

Theodore Roosevelt

1906

“what has especially directed the attention of the friends of peace is President Roosevelt's happy role in bringing to an end the bloody war recently waged between two of the world's great powers, Japan and Russia.”

Theodore Roosevelt was born to powerful and wealthy parents. He lived a lifetime of adventure and physical danger. He traveled through the wilds of Africa, the American West, and the Amazon jungle. He graduated from Harvard and wrote over twenty books.

Roosevelt's path to achieving peace was very different from the other Nobel laureates. During his life, the United States **annexed** Spanish **colonies** in the Caribbean and the Pacific. He believed being a strong country helped keep peace among nations.



Theodore (nicknamed “T.R.”) was sick for most of his childhood. He was unable to sleep lying down because of **asthma**, so he slept sitting up in a chair. Even when he was ill Theodore was active and **mischievous**. His interest in wild animals and natural science started when he saw a dead seal at a market, and took the animal's head home to learn about it.

Theodore's father (also named Theodore) encouraged his son to participate in physical activities such as boxing, hiking, and other outdoor sports. From then on Roosevelt believed in action and the power of the individual to overcome difficulty.

In 1895, Roosevelt became **Commissioner** of the New York City Police Department. His energy was a good match for what was considered the most **corrupt** police force in the country. Roosevelt was known to walk around town in the middle of night checking to see if his police officers were on the job. During his **tenure**, women and Jews were hired into the police department for the first time.

In 1897, Roosevelt was appointed by the President to be the Assistant Secretary of the Navy. He had always been fascinated by naval battles, and saw the key to American security in her naval strength. The great countries of the world maintained navies to capture, and control countries they claimed as theirs.

Roosevelt thought war with Spain (who claimed Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Philippines as theirs) would be inevitable. The Spanish-American War began with a mysterious explosion on the ship the USS Maine when it was docked at Havana, Cuba. This was

reported as an act of Spanish **espionage**. This was a chance for the United States to become a world power by taking the colonies of the strong Spanish Empire.

Roosevelt saw the war as a great adventure, and organized a group of volunteers to go to Cuba and fight the Spanish. His regiment was known as the **Rough Riders**. Their battles were written about in American newspapers. The most famous battle was the Battle of San Juan Hill.

When he returned to New York after the war, Roosevelt was elected governor. He attacked **corruption** so much that the men who had controlled the state wanted to get rid of him. They succeeded by forcing presidential candidate William McKinley to take Roosevelt away from his New York State Governor's job and become McKinley's vice presidential candidate.

McKinley and Roosevelt won the election. As Vice President, Roosevelt was bored. He considered leaving this job to return to law school but his plans changed when President McKinley was shot and killed.

Theodore Roosevelt became President of the United States.

While serving out the rest of McKinley's term, Roosevelt promised to follow McKinley's ideas. One major achievement was solving a six-month long coal strike in 1902. He decided to run for President in the 1904 election as a Republican. His opponents in the race did not like his military ideas but he was elected.

Due to his love of nature and animals, President Roosevelt decided to use the power of his office to protect the environment. There were almost no laws against the use of land, water, resources and destruction of species. Roosevelt created National Parks and nature preserves in record numbers. The **US Forest Service** was created

by Roosevelt, who saw conservation of resources in terms of managing them for long-term use.

Roosevelt saw the role of the United States as active, energetic and strong. He believed it was the role of "civilized" nations to oversee the affairs of "poorer" ones. Roosevelt declared that the United States had **control** over the Caribbean Basin and Central America.

1858 - 1919

- **United States President, Statesman, Soldier, Civil Servant, Historian, Author, Adventurer, Conservationist**
- **After being shot by an assassin on the way to a campaign rally, Roosevelt decided to complete his 90-minute speech before seeking medical attention.**
- **He was first American to win the Nobel Prize**

"Character, in the long run, is the decisive factor in the life of an individual and of nations alike."

In 1901, Roosevelt invited **Booker T. Washington** to visit and have dinner at the White House. Washington was the first African American to visit the white house

Roosevelt was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1906, for ending a war between the Russian and Japan. He was the first winner of the Nobel Prize.

After his second term as President, Roosevelt traveled to Africa for a **safari**. This trip was sponsored by the Smithsonian Institute and the National Geographic Society. The men on safari killed over 11,000 animals, and more than 500 big game animals. Roosevelt was criticized about the number of animal that had been killed on the trip. He replied "I can be condemned only if the existence of the National Museum, the American Museum of Natural History, and all similar zoological institutions are to be condemned." He believed that these organizations had killed many animals.

