



NOTES FOR TEACHERS



THEODORE ROOSEVELT

THE BULLY PULPIT THE BIG STICK THE SQUARE DEAL
THE STRENUOUS LIFE THE PANAMA CANAL
THE ROUGH RIDER THE TEDDY BEAR

The 26th President of the United States was an Example for all Americans. He was a politician and an author, a soldier and a conservationist, an athlete and a philosopher, an adventurer, Nobel Prize winner, scholar, teacher, visionary and father:

His love for his family was legendary. His firm yet loving discipline was as famous as his games of hide-and-seek and treasure hunts and pillow fights in the White House. He was the nation's first and foremost exponent of family values more than three quarters of a century before the term "family values" was even thought of.

He set an example for Americans in a hundred ways. From his own struggle with childhood illness and weakness, to his firmness and force in dealing with foreign empires while in the White House. From his own high moral standard to his insistence that the nation behave fairly and honorably as well.

He was truly an American for all seasons, and it is astonishing how his vision for America, formed more than a hundred years ago, is still ahead of its time today.





There's a lot more to Theodore Roosevelt than the teddy bear, but the teddy bear is a great place to start. The teddy bear was named after the 26th president of the United States because he refused to shoot a bear that had been chained up.

TR was the youngest president we have ever had, and the most popular. He was a great outdoorsman and a big-game hunter. He knew all about lions and elephants and grizzly bears. But he also knew all about little birds, and about flying squirrels, and about history, and about science.

He was a cowboy and a deputy sheriff and a soldier and an explorer. He was an author. He wrote 36 books, and he loved to read books. He liked to carry books around in his pockets so he could read whenever he had a few minutes free. He read a book every day, and sometimes two, even though he was almost blind without his glasses.

TR had six children and they all lived with him and Mrs. Roosevelt in the White House.

They all loved animals.

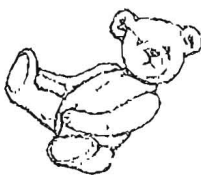
Archie had a badger named Josiah; Kermit

had a pony called Algonquin; and Alice had a snake named Emily Spinach.



TR believed that every American deserved a Square Deal, he believed in taking care of yourself and taking care of the world around you, he believed in ghost stories and hard work and having fun.

“When you play – play hard. When you work – don’t play at all!”



BEFORE THE PROGRAM

The TR! Show is pretty much self-explanatory, but it might be a good idea for students to know a little about Theodore Roosevelt before attending the presentation:

TR was the 26th President of the United States (1901-1909). He was the youngest President in our history and by far the most popular: in the 1904 election he won a higher percentage of the popular vote than any candidate before or since.

He was an outdoorsman, a lover of nature, a big game hunter and a world expert on small songbirds. He was also a lover of books. In spite of the fact that he was nearly blind without his glasses, he read a book every day, and sometimes two. He also wrote 36 books.

During his presidency he made huge advances in the protection of the environment; he sponsored child labor laws and the Pure Food and Drug Act; he won the Nobel Prize for helping settle the war between Russia and Japan; and he dug the Panama Canal almost single-handed.

AFTER THE PROGRAM

Any program on Theodore Roosevelt would have to lay great stress on family values and protection of the environment:

- TR was a great man for family values many years before the term “family values” was even thought of. There are several examples of his relations with his family in the program. Students can explore how he drew strength from his family, and how he was able to give strength to his children.
- TR believed passionately about the value of the great natural wonders of America. He believed we should preserve these wonders and pass them on to the future in better condition than when we found them. Students can explore how this attitude is expressed in the episodes of the Teddy Bear, the list of endangered birds, and the Grand Canyon

