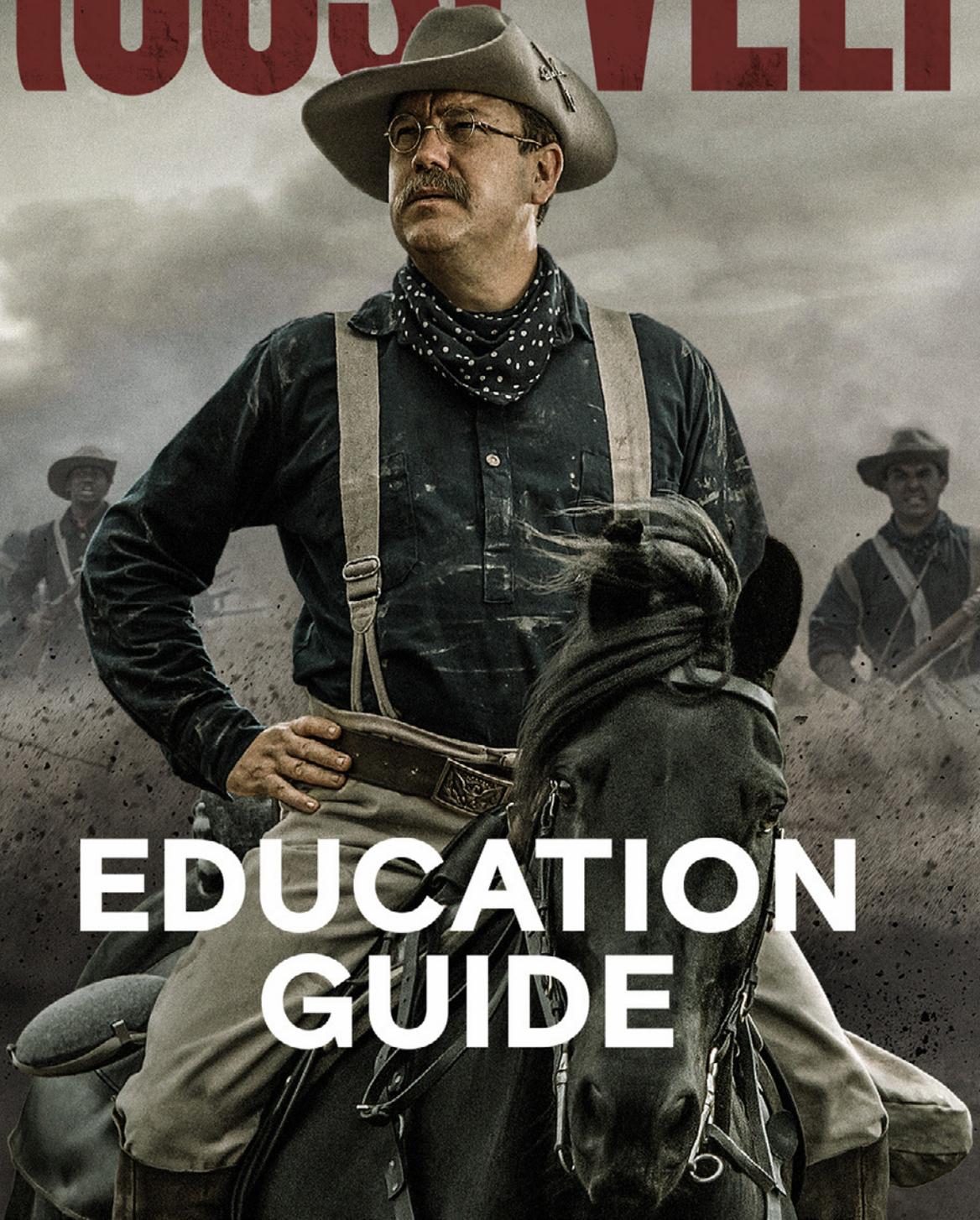