In 1912 Roosevelt ran for President again. During the campaign, he was shot in the chest. After losing the election, Roosevelt traveled on another adventure trip to the Amazon Jungle in South America. Roosevelt's son Kermit traveled with his father on the trip. Roosevelt became very ill in the Amazon and nearly died.

When the First World War began in 1914, Roosevelt supported the Allies against Germany. He criticized President Wilson and did not support him in his 1916 campaign to be president.

Roosevelt considered running for president again in 1920 but in January of 1919 Theodore Roosevelt died in his sleep at the age of 60. His son Archie told the rest of his family of Roosevelt's death with a five word telegraph:

"The old lion is dead."

Activities

Theodore Roosevelt

Vocabulary Terms:

1. **asthma**
2. **mischievous**
3. **Commissioner**
4. **corrupt**
5. **tenure**
6. **espionage**
7. **Rough Riders**
8. **Booker T. Washington**
9. **Safari**
10. **US Forest Service**

Study Questions

1. In what way do you think that Theodore Roosevelt's early years when he had asthma had an important effect on what he believed and achieved?
2. Roosevelt did not like corruption. How did he try to improve the New York Police department?
3. What strengths did Theodore Roosevelt bring to each of his careers? (Police Commissioner, President, environmentalist)?
4. Roosevelt believed that stronger countries should rule smaller ones. Do people believe this now?
5. How did Theodore Roosevelt seek to achieve and maintain peace?
6. How did Roosevelt feel about Woodrow Wilson?

Introductory and Extended Exercises

- A. Before reading, write "peace", "justice" and "security" on the board. Divide the class into groups of three, with each student in the group responsible for one term. Each student will make a quick list of terms that he or she associates with their word. Then compare and contrast the lists.

- B. As each student reads the biography, ask him or her to keep an eye out for how that word is part of the Roosevelt story. They can do the same for more than one laureate biography, and decide whether the laureates studied created one, two or all three. Groups can share their findings through discussion or voting.
- C. Roosevelt said: “Walk softly and carry a big stick”. What did this mean to him? What does it mean to you?

Technology Option

After reading the biography, ask students to describe his voice and speaking style. Then listen to Roosevelt (see 6, 7 in bibliography) and ask students to respond.

Bibliography

1. [Theodore Roosevelt Association](http://www.theodoreroosevelt.org/). <http://www.theodoreroosevelt.org/>
2. ["Leadership of the City of New York Police Department 1845-1901," - The New York City Police Department Museum](http://www.nycpolicemuseum.org/html/tour/leadr1845.htm).
<http://www.nycpolicemuseum.org/html/tour/leadr1845.htm>
3. [PBS "American Experience" Theodore Roosevelt](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/tr/)
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/tr/>
4. [My Brother Theodore Roosevelt, 1921](http://www.antiquebooks.net/readpage.html#roosevelt) By Corinne Roosevelt Robinson, a bestseller with a woman's and sister's point of view on TR. Full text and Full text Search, Free to Read and Search.
<http://www.antiquebooks.net/readpage.html#roosevelt>
5. [Almanac of Theodore Roosevelt](http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/) <http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/>
6. [Downloadable audio recordings of Roosevelt in MP3 format](http://vvl.lib.msu.edu/showfindingaid.cfm?findaidid=RooseveltT).
<http://vvl.lib.msu.edu/showfindingaid.cfm?findaidid=RooseveltT>
7. [Audio clips of Roosevelt's speeches](http://vvl.lib.msu.edu/showfindingaid.cfm?findaidid=RooseveltT).
<http://vvl.lib.msu.edu/showfindingaid.cfm?findaidid=RooseveltT>
8. [Quotes](http://www.theodoreroosevelt.org/life/quotes.htm). <http://www.theodoreroosevelt.org/life/quotes.htm>
9. [Works by Theodore Roosevelt](http://www.gutenberg.org/author/Theodore_Roosevelt) at [Project Gutenberg](http://www.gutenberg.org/).
http://www.gutenberg.org/author/Theodore_Roosevelt
10. [Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Address](http://www.usa-presidents.info/inaugural/roosevelt.html). <http://www.usa-presidents.info/inaugural/roosevelt.html>
11. [Nobel Peace Prize 1906: Theodore Roosevelt](http://www.nobel.se/peace/laureates/1906/).
<http://www.nobel.se/peace/laureates/1906/>
12. [White House biography](http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/tr26.html). <http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/tr26.html>