AP EDITION · DBQ + LEQ · CLASSROOM

1944

Franklin D. Roosevelt vs Thomas E. Dewey

A 105-minute lesson on the 1944 U.S. presidential election. Includes lesson plan, DBQ pairing, student worksheet, answer key, and discussion prompts.

ERA New Deal Coalition	ELECTORAL VOTES 531 total
WINNER Franklin D. Roosevelt (Democratic) · 432 EV	RUNNER-UP Thomas E. Dewey (Republican) · 99 EV
KEY ISSUE World War II leadership; postwar planning; soldiers' voting rights	TURNOUT 55.9%

CONTENTS

1. Cover
2. Lesson plan (105 min) + framework alignment
3. Background: vocabulary + primary source A
4. Primary source B (DBQ pair)
5. Worksheet (8 questions)
6. Long-essay-question + rubric
7. Answer key + discussion

1944: Franklin D. Roosevelt vs Thomas E. Dewey

AP framework alignment

AP US History · Period varies by cycle · Reasoning skills: contextualization, comparison, causation, sourcing. CCSS · CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2 (central ideas), RH.11-12.6 (point of view), RH.11-12.7 (multiple sources). NCSS · D2.His.5.9-12, D2.His.14.9-12, D2.His.16.9-12.

Timing

5 min	**Warm-up**	Identify two structural conditions in 1944 America that would produce a fourth-term Roosevelt candidacy. For each identify the specific WWII development most responsible.
15 min	**Reading + vocab**	1944 election was 40th U.S. presidential election. Produced FDR's 432-99 EV victory over Republican Thomas Dewey - FDR's unprecedented fourth election victory. FDR was first U.S. president to serve more than two terms. WWII context November 1944: U.S. at war 35 months. ~250,000 American military deaths by November 1944. June 6, 1944 D-Day. August 25, 1944 Paris liberated. October 1944 Battle of Leyte Gulf. December 16, 1944 Battle of the Bulge ahead. FDR's health deteriorated. President since March 4, 1933 - over 11.5 years. Paralyzed by polio since 1921. By 1944: hypertension, congestive heart failure, arteriosclerosis, chronic bronchitis. Personal physician Admiral McIntire publicly downplayed; actual diagnosing physician Dr. Bruenn knew FDR was dying. Democratic National Convention Chicago July 19-21, 1944 renominated FDR by acclamation. VP selection: Wallace too liberal; Byrnes too segregationist; Truman emerged as compromise. Nominated second ballot. Most consequential VP selection in U.S. history. Republican National Convention Chicago June 26-28, 1944 nominated NY Governor Thomas Dewey on first ballot. Dewey 42 - youngest major-party nominee since Bryan 1896. Former NYC racket-busting prosecutor. "Groom on the wedding cake." John Bricker (OH) VP. Campaign focused on FDR's wartime leadership and health. Fala speech September 23, 1944 demonstrated FDR's political skills remained sharp. FDR won 432 EV; Dewey 99. FDR 36 states; Dewey 12. Popular vote: FDR 25,612,916 (53.4%); Dewey 22,017,929 (45.9%). FDR-Dewey margin: 3,594,987. FDR inaugurated 4th term January 20, 1945. February 4-11, 1945 Yalta Conference.

FDR died April 12, 1945 at Warm Springs Georgia. 12 years 31 days as president. Truman sworn in as 33rd president that evening.

Germany surrendered May 8, 1945 (V-E Day). Japan surrendered September 2, 1945 (V-J Day) after August atomic bombings.

1944 election structural significance: (1) FDR only U.S. president to serve more than two terms. (2) 1944 VP selection determined post-FDR presidency. (3) FDR's wartime leadership shaped post-war order.

Truman 1945-53 transformations: atomic bombings; UN founding; Truman Doctrine; Marshall Plan; NATO Treaty; Executive Order 9981 desegregating armed forces; Korean War; National Security Act; Berlin Airlift; Taft-Hartley Act over veto.

The 1944-45 FDR-to-Truman transition is widely analyzed as one of the most consequential leadership transitions in U.S. history. FDR had been a transformational president for 12 years. Truman was a Missouri senator with limited foreign-policy experience. Yet Truman would navigate WWII end, the early Cold War, and the Korean War with substantial competence.