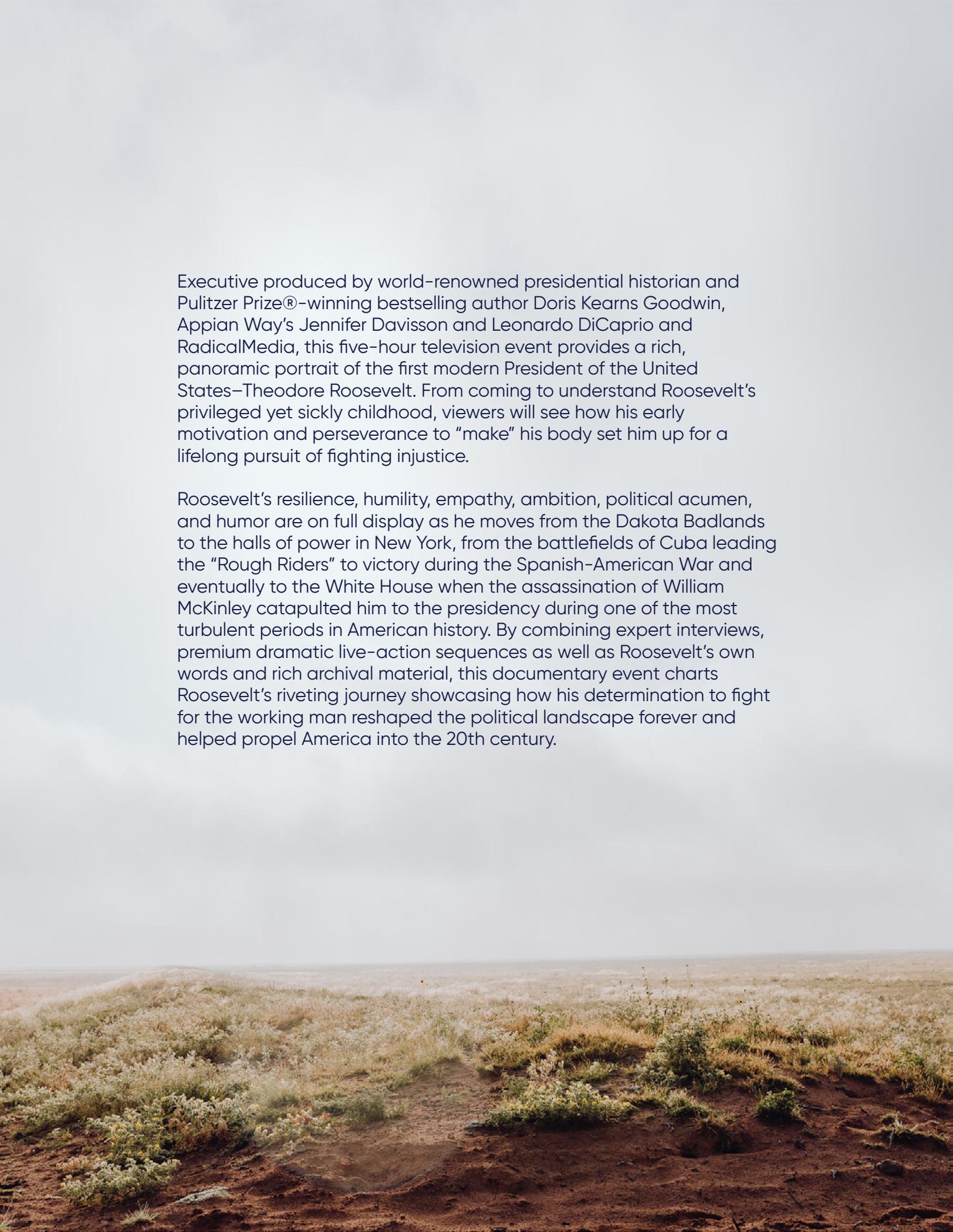


