get polio in the world today?

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There is no cure for polio, but in 1954 Jonas Salk discovered a vaccine that prevents people from getting the disease. How does a vaccine work? What skills does a person like Jonas Salk need to discover a vaccine?

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EXPLORING PLACES

Eleanor Roosevelt traveled many places in her life. She was born in New York. When she was young, she went to school in England. Later she lived in Washington, D.C. As First Lady she traveled to Europe, Australia, and Hawaii. Find these places on the map below and mark them. How are these places different from where you live? How might they be the same?
MEETING PEOPLE

Eleanor Roosevelt knew many famous people during her life. Among the famous people she met were John F. Kennedy, Nikita Khrushchev, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Winston Churchill. Choose one of these people and write a very brief biography of him. Then use your imagination skills and what you learned and write a paragraph expressing what you imagine they talked about with Eleanor Roosevelt.
Answers to multiple choice questions about ELEANOR ROOSEVELT:

1.  b
2.  d
3.  a
4.  c
5.  d

All other answers will vary.