FDR’s 100 Days

**Step One: What were the “Fireside Chats”?**

Roosevelt made a total of thirty-one Fireside Chats, from the initial days of his first administration to the dark days of World War II. He used these opportunities to explain his hopes and ideas for the country, while inviting the citizenry to "tell me your troubles." The combination of the novelty and intimacy of radio with the believability of his message created a powerful force that enabled him to pass a sweeping set of legislation in the first 100 days of his presidency and then go on to many other accomplishments in the following twelve years.

The first broadcast set the pattern for the content and tone of the rest: FDR patiently and calmly explained the complexities of the nation's banking crisis in a way that was understandable and accessible to the masses.

The care and attention that he put into his addresses is apparent. He used words, phrases, analogies, and terms that people could grasp easily; eighty percent of his words were among the one thousand most commonly used words in the English vocabulary, and they were being delivered to a nation where nearly ninety percent of the populace had a radio. It is no wonder that his words were eagerly awaited and devoured by a devastated and depressed nation.

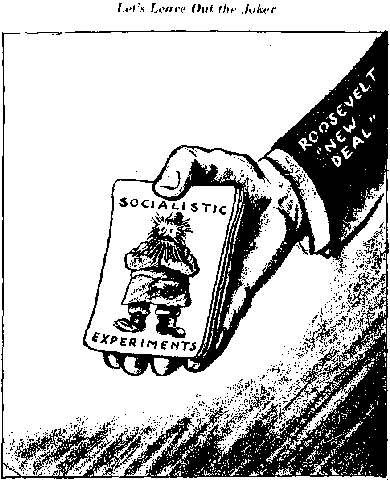
1. **Why was it so important to FDR that he reach the masses of the American public (consider the time/condition of the nation in the 20’s and 30’s).**
2. **Why do you think they were called “fireside” chats?**

**Step Two: Listen and read a Fireside Chat here:** [**http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jt9f-MZX-58**](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jt9f-MZX-58)

1. **What is the president talking about here? What does he want the American people to understand?**
2. **The overwhelming majority of Americans were swayed and comforted by the president and his fireside chats. After you have listened to a Fireside Chat can you see why? Explain.**

**Step Three: Read a Response here:** [**http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/8127**](http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/8127)

1. **What letter did you choose? Sum up the basic point the writer is making.**
2. **What specific program or topic does the writer discuss with the president? Does this topic hold specific relevance to this writer? Explain**

**Step Four: Not All Were Believers…Take a look at this political cartoon called “Let’s Leave out the Joker”**

1. **Analyze the cartoon (what does it mean?)**
2. **Do you agree? Explain**