THE HISTORY® CHANNEL DOCUMENTARY EVENT
FROM EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN & LEONARDO DiCAPRIO

THEODORE ROOSEVELT



EDUCATION
GUIDE

A wide, flat landscape with sparse, dry vegetation under a cloudy sky. The foreground shows a dirt path or clearing with small, scrubby plants. The middle ground is a vast, open plain with scattered bushes and grasses. The horizon is flat and distant, with a heavy, overcast sky above.

Executive produced by world-renowned presidential historian and Pulitzer Prize®-winning bestselling author Doris Kearns Goodwin, Appian Way's Jennifer Davisson and Leonardo DiCaprio and RadicalMedia, this five-hour television event provides a rich, panoramic portrait of the first modern President of the United States—Theodore Roosevelt. From coming to understand Roosevelt's privileged yet sickly childhood, viewers will see how his early motivation and perseverance to “make” his body set him up for a lifelong pursuit of fighting injustice.

Roosevelt's resilience, humility, empathy, ambition, political acumen, and humor are on full display as he moves from the Dakota Badlands to the halls of power in New York, from the battlefields of Cuba leading the “Rough Riders” to victory during the Spanish-American War and eventually to the White House when the assassination of William McKinley catapulted him to the presidency during one of the most turbulent periods in American history. By combining expert interviews, premium dramatic live-action sequences as well as Roosevelt's own words and rich archival material, this documentary event charts Roosevelt's riveting journey showcasing how his determination to fight for the working man reshaped the political landscape forever and helped propel America into the 20th century.

CURRICULUM LINKS

Theodore Roosevelt would be useful for History, American History, Social Studies, Political Science, and Government courses. The content is appropriate for middle school through college students.

TO THE EDUCATOR

Theodore Roosevelt explores Theodore Roosevelt's life and political career. It provides opportunities for students to examine the forces that shaped Roosevelt's character, his leadership skills, achievements, and legacy, as well as his impact on the role of the executive branch. We encourage educators to use this guide as a resource and to develop their own lesson plans and activities to best suit their students and their specific educational needs and benchmarks.

WATCHALONG GUIDE

Students can use this guide as they watch to gain additional insights:

<https://www.history.com/rooseveltguid>

TERMS TO DEFINE

- Legislature
- Conservation
- Corruption
- Political boss
- Bribe
- Reform
- Rough Rider
- Trust
- Trust-busting
- Strike
- Bully pulpit
- Canal
- Square deal
- Third party

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was Roosevelt's childhood like? What impact did his childhood have on his later life?
2. What motivated Roosevelt to get involved in politics? What were his goals?
3. Describe Roosevelt's experience in the Badlands. How did it shape his life?
4. How would you describe Roosevelt's views about Native Americans?
5. Roosevelt called conservation "the romance of his life." What do you think he meant?
6. Why did Roosevelt believe in learning about topics he was interested in firsthand? What are some examples of his firsthand experiences, and what effect did these experiences have on him?
7. Roosevelt is described as having a clear sense of right and wrong. What are some examples of things he saw as "right?" What are some examples of things he saw as "wrong?"
8. Why do you think serving in a war so important to Roosevelt?
9. Why do you think Roosevelt was so determined to try to break up trusts? How did he explain his determination?
10. What are some of the factors that made the coal strike of 1902 a complicated issue for Roosevelt to handle? Do you agree with how he handled it?
11. How did Roosevelt use the press to help achieve his goals?
12. How did Roosevelt ensure the completion of the Panama Canal? Do you think he acted fairly?
13. Why do you think Roosevelt decided to run for a third term? Why do you think he decided to start a new political party? What do you think these decisions tell us about him?
14. How would you describe Roosevelt's views about African Americans? What evidence from his life supports your conclusions?
15. In what ways was Roosevelt a progressive? In what ways was he a conservative?
16. What do you think were Roosevelt's best traits? What do you think were his worst traits? Share some examples of how these traits shaped his life and career.

HISTORY.com

PRIMARY SOURCE #1

POLITICAL CARTOON: A ROOSEVELT TO THE RESCUE, 1895 and NO LACK OF BIG GAME, 1901



Credit: Cartoon by George Coffin Yost, [Library of Congress](#)



Credit: Cartoon by Charles Lewis Bartholomew, [Library of Congress](#)

In 1895, Theodore Roosevelt left his job with the U.S. Civil Service Commission in Washington, D.C. to return to New York City to work as the city's police commissioner. In an effort to tame a city racked by violence and corruption, Roosevelt made a series of controversial decisions, including resuming police use of the nightstick during daytime patrols (after the nightstick had been deemed too brutal); arming police officers with guns; and attempting to enforce every one of the city's laws. Upon leaving the job some 18 months later after the Republicans were voted out of office, Roosevelt remarked to a friend, "This is the last office I shall ever hold. I have offended so many powerful interests and so many powerful politicians." Despite Roosevelt's predictions, he served as assistant secretary of the navy, New York governor and vice president of the United States, before ascending to the presidency after William McKinley's assassination. The second cartoon, "No Lack of Big Game," was made soon after he became president.

