

DEFINING FREEDOM

FDR's Four Freedoms Speech Analysis

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Take some time to consider the questions below and then discuss them in small groups.

1. What is freedom? Define in your own words.
2. What are some specific American freedoms that are important to you and your life?

On January 6, 1941 President Roosevelt gave his State of the Union speech. In this speech he defined four "essential human freedoms." We will read the speech below in a moment but before we do let us think about its historical context. **When this speech was delivered what was America's involvement/stance in the war up to this point?**

FOUR FREEDOM SPEECH

The American people have unalterably set their faces against that tyranny.

Every realist knows that the democratic way of life is at this moment being' directly assailed in every part of the world--assailed either by arms, or by secret spreading of poisonous propoganda by those who seek to destroy unity and promote discord in nations that are still at peace. ...

Let us say to the democracies: "We Americans are vitally concerned in your defense of freedom. We are putting forth our energies, our resources and our organizing powers to give you the strength to regain and maintain a free world. We shall send you, in ever-increasing numbers, ships, planes, tanks, guns. This is our purpose and our pledge." ...

In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms. The first is freedom of speech and expression--everywhere in the world.

The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way--everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want--which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants--everywhere in the world.

The fourth is freedom from fear--which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor--anywhere in the world.

That is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation. That kind of world is the very antithesis of the so-called new order of tyranny which the dictators seek to create with the crash of a bomb... Since the beginning of our American history, we have been engaged in change -- in a perpetual peaceful revolution -- a revolution which goes on steadily, quietly adjusting itself to changing conditions--without the concentration camp or the quick-lime in the ditch. The world order which we seek is the cooperation of free countries, working together in a friendly, civilized society.

This nation has placed its destiny in the hands and heads and hearts of its millions of free men and women; and its faith in freedom under the guidance of God. Freedom means the supremacy of human rights everywhere. Our support goes to those who struggle to gain those rights or keep them. Our strength is our unity of purpose. To that high concept there can be no end save victory.



1941 State of the Union Address
Scan the QR Code to hear an excerpt of the speech

What are the Four Freedoms?

Do you think that Roosevelt believed that these "FOUR FREEDOMS" existed in the US in 1941? Give an example from the text to support your answer.

How did FDR's attitude towards neutrality change, and how does the "FOUR FREEDOMS" speech explain that change? Give an example from the text to support your answer.

Whom is FDR trying to persuade and why?

What might his opponents have listed as the four most essential freedoms?

What comparisons can be drawn from the 4 freedoms speech and the 1st Amendment in our constitution?



Norman Rockwell & the Four Freedoms

Directions: Read Norman Rockwell's biography and answer the questions below.

What famous Magazine is Rockwell associated with?

Were government officials pleased when he offered to illustrate Roosevelt's Four Freedoms speech?

How did Rockwell's 4 Freedoms paintings help with American efforts in the War II?

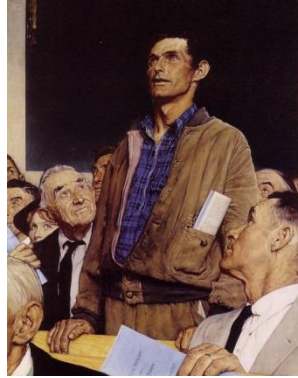
How much money was raised from the sale of war bonds?



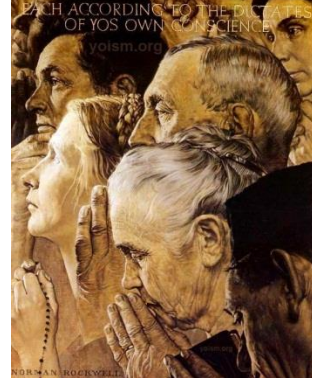
Freedom from



Freedom from



Freedom of



Freedom of

QUESTIONS

1. Who is in all of these paintings?

2. Where are these paintings happening?

3. How do these paintings make you feel?

4. Do you think people liked these paintings? Why or why not?

INFERING

Look at the reproduction of the painting, *Freedom of Speech*. Where do you think the man in the painting is speaking? What are the other people in the painting doing? How is the man who is speaking dressed? How are others dressed? Why does that matter?

COMPARING

The etching on the left is Ralph Fabri's, 1943 interpretation of FDR's 4 Freedom Speech. Analyze the etching and answer the questions below.

Is it inspiring or unpleasant? Explain

Which artwork is easiest to understand? Fabri's or Rockwell's? Why?

Which artist is more effective in communicating the ideals of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Four Freedoms speech? Explain using specific examples from their works

Norman Rockwell, a Biography



By 1943, the paintings of Norman Rockwell were recognized and loved by almost everyone in the United States. Americans had seen Rockwell's art on the cover of the *Saturday Evening Post*, a weekly magazine read by millions. Norman Rockwell was born on February 3, 1894 in New York City and studied at the New York School of Art. He enlisted in the Army at the beginning of World War I and served as a military artist.

In 1916, at age 22, he painted his first cover for the *Saturday Evening Post*. Over the next 47 years he painted 321 covers as well as illustrations for many other national magazines.

When World War II broke out Rockwell wanted to help his country, but he was too old to fight. Norman and his friend and illustrator Mead Schaeffer talked about how to help. When he heard the president wanted the four Freedoms illustrated, he knew he had found a way to help. The two men went to Washington D. C. with rough sketches of their ideas and spent the day offering their services free to the government. Robert Patterson, Undersecretary of War, was the first person to reject them. All day they went from office to office ending up at the Office of War Information. An official there told them that "real artists would be doing posters not illustrators." On the return trip they stopped in Philadelphia to see the editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*. Ben Hibbs loved the idea and told Rockwell "Norman, you've got to do them for us."

It took Rockwell seven months to complete the four paintings, during which time he lost 15 pounds. He repainted *Freedom to Worship* three times before he was happy with it. *Freedom from Fear* and *Freedom of Speech* were painted two times. Rockwell described the creation of the paintings as "serious work which sucked the energy right out of me, leaving me dazed and weary." The **Four Freedoms** paintings appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* in June of 1943. Each week a different freedom was on the cover. Each painting was accompanied by an article about that freedom by a famous American writer.

The American people loved the paintings. Norman Rockwell immediately received more than 70,000 letters of encouragement. A set of small reproductions was given to every person who bought a war bond. President Roosevelt sent a larger set of reproductions and his speech to Congress, leaders in the United Nations, and heads of state around the world. Norman Rockwell not only helped communicate Roosevelt's Four Freedoms, but the paintings were used to raise money to help pay for the war. World War II was largely paid for by selling war bonds. In 1943-44, \$133 million was raised through the sale of war bonds during a 14-city tour. The materials displayed during that campaign included Rockwell's original paintings.

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