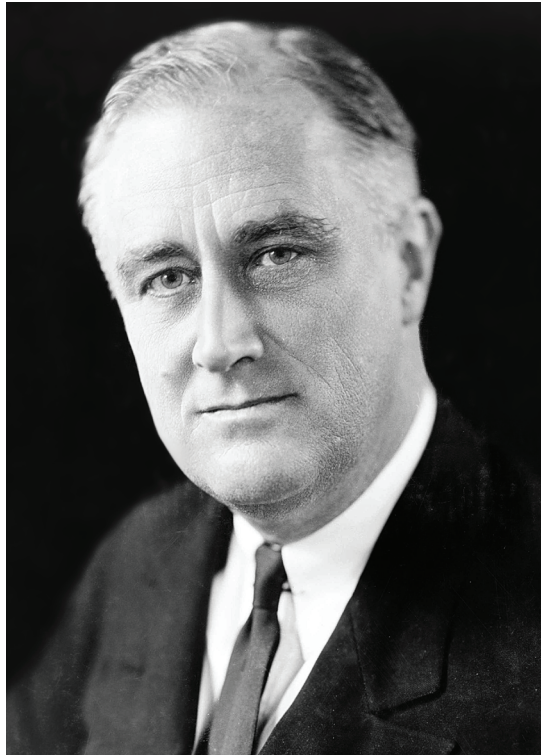

Objectives:

- Students will be able to analyze a rhetorical work, and to understand its cultural influence and its historical significance
- Students will be able to use context clues to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words.
- Students will be able to correctly use vocabulary words.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882 – 1945)

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, also known by his initials FDR, was the 32nd President of the United States (1933 – 1945). He was the only President elected to more than two terms, and he led the United through the Great Depression, as well as the Second World War. He was considered to be one of the greatest American Presidents, and the policies which his administration enacted permanently changed American society.

The “1944 State of the Union Address” was delivered by radio as a “fireside chat,” before a joint session of Congress. Normally, the president would deliver this address in person to Congress, but after just having returned from the Middle East, and sick with the flu, he decided instead to submit a written copy of his address to Congress and read it via live broadcast to the American public.



The 1944 Address is known as the *Second Bill of Rights* or the *Economic Bill of Rights* speech. In it, President Roosevelt speaks about the war effort and about negotiations that he and the leaders of the Allied nations were participating in to ensure a lasting peace after the war was won. He also addresses the concerns he has regarding greedy American war-profiteers and the need for a strong and united national effort to end the war quickly. Finally, President Roosevelt lays out his plan for economic security at home in what is known as the *Second Bill of Rights*.

Rhetoric

The student must remember that political speeches use **rhetoric**, or the specific style of writing that is used. President Roosevelt wrote his *Second Bill of Rights* speech to persuade. President Roosevelt's Address tries to convince the US Congress to pass his suggestions into law. Such laws are known as "legislation."

It is important to remember that according to the Constitution, Presidents cannot write any laws. Instead, the President has to persuade Congress to pass the laws he wants. Therefore, we have to read this Address as an example of persuasive writing.

President Roosevelt presents his objectives for the Address. He explains that he is going to make proposals that he believes will provide physical, economic, social, and moral security not only to the US, but to all Nations. However, the world was literally at war. How could FDR provide all that?

The best interests of each Nation, large and small, demand that all freedom-loving Nations shall join together in a just and durable system of peace. ... And an equally basic essential to peace is a decent standard of living for all individual men and women and children in all Nations. *Freedom from fear is eternally linked with freedom from want.*

In the italicized sentence, President Roosevelt is making a claim. He claims that fear and want are linked, which means to be connected. What do you think "want" has to do with "fear?" Do you think that they are related? Freedom is something that most Americans want and believe in. Having what one needs to survive and prosper is also something that most people seek. Getting the audience to agree with the speaker by making a personal connection with them is a key element in persuasive writing found in rhetorical works. If someone agrees with the President on this, he or she will probably agree with him on how he intends to ensure that all Americans have freedom from fear and want.

A noisy minority maintains an uproar of demands for special favors for special groups. There are pests who swarm through the lobbies of the Congress and the cocktail bars of Washington, representing these special groups as opposed to the basic interests of the Nation as a whole. They have come to look upon the war primarily as a chance to make profits for themselves at the expense of their neighbors – profits in money or in terms of political or social preferment.

"...pests who swarm through the lobbies of the Congress...representing ...special groups." President Roosevelt is referring to people who try and persuade members of Congress to make decisions in their favor. (Today, they are called "lobbyists.") The "special groups" the President is criticizing are trying to profit, or make money, from the war. Criticism can be used to persuade a particular audience by gaining the support of those who oppose the issues being spoken against. In this case, President Roosevelt is criticizing those who try to make money from the war – he hopes to gain the support of the members of his audience that oppose those same groups.

Context Clues

Context clues are “helper” words and phrases that will help you determine the meaning of unfamiliar words. They can be found within the same sentence or surrounding sentences. There may be unfamiliar words to you in President Roosevelt’s *Second Bill of Rights* speech. Using context clues can help you understand the points the President is trying to make. Let’s have a look.

...I do not think that any of us Americans can be content with mere survival. Sacrifices that we and our allies are making **impose** on us all a sacred obligation to see to it that out of this war we and our children will gain something better than mere survival.

Can you determine what the word “impose” means? President Roosevelt talks about the sacrifices the allies make and how they will affect the next generation. He also uses the word “obligation,” which is something that someone *must* do. The word “impose” seems to mean to force or require something. The sacrifices being made by Americans and allied nations *force* us to see to it that Congress must ensure that Americans and their children gain more after the war than simply having survived it.

Let’s look at another example from the President’s speech and use context clues to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word.

The one supreme objective for the future, which we discussed for each Nation individually, and for all the United Nations, can be summed up in one word: Security. And that means not only physical security which provides safety from attacks by **aggressors**. It means also economic security, social security, moral security – in a family of Nations.

Do you know what an “aggressor” is? Look at its **context**. The passage says that aggressors “attack.” It also addresses the need for “security” to provide safety from their attacks. Therefore, an **aggressor** can be taken to mean “someone who is forceful or attacks another.”

Vocabulary

Understanding the vocabulary used by President Roosevelt in his *Second Bill of Rights* speech will help you understand and better appreciate the power it had over the American people. Let’s look at some words found within this section of the speech that may be unfamiliar to you.

Vital – adjective – Necessary for life or existence

There were many *vital* questions concerning the future peace.

Eternal – adjective – Something without an end

“Freedom from fear is *eternally* linked with freedom from want.”

Divert – verb – To go around something; to avoid

The battle was *diverted* at the last minute.

Growth & Assessment

1. During which war did Franklin Roosevelt serve as President?
 - a. The Civil War
 - b. World War I
 - c. World War II
 - d. The War of 1812
2. What does the word impose mean?
 - a. To force
 - b. To position
 - c. To explode
 - d. Impossible
3. Early in his speech, what did FDR try to assure his listeners about?
 - a. That the US would merely survive the war
 - b. That he made no secret treaties
 - c. That he was a communist
 - d. That he went to Cairo, Egypt
4. What did the President say was the “one supreme objective for the future”?
 - a. Secret treaties
 - b. The United Nations
 - c. Security
 - d. Mere survival
5. Who was President Roosevelt critical of in his speech?