POLITICAL CARTOON ANALYSIS

For each image, consider:

1. Who do you think is depicted in this image?
2. What do you think is happening in this image?
3. What is the main figure holding? Why do you think the cartoonist chose this pose?
4. Who are the secondary figures depicted? What emotions are being depicted?
5. What do you think is the message of this cartoon? What might the cartoonist have been trying to say or point out? List evidence from the image to support your conclusion.
6. How are the messages of these two images similar? How are they different?

RELATED ACTIVITY

As a class, discuss Roosevelt's leadership abilities throughout his career. What was he good at? Where did he struggle? Then, ask students to create their own drawing or cartoon that describes Roosevelt's career.

PRIMARY SOURCE #2

SPEECH: THE STRENUOUS LIFE, APRIL, 1899

Source: Voices of Democracy, U.S. Oratory Project

[Read the full speech here.](#)

On April 10, 1899, while serving as the governor of New York, Theodore Roosevelt traveled to Chicago to give a speech to members of the city's Hamilton Club. The speech was titled "The Strenuous Life."

Excerpts from "The Strenuous Life"

[1] In speaking to you, men of the greatest city of the West, men of the State which gave to the country Lincoln and Grant, men who pre-eminently and distinctly embody all that is most American in the American character, I wish to preach, not the doctrine of ignoble ease, but the doctrine of the strenuous life, the life of toil and effort, of labor and strife; to preach that highest form of success which comes, not to the man who desires mere easy peace, but to the man who does not shrink from danger, from hardship, or from bitter toil, and who out of these wins the splendid ultimate triumph.

[4] As it is with the individual, so it is with the nation. It is a base untruth to say that happy is the nation that has no history. Thrice happy is the nation that has a glorious history. Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat. If in 1861 the men who loved the Union had believed that peace was the end of all things, and war and strife the worst of all things, and had acted up to their belief, we would have saved hundreds of thousands of lives, we would have saved hundreds of millions of dollars. Moreover, besides saving all the blood and treasure we then lavished, we would have prevented the heartbreak of many women, the dissolution of many homes, and we would have spared the country those months of gloom and shame when it seemed as if our armies marched only to defeat. We could have avoided all this suffering simply by shrinking from strife. And if we had thus avoided it, we would have shown that we were weaklings, and that we were unfit to stand among the great nations of the earth. Thank God for the iron in the blood of our fathers, the men who upheld the wisdom of Lincoln, and bore sword or rifle in the armies of Grant! Let us, the children of the men who proved themselves equal to the mighty days—let us, the children of the men who carried the great Civil War to a triumphant conclusion, praise the God of our fathers that the ignoble counsels of peace were rejected; that the suffering and loss, the blackness of sorrow and despair, were unflinchingly faced, and the years of strife endured; for in the end the slave was freed, the Union restored, and the mighty American republic placed once more as a helmeted queen among nations.

