

LEVELED BOOK • Q

Famous First Ladies

Written by Linda Johns

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Table of Contents

What Does a First Lady Do?	4
Eleanor Roosevelt	6
Jacqueline Kennedy	9
Hillary Rodham Clinton	13
Glossary	16
Index	16



First Lady Michelle Obama in 2011

What Does a First Lady Do?

The First Lady of the United States is the wife of the president. Being First Lady isn't an ordinary job. First Ladies don't get paid. First Ladies also are very much in the public eye. This gives them the chance to talk to many Americans about causes or projects they believe in.

Do You Know?

Q: When a woman is elected president of the United States, what will her husband be called?

A: The First Gentleman

Over the years, First Ladies have worked hard to help the poor; improve the environment, schools, and libraries; and enrich the lives of thousands of children.

Some First Ladies are better known than others. Many famous First Ladies have been more active and outspoken than the rest.

This book is about three of the most influential First Ladies. You are about to meet Eleanor Roosevelt, Jacqueline Kennedy, and Hillary Rodham Clinton.



Eleanor Roosevelt



Jacqueline Kennedy



Hillary Clinton

Do You Know?

When George Washington was president, people weren't sure what to call his wife, Martha. One day, a crowd greeted Martha Washington with shouts of, "Long live Lady Washington!" Shortly after, the term First Lady began to be used. It was added to the dictionary in 1934.



Eleanor Roosevelt talks politics.

Eleanor Roosevelt

President: Franklin D. Roosevelt

Year Elected: 1932

Years in White House: 1933–1945

First Lady quote: *No one can let you feel inferior without your permission.*

One of the most powerful First Ladies was Eleanor Roosevelt. Her husband, Franklin Roosevelt, was president during a difficult time in America. They moved into the White House during the Great Depression of the 1930s, when many people were out of work.

They stayed through the mid-1940s, when the United States was in the middle of World War II.

Singing in Washington

In 1939, the famous singer Marian Anderson was supposed to sing at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. However, the group called the Daughters of the American Revolution, who owned the hall, banned her from singing there. Their reason: she was African-American. Eleanor Roosevelt resigned in protest from the group after the display of **discrimination**. She then invited Anderson to sing at the Lincoln Memorial, where 75,000 people saw the concert. Millions more heard Anderson's beautiful voice on the radio.



Marian Anderson sings at the Lincoln Memorial.

Eleanor worked hard all her life, even though she was born to wealthy parents. She worked as a reporter and as a **humanitarian**, giving to people who needed her help. She was the first First Lady to travel all over the world. She shared her experiences with President Roosevelt, and he learned about the hardships people were facing.

She went to visit soldiers in war zones in England and the South Pacific during World War II. She met thousands of injured soldiers and spent time talking with them while they were recovering.



Eleanor Roosevelt visits with soldiers at the White House.

Eleanor Roosevelt was the first First Lady to become heavily involved in politics. Because of her involvement in world affairs, she was known as the First Lady of the World. In 1945, her husband died of **polio**, a disease that he had suffered from during his presidency.



Jackie Kennedy rides horses with her children.

Jacqueline Kennedy

President: John F. Kennedy

Year Elected: 1960

Years in White House: 1961–1963

First Lady quote: *There are many little ways to enlarge your child's world. Love of books is the best of all.*

Jacqueline Kennedy grew up in New York. She loved riding horses and continued to ride throughout her life. She graduated from Vassar College. She worked as a photographer for a Washington, D.C., newspaper. Publishing would always be a part of her life.

Jackie met a young man named John “Jack” Kennedy in 1952. He told her he would be president of the United States one day. A year later, he was a U.S. senator. They married in 1953. He was elected president in 1960. The Kennedy family moved into the White House with their two children, Caroline, who was three years old, and John Jr., who was just a baby.



The Kennedy family at the south entrance to the White House



Jackie Kennedy takes a reporter on a filmed tour through the White House in 1962.

When Jackie Kennedy was First Lady, she invited all of America to see the White House. A CBS television camera crew followed Jackie Kennedy on a personal tour of the White House in 1962.

She worked to restore the White House as a kind of museum, sharing its rich history with everyone. The First Lady also promoted arts such as painting and dance. Americans came to love Jackie Kennedy for her style, sense of fashion, and gracious manners.

In 1963, President Kennedy was **assassinated**. Jackie's courage during the tragedy won her the admiration of the world. From 1978 until her death from cancer in 1994, the former First Lady lived and worked in New York City.



Jackie Kennedy and her children attend her husband's funeral.



Hillary worked to get her husband, Bill Clinton, elected president.

Hillary Rodham Clinton

President: William Jefferson Clinton

Year Elected: 1992

Years in White House: 1993–2000

First Lady quote: *There cannot be true democracy unless women's voices are heard.*

Hillary Rodham was going to law school at Yale University when she met a law student named Bill Clinton. They married after law school and moved to Little Rock, Arkansas. Hillary Clinton worked as an attorney and taught at the University of Arkansas law school. Bill Clinton also taught law and later was elected governor of Arkansas. For twelve years, Hillary was First Lady of the state of Arkansas.

As First Lady of the United States, Hillary Clinton worked hard for better health care for all Americans. She made speeches about how important it was for children to have **immunizations**. She helped raise money for health projects.

President Clinton asked Hillary Clinton to lead the Task Force on National Health Care Reform. She was the first First Lady to have an official government position during her husband's presidency.



Hillary Rodham Clinton pushed for health care reform.



Hillary Clinton is sworn in as U.S. Secretary of State.

Many people say that her time as First Lady was more **influential** than that of other First Ladies. She did a lot to shape her husband's policies and didn't work behind the scenes like some other First Ladies.

In 2000, Hillary Rodham Clinton was elected United States senator from New York. She was the first First Lady elected to the U.S. Senate.

In 2009, she became the U.S. Secretary of State. She is the first First Lady to hold that office as well.

Glossary

assassinated	killed by a surprise attack (p. 12)
discrimination	the unfair treatment of a person or group (p. 7)
humanitarian	a person who helps people (p. 8)
immunizations	shots that protect people from diseases (p. 14)
influential	having the power to shape events (p. 15)
polio	a viral disease that attacks the brain and spinal cord (p. 8)

Index

Anderson, Marian, 7	Kennedy, Jacqueline, 5, 9–12
Clinton, Hillary Rodham, 5, 13–15	Kennedy, John F., 10–12
Clinton, William, 13, 14	Roosevelt, Eleanor, 5–8
Daughters of the American Revolution, 7	Roosevelt, Franklin D., 6
First Gentleman, 4	Senate, 15
Great Depression, 6	Washington, Martha, 5
	World War II, 8

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Cover: First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy in the White House

Back cover: Hillary Rodham Clinton is sworn in as U.S. Secretary of State as daughter Chelsea and husband Bill look on.

Title page: Eleanor Roosevelt sits with Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, First Lady of the Republic of China, in 1943.

Table of Contents: Eleanor Roosevelt during World War II

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