

Exploring Personal Voices

Eleanor Roosevelt's "My Day" and Students' "My Blog"

There are many ways teachers can use this issue's American history feature (pp. 19-21) in the classroom. This suggested lesson plan comes from Lisa Arce, who teaches seventh- and eighth-grade students at Selden Middle School in Centereach, New York, and is a contributing editor to *Junior Scholastic*.

"The wives, of course, have certain official obligations, but they are certainly not responsible for their husbands' policies. And they do not have to feel that sense of obligation at every point to uphold the ideas of the man of the family."

—Eleanor Roosevelt, "My Day,"
October 21, 1960

BACKGROUND

Eleanor Roosevelt was the first First Lady to use her own voice in a regular newspaper column. In "My Day," which ran six days a week, Roosevelt wrote candidly on many political and social issues, such as the hydrogen bomb, Prohibition, the Cold War, Jews in Europe, racial segregation, and almost every concern facing women. (She also wrote a glowing review of the first issue of *Junior Scholastic*, which appeared in September 1937.) "My Day" is an excellent primary source to consult when considering the range of issues that Eleanor Roosevelt, separate from her husband, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, considered important.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will write a quarter-page, fully detailed editorial-style blog, fashioned after Eleanor Roosevelt's column "My Day."

- Students will use the Internet to research various "My Day" articles to provide factual examples of Roosevelt's use of her voice.
- Students will read and take bullet-style notes using the *JS* article "Eleanor Roosevelt" for background and secondary information in their own article.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- *JS* article "Eleanor Roosevelt"
- Internet access for research (*for recommended sites, see Web Links, p. T-3*)
- A teacher e-board or other free blogging site, such as my-ecoach.com/online/webresourcelist.php?rId=4992#2
- Highlighters (optional)
- LCD projector or interactive white board (optional)
- Teachers can use e-board iNotes to set up a "moderated" blog, which means that student answers do not appear until the teacher approves the message.

CLASS OPENER

Ask students to read the first two paragraphs of "Eleanor Roosevelt." Then ask them to contrast the traditional role of First Lady with the one that Roosevelt created. Students can do this in paragraph



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form or with a Venn diagram.

- **Activity 1:** As a class, read the sections "Eleanor Everywhere" and "New Horizons." Students should highlight what they think best describes Roosevelt's accomplishments.
- **Activity 2:** Provide examples of "My Day" columns, using the Internet links. Teachers with an LCD projector or interactive white board may wish to project examples in multimedia format for additional visual learning. Have students read excerpts of various selections with either the entire class or in small groups. Allow up to 15 minutes for reading and highlighting some of Roosevelt's notable views.
- **Activity 3:** Optional classwork in a computer lab, or homework assignment: Students should use their notes from both activities to write their paragraph, "My Blog," answering the task question at the head of this section. Students should go to the assigned blog space that the teacher has set up, and enter their paragraph with their full first name and last-name initial.