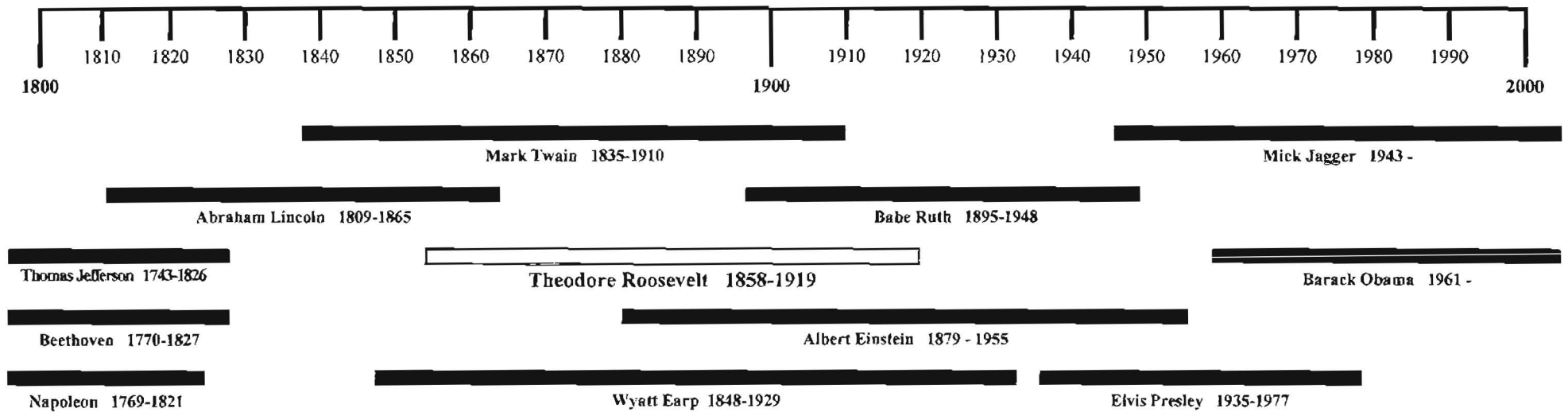
Other topics:

There are great differences between America in 1900 and in 2000 – and also great similarities.

- The end of the 19th Century was a time of tremendous growth in America, just as today is. Huge corporations were being formed by merger and combination, just as they are today, and people were worried about the power of such corporations. We were on the verge of becoming a great world power, but what values had got us there?
- In 1910 William Howard Taft, Theodore Roosevelt’s successor as President, built the first garage for automobiles at the White House. Until that time there had been stables. There were very few cars and no airplanes, no TV, no radio and no Internet. How would this make political campaigning different than today? How would it make everyday life different?

In what ways would everything still be the same as today?

Theodore Roosevelt's Place in History



As we enter the second decade of the Twenty-First century, it might be a good idea to cast an eye back on the Twentieth and the Nineteenth. Students today are so accustomed to a world in which the United States is the only Super Power that they can hardly understand it was not always so. American military power and economic power, and above all our cultural power, have overwhelmed the world. The Twentieth Century has quite rightly been called “the American Century.”

Little more than a hundred years ago, though, America was just an adolescent upstart among the then “Great Powers” – England, France, Germany, Russia, and even Spain. But America was growing: our immense resources of farmland, timber, coal, iron, gold, oil and water gave us nourishment. And the pioneering energy of our great westward expansion gave us sinew and will. More than any other living person, Theodore Roosevelt personified the emerging vitality of the coming American Century. In 1897 he said:

“Is America a weakling, to shrink from the work of the great world powers? No! The young giant of the West stands astride a continent and clasps the crest of an ocean in either hand. Our nation, glorious in youth and strength, looks into the future with eager eyes and rejoices as a strong man to run a race.”

He stood for strength, he stood for energy, he stood for exuberance, and he stood for expansion. But he also stood for honesty and decency, for a “square deal” for every citizen, and for personal and for national responsibility. Above all he stood for what we now like to call “family values.” In his autobiography in 1913 he wrote:

“ . . . but all the powers of all the governments of all the nations of the earth are as dust in the windy street unless back of them lie the strong and tender virtues of a family life based on the love of the one man for the one woman and on their joyous and fearless acceptance of their common obligation to the children who are theirs.”

Today we lead the world, but we might do well to look back from time to time, and remember how we got where we are.