[6] *The timid man, the lazy man, the man who distrusts his country, the over-civilized man, who has lost the great fighting, masterful virtues, the ignorant man, and the man of dull mind, whose soul is incapable of feeling the mighty lift that thrills "stern men with empires in their brains"—all these, of course, shrink from seeing the nation undertake its new duties; shrink from seeing us build a navy and an army adequate to our needs; shrink from seeing us do our share of the world's work, by bringing order out of chaos in the great, fair tropic islands from which the valor of our soldiers and sailors has driven the Spanish flag. These are the men who fear the strenuous life, who fear the only national life which is really worth leading. They believe in that cloistered life which saps the hardy virtues in a nation, as it saps them in the individual; or else they are wedded to that base spirit of gain and greed which recognizes in commercialism the be-all and end-all of national life, instead of realizing that, though an indispensable element, it is, after all, but one of the many elements that go to make up true national greatness. No country can long endure if its foundations are not laid deep in the material prosperity which comes from thrift, from business energy and enterprise, from hard, unsparing effort in the fields of industrial activity; but neither was any nation ever yet truly great if it relied upon material prosperity alone. All honor must be paid to the architects of our material prosperity, to the great captains of industry who have built our factories and our railroads, to the strong men who toil for wealth with brain or hand; for great is the debt of the nation to these and their kind. But our debt is yet greater to the men whose highest type is to be found in a statesman like Lincoln, a soldier like Grant. They showed by their lives that they recognized the law of work, the law of strife; they toiled to win a competence for themselves and those dependent upon them; but they recognized that there were yet other and even loftier duties – duties to the nation and duties to the race.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. After reading these excerpts from Roosevelt's "Strenuous Life" speech, how would you describe the strenuous life? What kinds of personal qualities do you think Roosevelt admired? What kinds of personal qualities did he disparage?
2. What do you think Roosevelt meant when he said "As it is with the individual, so it is with the nation?" What does this tell you about what Roosevelt thought America's place in the world should be? What evidence from the speech supports your conclusion?
3. What kind of military do you think Roosevelt thought the United States should have? What evidence from the speech supports your conclusion?

RELATED ACTIVITY

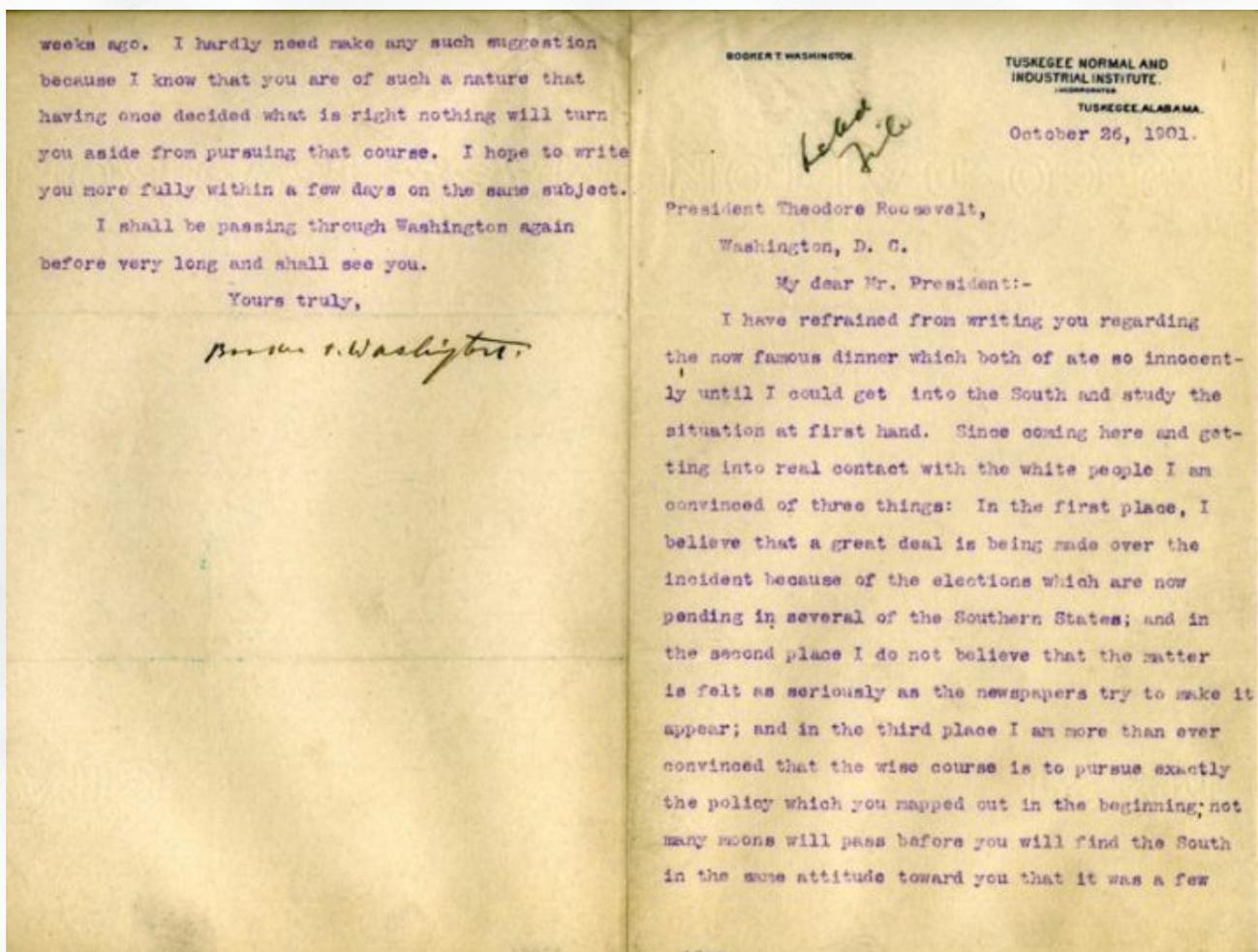
Ask students to imagine that they were in the audience to hear Roosevelt's "Strenuous Life" speech. (They may want to read the [entire speech](#).) Then, ask them to prepare a postcard about the speech to send to a friend. On the front, draw an image that represents their impression of the speech. On the back, write several sentences that describe the main ideas of the speech and how they felt about Roosevelt's ideas.

