

American Values – U.S. History World War II – Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms

Abstract: Students should have already covered the beginning of World War II and the U.S. position before entering the war. This lesson can be given before the bombing of Pearl Harbor and in relation to U.S. foreign policy and domestic sentiment towards the war. Or, when learning about the U.S. home front and the War’s impact on American values.

Overall Objective: Students examine the FDR era with particular focus on the impact of the Depression and World War II leading the country to redefine and characterize American values.

CA Standard Objective 11.7.4: Analyze Roosevelt’s foreign policy during World War II (e.g., Four Freedoms speech).

Guiding Questions:

Lesson A:

1. What are American values? Historically? Currently?
2. What are American values? Economically? Socially? Politically?
3. Are there American values we have done away with and others we have adopted later in our history?
4. How has the United States defined “American Social Norms” in a country that is politically so young with such a diversified population?
5. How did the Great Depression impact American values?
6. What about World War II changed American values?

Lesson B:

7. What does freedom mean in America? Historically? Currently?
8. What does Roosevelt distinguish as our “four essential freedoms”?
9. Why does Roosevelt include “everywhere in the world” after describing these freedoms to an American audience?
10. What does Roosevelt mean when he says, “Our strength is our unity of purpose. To that high concept there can be no end save victory.”
11. How does Norman Rockwell’s “Four Freedoms” illustrate Roosevelt’s speech?
12. Is Norman Rockwell’s artistic interpretation of the “four freedoms” reflective of American values? In what ways?
13. What is the difference between freedom *to* and freedom *from*? Why is this important?
14. Did WWII propaganda shape American values or was it reflective of them?
15. What difference did a War time economy have on our values?

Lesson A: Background Knowledge

Students revisit their prior knowledge of American history by focusing on the Lesson A Guiding Questions above.

Procedure: 55 min.

1. In groups of four, students answer the first three Guiding questions only referencing each other's background knowledge, personal experiences, and learning of American History.
2. Still in groups, students organize their answers on butcher paper to be presented to class. Chart should include visual representations of their "American Values" and be categorized as is with the questions.
3. Student groups are given 5 min. to present their values, students in audience must write down any values their groups did not have on a separate sheet of paper.
4. After presentations, students are asked to evaluate values they did not have and discuss whether they would now include any to their list and why or why not.
5. Students are popcorned for group's decision to include or not include any new values.
6. Students are shown the fourth Guiding question and asked to individually answer in a paragraph response.
7. 10 min. class discussion with volunteers for answer.
8. H.W. Students are asked to answer Guiding Questions 5 and 6.

Lesson B: Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms"

Students analyze Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms" speech in relation to foreign policy and Norman Rockwell's artistic interpretation of the "four essential freedoms" in relation to American values, WWII propaganda and a War economy.

Procedure: 1 hr 45 min.

1. 7 min. Students are popcorned for answers to Guiding questions 5 and 6. A list is formulated on the board.
2. 5 min. Students listen to and watch Roosevelt's speech "see Youtube attachment"
3. 10 min. Students are put into different groups of four and asked to answer Guiding questions 7-10.
4. 20 min. Groups are then asked to examine which of the four freedoms is most important and compose 5 reasons to defend their position and why the other 3 are not as important, citing 3 reasons for each freedom they did not choose.
5. 15 min. Students present their cases.
6. 5 min. The class then is polled and a majority vote determines the most important freedom.
7. 20 min. Students are then shown Norman Rockwell's "Four Freedoms" and given background knowledge regarding the series, students take notes on this. See "Powers of Persuasion and "Picturing America"
8. 15 min. Students are asked to answer Guiding Questions 11-13.

9. 30 min. Students in groups are asked to develop their artistic interpretation of their most important freedom and present to class on butcher paper and explain illustration.
10. H.W. Students are asked to answer Guiding Questions 14-15
11. Extra: Students listen to Barak Obama's inaugural speech and asked how it reflects American values. See attached Youtube.

Resources:

The "Four Freedoms" Franklin D. Roosevelt's Address to Congress January 6, 1941

Chapter 36 Text: <http://www.wwnorton.com/college/history/ralph/workbook/ralprs36b.htm>

The Four Freedoms - Franklin D. Roosevelt: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5iHKtrirjIY>

Powers of Persuasion: American WWII Propaganda Comparison:

http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/powers_of_persuasion/four_freedoms/four_freedoms.html

Norman Rockwell , "Freedom of Speech, The Saturday Evening Post, 1943" <http://picturingamerica.neh.gov/>

President Barack Obama 2009 Inauguration and Address: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjnygQ02aW4>