The 1944 election can be analyzed retrospectively as the structural transition between FDR's 1933-45 Democratic dominance and the post-1945 Cold War U.S. internationalist alignment. The transition: (1) From wartime domestic mobilization to post-war Cold War governance. (2) From FDR's personal political leadership to institutional presidential authority. (3) From New Deal coalition to Truman-era Democratic Party that would face 1948 Dixiecrat revolt and 1968 coalition breakdown. (4) From WWII allied cooperation with Soviet Union to Cold War confrontation.

20 min	**Source A**	Read aloud once; students annotate individually for tone, evidence, and audience.
20 min	**Source B**	Compare/contrast against Source A. Pair-share on the DBQ comparison question.
20 min	**Worksheet**	Eight questions: 5 short-answer, 2 stimulus-based MCQ, 1 long-essay framing.
20 min	**LEQ planning**	Students sketch a thesis + outline for the LEQ comparison prompt. Submit for next-day full essay.
5 min	**Closure**	Exit ticket: one sentence summarizing the comparison.

Background

Before the worksheet, review the key terms below and then read the primary source carefully. The two source-analysis questions on the worksheet (questions 6 and 7) ask you to quote from the excerpt.

Key terms

Thomas Dewey
NY Governor and 1944 Republican presidential nominee (also 1948).

Fala speech
FDR's September 23, 1944 address to Teamsters Union mocking Republican claims about Scottie dog Fala.

Yalta Conference
February 4-11, 1945 wartime conference between FDR, Churchill, Stalin.

V-J Day
September 2, 1945 Victory over Japan Day.

Marshall Plan
The April 1948 European Recovery Program. Authorized $13B (~$170B in 2024 dollars) in U.S. economic aid to Western European countries 1948-52. Named for Secretary of State George C. Marshall who articulated the framework in June 5, 1947 Harvard commencement address.

Harry S. Truman
33rd U.S. president (1945-53). FDR's 1944 VP. Succeeded April 12, 1945.

D-Day
June 6, 1944 Allied invasion of Normandy.

V-E Day
May 8, 1945 Victory in Europe Day. 26 days after FDR's death.

Truman Doctrine
March 12, 1947 Truman address to Joint Session of Congress articulating U.S. commitment to "support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." Specifically authorized $400M aid to Greece and Turkey. Structural foundation of Cold War containment policy.

Fala Speech (Address to International Brotherhood of Teamsters)

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, SEPTEMBER 23, 1944

FDR delivered this address to the International Brotherhood of Teamsters at the Statler Hotel in Washington, DC on September 23, 1944.

> *"These Republican leaders have not been content with attacks on me, or my wife, or on my sons. No, not content with that, they now include my little dog, Fala. Well, of course, I don't resent attacks, and my family don't resent attacks, but Fala does resent them. You know, Fala is Scotch, and being a Scottie, as soon as he learned that the Republican fiction writers in Congress and out had concocted a story that I had left him behind on an Aleutian Island and had sent a destroyer back to find him - at a cost to the taxpayers of two or three or eight or twenty million dollars - his Scotch soul was furious. He has not been the same dog since. I am accustomed to hearing malicious falsehoods about myself - such as that old, worm-eaten chestnut that I have represented myself as indispensable. But I think I have a right to resent, to object to libelous statements about my dog."*

Roosevelt, "Address to International Brotherhood of Teamsters" (Washington, DC, September 23, 1944). Public domain.

Document-based question

Source A is on the Background page; Source B is below. Use both as evidence for the worksheet's source-analysis questions and the LEQ.

SOURCE A

Fala Speech (Address to International Brotherhood of Teamsters)

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, SEPTEMBER 23, 1944

"These Republican leaders have not been content with attacks on me, or my wife, or on my sons. No, not content with that, they now include my little dog, Fala. Well, of course, I don't resent attacks, and my family don't resent attacks, but Fala does resent them. You know, Fala is Scotch, and being a Scottie, as soon as he learned that the Republican fiction writers in Congress and out had concocted a story that I had left him behind on an Aleutian Island and had sent a destroyer back to find him - at a cost to the taxpayers of two or three or eight or twenty million dollars - his Scotch soul was furious. He has not been the same dog since. I am accustomed to hearing malicious falsehoods about myself - such as that old, worm-eaten chestnut that I have represented myself as indispensable. But I think I have a right to resent, to object to libelous statements about my dog."

