
The Four Freedoms: Freedom from Want

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About the Book

During Franklin Delano Roosevelt's four terms of office as President of the United States, he spoke about four universal freedoms, including the freedom from want. The Constitution of the United States identifies the promotion of general welfare as one of the nation's purposes. *Freedom from Want* explores how the government strives to help its citizens in need.

Before Reading

Have students identify why some people may not have their basic needs met: lost jobs, catastrophic illnesses, natural disasters, mental health issues, economic disasters, and similar reasons. If there is a shelter in the community, discuss what it might be like to live in one and have to change schools regularly. Be sensitive to the possibility that one or more students might live or might have lived in shelters. If possible, have someone who works at or volunteers at a shelter come talk with students.

During-Reading Discussion

1. After reading chapter one, ask: *Sometimes people feel ashamed or embarrassed when they need help. Why do you think people feel this way?* Discuss how people feel they should be able to provide for themselves and their families, and how hard it is to feel like one has failed to do this. Discuss how difficult it can be to keep going when you're sick or hungry.
2. After reading chapter two, ask: *How do we get our water? Where does it come from? If you didn't have water made available to you from [your local sources], how would you get it? What can you do to help ensure that you have clean water?* Discuss programs to reduce pollution, such as cleaning up streams and beaches.
3. After reading chapter three, ask: *What organizations work in our community to help people in want?* List shelters, soup kitchens, food pantries, etc. Discuss how animals also need help if they lose their homes or are injured in a natural disaster.
4. Ask: *Which facts in the story most surprised you? Which pictures were most informative? Why?*

After-Reading Activities

Water Challenge

Have students keep track of how much water they drink every day. Research how much water they use every time they flush the toilet, take a shower, and launder their clothes. Challenge students to reduce their water usage for a month. See the section on water use at this web site for water consumption data and other information:

www.epa.gov/watersense/

Bucket Brigade

Fill up buckets of water equivalent to the minimal amount of water a student requires each day. Have students carry that amount for a specified distance, such as one block or around the playground. How would their lives change if water was not readily available and they had to fetch and carry it home?

Needs and Wants

Write two headings on the board: **Need to Have** and **Nice to Have**. Brainstorm *wants* for each column. Have students assume the role of a child who has to carry water for an hour each day. How would that child's chart differ? Then brainstorm how one could do without some "Nice to Have" items to help other in need instead.

Common Core State Standards

ELA- Reading Informational Text:
RI.4.1; RI.4.2; RI.4.3; RI.4.4; RI.4.5;
RI.4.7; RI.4.8