

3 Let's garden!

- A.** Observe the picture, then read the caption and the quotes.
- B.** Sum up what you have understood (Who? What? When? Why?)
- C. At home.** Search the web to find out about the garden now that the Obamas have left.

First Lady M. Obama harvests vegetables with school pupils from her organic garden.



"As both a mother and a first lady, I was alarmed by reports of skyrocketing¹ childhood obesity rates [...] I wanted this new White House garden to be a "learning garden."

1 montée en flèche

Michelle Obama, *American Grown: The Story of the White House Kitchen Garden and Gardens Across America*, 2012

"Barack's administration was focused on providing better healthcare, and for me the garden was a way to offer a parallel message about healthy living. [...]"

Michelle Obama, *Becoming*, 2018

4 The Victory Garden

- A.** Read the text. Why did Eleanor Roosevelt find it difficult to transform that space?
- B.** Find how the historical context helped Eleanor Roosevelt in her task.

Though it's certainly the most famous now, Michelle Obama's iconic White House garden is not the first of its kind. Throughout the centuries, the presidential mansion has hosted crops and sheep and all manner of landscaping¹. But by World War II, the

5 White House lawns were considered purely decorative. A First Lady would have had to fight hard to install a garden by the White House. Luckily Eleanor Roosevelt was up to the task. With wartime Washington straining to support its growing population, sustainable eating² was more important than ever

10 and many district dwellers saw it as their patriotic duty to keep from starving to death. Residents grew their own food in backyards, schoolyards, and windows boxes. Everyone from lowly clerks to the Vice President... but not the President. FDR was so against the idea of an executive garden that he

15 reportedly told the federal soil scientists "tell [Eleanor] the yard is full of rocks or something. The people own this place, and don't want it busted up just so she can plant beans." Very likely, the soil scientists knew which side their dirt was buttered on and they told Mrs. Roosevelt the truth. The White

20 House sat on what might have been the most fertile land in the city. And right on the property lived the perfect gardener, little 11-year-old Diana Hopkins. Diana lived in the White House with her father, presidential advisor Harry Hopkins, and was the perfect person for the First Lady's project. Eleanor's plan

25 for the garden was thus: "it will be a small thing, children can grow things they are apt to want to grow in a very small space." The gardeners set aside a 2x2 plot and little Diana cared

- C.** How did people react to her project? What impact did it have on the population?



faithfully for the beans, carrots, tomatoes, and cabbage with spade, hoe, and rake.

- 30 Diana's efforts changed FDR's tune, as in a presidential address the next year he said: "I hope every American who possibly can will grow a victory garden this year. We found out last year that even the small gardens helped". The total harvest³ from victory gardens was tremendous. It made the difference
- 35 between scarcity⁴ and abundance. The American public, first family included, produced forty percent of their own fruits and vegetables in 1944, opening the way for more food to be sent to troops overseas. So Diana Hopkins probably won the war, is what we're saying. Her and Eleanor Roosevelt.

1 garden design • 2 nourriture durable • 3 récolte • 4 pénurie

Claudia Swain, in _____, 25 May 2012

YOUR TURN! 5 Answer a survey

Groupwork. An American magazine has launched a survey about "The most iconic First Lady in the White House".

In groups, choose your most iconic First Lady, then explain the role she played. Justify your choice.