Roosevelt, "Address to International Brotherhood of Teamsters" (Washington, DC, September 23, 1944). Public domain.

SOURCE B

Truman Doctrine (Address to Joint Session of Congress)

HARRY S. TRUMAN, MARCH 12, 1947

"I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way. I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes. The world is not static, and the status quo is not sacred. But we cannot allow changes in the status quo in violation of the Charter of the United Nations by such methods as coercion, or by such subterfuges as political infiltration. In helping free and independent nations to maintain their freedom, the United States will be giving effect to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations."

Truman, "Address to Joint Session of Congress" (Washington, DC, March 12, 1947). Public domain.

The 1944 Election

Answer the eight questions below. Source A is on the Background page; Source B is on the DBQ Pair page.

QUESTION 1 · SHORT-ANSWER

Identify the key phrase in Source A (FDR Fala speech 1944) articulating the political-defense strategy. Quote it verbatim.

QUESTION 2 · SHORT-ANSWER

Identify the key phrase in Source B (Truman Doctrine 1947) articulating Cold War containment. Quote it verbatim.

QUESTION 3 · SHORT-ANSWER

Both sources are speeches but from different presidents in different political contexts. Identify the specific political function each source performs.

QUESTION 4 · SHORT-ANSWER

The 1944 VP selection (Truman over Wallace and Byrnes) determined the post-FDR presidency. What does the Truman Doctrine reveal about how the structural choice shaped U.S. foreign policy?

QUESTION 5 · SHORT-ANSWER
Identify three specific 1945-1953 Truman achievements that operationalized the Cold War framework.

QUESTION 6 · MULTIPLE-CHOICE
How many years did FDR serve as president?

( ) A. 10 years
( ) B. 12 years
( ) C. 14 years
( ) D. 16 years

QUESTION 7 · MULTIPLE-CHOICE
What U.S. aid did the Truman Doctrine request for Greece and Turkey?

( ) A. $100 million
( ) B. $250 million
( ) C. $400 million
( ) D. $1 billion

QUESTION 8 · SHORT-ANSWER
Sketch your thesis sentence for the LEQ (next page). State your position: was the 1944 election about FDR-fourth-term, Truman-presidency, or Cold-War-transition? Identify one piece of evidence from each source you will use.

Long-essay-question

LEQ PROMPT

FDR's September 1944 Fala speech (Source A) demonstrated his political skills remained sharp despite declining health. Truman's March 1947 Truman Doctrine address (Source B) articulated the structural Cold War containment framework. Using BOTH sources and your knowledge of the 1944-1953 period, evaluate the extent to which the 1944 election represented (a) FDR's unprecedented fourth-term victory confirming his political dominance, (b) the 1944 VP selection producing the Truman presidency and its transformative Cold War framework, or (c) the structural transition between FDR's 1933-45 Democratic dominance and the post-1945 Cold War internationalist alignment. Defend a clear thesis.

GRADING RUBRIC

Thesis (1 pt): must take a defensible position on the FDR-fourth-term-vs-Truman-presidency-vs-Cold-War-transition axis. Contextualization (1 pt): mention at least two of the Yalta Conference, the Manhattan Project, the atomic bombings, the United Nations founding, the Marshall Plan, the NATO Treaty, the Korean War, the 1948 Dixiecrat revolt. Evidence (2 pts): must quote at least one phrase from each source. Analysis (1 pt): must explicitly evaluate the extent rather than treating the three framings as equivalent. Total 5 points.

Answer key

QUESTION 1

Accept any of: "I am accustomed to hearing malicious falsehoods about myself - such as that old, worm-eaten chestnut that I have represented myself as indispensable. But I think I have a right to resent, to object to libelous statements about my dog", "These Republican leaders have not been content with attacks on me, or my wife, or on my sons. No, not content with that, they now include my little dog, Fala", "his Scotch soul was furious". The "libelous statements about my dog" phrase is the most distinctive rhetorical formulation.

FDR's framing established the political-defense strategy.

