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# The Four Freedoms: Freedom of Speech and Expression

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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 of speech and expression. The rights, power, and responsibilities of having this freedom is explored in *Freedom of Speech and Expression*.

## Before Reading

Have students identify all the ways they get information. Using newspapers or magazines, cut out and arrange images of information devices and sources: computers, hand-held devices, televisions, radios, friends, adult family members, etc. Have students rank-order the most important sources. Save their choices to revisit after reading.

## During-Reading Discussion

1. After reading chapter one, ask: *Were you aware that some schools banned Harry Potter books? Who do you think should decide what is okay for you to read? Your parents? Teachers? Librarians? State government officials? Local leaders?* Discuss how different people have different tastes, deserving of respect but not censure. Discuss how points-of-view can be expressed.
2. After reading chapter two, ask: *How does the idea of freedom of speech vary in other countries according to this chapter?* Contrast the limitations in China and North Korea with the freedoms in the United States. Then ask: *Do you know of people who fled a country because of the lack of freedom?* Discuss examples of immigration, political asylum, etc that students may know of or that may be in the news.
3. After reading chapter three, ask: *Sometimes we are afraid to speak up when we have a different opinion. What can you do to feel more comfortable and to help others feel like they can speak up?* Discuss strategies such as preparing to share an opinion by jotting down a few notes, not interrupting another person's statements, showing positive facial expressions, being reasonable with an opposing point of view, etc.
4. Ask: *What does it mean to be a whistleblower?* Discuss the important role of reporters who take risks to expose those who lie, cheat, or steal.
5. Ask: *Do you think the U.S. and United Nations should worry about other countries that don't allow the freedom of speech? Should they just leave them alone?* Discuss how some people think the U.S. should not spend resources on other people's rights in other countries when we have our own problems. Refer to FDR's speech and his vision of a world free from tyranny.

## After-Reading Activities

### Sources of Information

Have students revisit the list of their most important sources for gaining information. Have them make a second list that rank-orders the most trusted sources of information. How do their lists differ?

### Rights and Responsibilities

Make a chart that has two columns: **Rights and Responsibilities**. List a right, such as "freedom to express an opinion" and add a corresponding responsibility, such as "be respectful of another person's opinion, even if it differs from mine." If time allows, add a third column that explores how to apply these responsibilities in the classroom.

### 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