PRIMARY SOURCE #3

A LETTER FROM BOOKER T. WASHINGTON TO THEODORE ROOSEVELT, OCTOBER 26, 1901

Source: Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Library of Congress

On October 16, 1901, just about a month after Theodore Roosevelt assumed the presidency, and at a time when the country was still racially segregated, Roosevelt invited Booker T. Washington, the African American author, educator, and speaker, to dine with him and his family at the White House. Although several other presidents had invited African Americans to meet with them at the White House, this was the first time the meeting occurred over a meal. As dining together was considered a mark of social equality, the dinner quickly made national headlines, and caused many Americans, particularly Southern politicians, to criticize Roosevelt. Ten days after the dinner, Washington wrote Roosevelt this note.



Text of letter:

My dear Mr. President: I have refrained from writing you regarding the now famous dinner which both of [us] ate so innocently until I could get into the South and study the situation at first hand. Since coming here and getting into real contact with the white people I am convinced of three things: In the first place I believe that a great deal is being made over the incident because of the elections that are now pending in several of the Southern States; and in the second place I do not believe that the matter is felt as seriously as the newspapers try to make it appear; and in the third place I am more than ever convinced that the wise course is to pursue exactly the policy which you mapped out in the beginning; not many moons will pass before you will find the South in the same attitude toward you as it was a few weeks ago. I hardly need make any such suggestion because I know that you are of such a nature that having once decided what is right nothing will turn you aside from pursuing that course. I hope to write you more fully within a few days on the same subject.

I shall be passing through Washington again before very long and shall see you.

Yours truly, Booker T. Washington

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who was Booker T. Washington and what dinner is he referring to in the letter?
2. Why do you think the dinner shared by Washington and Roosevelt caused some people to criticize Roosevelt?
3. Does Washington seem concerned that Roosevelt will be upset by the controversy over the dinner? What evidence from the letter supports your answer?

RELATED ACTIVITY

As a class, brainstorm events from one of the last several presidential administrations that caused a similar controversy. In groups or individually, ask students to research the event and present a summary of their event to the class. Summaries should include a description of what happened, an explanation of the controversy, and how the president responded to it. Discuss each event as a class. Why did it cause controversy? Who did the controversy benefit and harm? Did the president handle it appropriately?

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Article: 7 Little-Known Legacies of Teddy Roosevelt

<https://www.history.com/news/teddy-roosevelt-legacies>

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Theodore Roosevelt Center at Dickinson University

<https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/>

Theodore Roosevelt Papers at the Library of Congress

<https://www.loc.gov/collections/theodore-roosevelt-papers/about-this-collection/>

Theodore Roosevelt Resources, University of Virginia Miller Center

<https://millercenter.org/president/roosevelt>

Theodore Roosevelt Collection, Harvard University

<https://library.harvard.edu/collections/theodore-roosevelt-collection>

Theodore Roosevelt's Speeches, Theodore Roosevelt Association

https://www.theodoreroosevelt.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=991271&module_id=339335