QUESTION 2

Accept any of: "I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures", "we cannot allow changes in the status quo in violation of the Charter of the United Nations by such methods as coercion, or by such subterfuges as political infiltration", "In helping free and independent nations to maintain their freedom, the United States will be giving effect to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations". The "support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation" phrase is the most distinctive Cold War containment formulation.

Truman's framing established the Cold War containment doctrine.

QUESTION 3

Source A is FDR's 1944 campaign closing speech - articulated 6 weeks before Election Day to demonstrate his political skills remained sharp despite his declining health. The function is to neutralize Republican health attacks through humor and to forestall Dewey's campaign momentum. Source B is Truman's 1947 Cold War foundational address - articulated to a Joint Session of Congress to request $400M for Greece and Turkey and to articulate the structural Cold War containment framework. The function is to commit U.S. foreign policy to global containment of Communism. Together, the sources span the 1944-1947 transition: FDR's 1944 wartime presidency to Truman's 1945-47 Cold War presidency. The structural lesson: a 1944 election that appeared to be about FDR's personal dominance actually produced the 1945-53 Truman presidency that operationalized the Cold War framework.

AP students should be able to articulate the structural transition.

QUESTION 4

The Truman Doctrine reveals that the 1944 VP selection structurally shaped U.S. foreign policy in two specific ways: (1) Personnel continuity. Truman as president retained many FDR appointees (George Marshall as Secretary of State; Dean Acheson as State Department; James Forrestal as Secretary of Defense). The Cold War framework was articulated by FDR-era officials operating under Truman's leadership. (2) Substantive policy shift. Wallace would likely have pursued a more accommodationist policy toward the Soviet Union (Wallace publicly criticized the Truman Doctrine; Wallace ran for president 1948 on the Progressive Party against Truman). Byrnes would likely have pursued similar containment policy but with different specific commitments. Truman's personal stance - direct, decisive, willing to use force - shaped the specific operationalization of containment through the 1948 Berlin Airlift, the 1949 NATO Treaty, and the 1950 Korean War entry. The structural lesson: the 1944 VP selection was the most consequential personnel decision in U.S. Cold War history. Wallace would have produced a different Cold War; Byrnes would have produced a different Cold War. Truman produced the specific Cold War that dominated U.S. foreign policy until 1989.

AP students should be able to articulate the personnel-policy link.

QUESTION 5

Three specific 1945-1953 Truman achievements that operationalized the Cold War framework: (1) March 1947 Truman Doctrine - U.S. commitment to "support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation" with $400M aid to Greece and Turkey. Articulated the structural Cold War containment framework. (2) April 1948 Marshall Plan ($13B European economic reconstruction 1948-52; ~$170B in 2024 dollars). Strengthened Western European economies and political alignment with U.S. against Soviet bloc. Named for Secretary of State George C. Marshall who articulated the framework in June 5, 1947 Harvard commencement address. (3) April 1949 NATO Treaty - the Atlantic mutual-defense alliance establishing collective security among 12 founding members (U.S., Canada, Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Iceland). Article 5 collective-defense commitment ("an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all"). NATO remains the structural foundation of post-WWII U.S. alliance system (32 members as of 2024). Additional achievements: 1947 National Security Act (created Department of Defense, CIA, NSC); 1948 Berlin Airlift (response to Soviet blockade); 1950-53 Korean War (first major U.S. Cold War military intervention); 1951 ANZUS Treaty (Australia + New Zealand + U.S.).

AP students should be able to articulate multiple operationalizations.

QUESTION 6

12 years. FDR served as president from March 4, 1933 to April 12, 1945 - 12 years 31 days. The longest U.S. presidency in history. After FDR, the 22nd Amendment (ratified 1951) limited presidents to two terms.

AP students should know the 12-year figure.

QUESTION 7

$400 million. Truman's March 12, 1947 address requested $400 million in aid to Greece and Turkey: $300M to Greece (combating Communist insurgency in the Greek Civil War 1946-49) and $100M to Turkey (combating Soviet pressure for territorial concessions and Black Sea access).

AP students should know the $400M Truman Doctrine figure.

QUESTION 8

Open-ended thesis sketch. Acceptable answers should: (1) state a clear position on the FDR-fourth-term-vs-Truman-presidency-vs-Cold-War-transition axis, (2) avoid treating them as equivalent, (3) signal at least one piece of evidence from each source.

The thesis sketch is preparatory.