YOUR STUDENTS WILL LEARN ABOUT

THE PRESIDENCY

TR was the first "modern" president. He was the first American to win the Nobel Prize (the Peace Prize). He was the first American President to go down in a submarine or up in an airplane. He was the first to put into practice the ideal of the President as an advocate for the American people as a whole.

RESPONSIBILITY & DUTY

TR was born rich, but from his early youth his father instilled in him the doctrine of social responsibility -- so he became a wealthy Republican President who believed in, and lived by, the philosophy that a man's true worth is measured in his service to his country.

POLITICS

TR believed in what he called "applied idealism." He believed that the best public man must never compromise his ideals, but at the same time must find ways to work with others, including his enemies, to achieve practical results. His presidency produced a vast amount of work for the common good: Anti-trust legislation, child labor laws, and the Pure Food and Drug Act, to mention only a few.

BOOKS

TR wrote 36 books, hundreds have been written about him, and he read thousands! It is part of his legend that he read a book every day, sometimes two -- and he always carried a book or two in his pockets. He loved reading just for the sake of reading, and also for practical value. He felt there was no book from which an intelligent person could not learn something:

"Why, there are hundreds of books like these, each one of which, if really read, really assimilated, by the person to whom it happens to appeal, will enable that person quite unconsciously to furnish himself with much ammunition which he will find of use in the battle of life."

THE ENVIRONMENT

TR's greatest legacy, his greatest gift to the American people, is in the field of conservation. He passionately loved the vigorous life in the outdoors, and his proselytizing zeal for "the strenuous life" has paid dividends for all Americans right down to this day. As President he set aside over 230 million acres of public land for National Parks, National Monuments, and wilderness and game preserves. But by far his greatest achievement was making Americans aware of our great natural heritage and convincing us that each and every one of us is a steward of Nature's wealth.

EQUAL RIGHTS

TR was an early advocate of womens' suffrage, and he employed the first female secretary in the New York Police Department when he was Police Commissioner. Here's what he said on the subject of womens' rights, not in 1990 or 1960 mind you, but in 1880!:

"Much can be done by law towards putting women on a footing of complete and entire equal rights with man -- including the right to vote, the right to hold and use property, and the right to enter any profession she desires on the same terms as a man -- and, when her service is of the same value, to be paid as highly."

Now there was a man ahead of his time!

Resources and Activities

Books:

Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography, Da Capo Press

The Rise Of Theodore Roosevelt, Edmund Morris, Balantine Books

Theodore Roosevelt: A Life, Nathan Miller, Wm. Morrow & Company

Mornings On Horseback, David McCullough, Simon & Schuster

A Bully Father, Theodore Roosevelt's Letters To His Children,
edited by Joan Patterson Kerr, Random House

The White House Gang, Earle Looker, Revell Press
(anecdotes of TR's children in the White House)

Bully For You Teddy Roosevelt, Jean Fritz, Putnam Sons
(excellent short biography for intermediate grades)

The First Teddy Bear, Helen Kay, Stemmer House Publishers
(good for very young students)

Activities in connection with performances:

There is a great variety of activities and support available, including teacher materials, classroom visits, workshops, and a complete press conference with the 26th President, in which students become reporters and prepare questions as part of an ongoing study project.

About the Performer

DEREK EVANS was born and bred in Chicago, and except for travel and education has lived here all his life. He was trained for the theatre at Northwestern University, the Hedgerow Theatre, New York University and the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco. He has toured nationally, and has appeared in Chicago at the Body Politic, the Oak Park Shakespeare Festival, Northlight Theatre, and the Court Theatre, among others. At the Court he was nominated for the Joseph Jefferson Citations for his performances in Joe Egg and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead.

His greatest achievement, and the love of his career, however, has been touring educational programs to schools. As manager, actor and director of the Monarch Theatre Company, he has performed Shakespeare, light opera, and literary adaptations for schools in over twenty states. Between 1969 and 1988, under the auspices of Urban Gateways and independently, he has given over 6,500 live performances for more than one million students.