

**Journal Article Analysis:**

**William E. Leuchtenburg, "Franklin D. Roosevelt, The First Modern President"**

1. What is the thesis of Leuchtenburg's essay? Where does he state it?
2. As you read the first four pages of the essay, pay special attention to Leuchtenburg's topic sentences (the first sentence in each paragraph). Note the idea that is expressed in the topic sentence. Does the rest of the paragraph pertain to the idea in the topic sentence? How does he *develop* or *support* the idea in the subsequent sentences?
3. One of Leuchtenburg's first points is that Roosevelt has had many critics, both at the time he was President and since. How does he use both primary and secondary sources to demonstrate this point? [Look at his footnotes.]
4. Starting on page 5, and for the next four pages, pay special attention to each quote. Is it clear who is saying the words between the quotation marks. At each quote, underline the person's name whose words Leuchtenburg is quoting.
5. What reasons does Leuchtenburg offer for FDR's high standing in the presidential greatness poll that even skeptics have acknowledged?
6. What is the most important reason for FDR's high ranking?
7. On pages 6-8, Leuchtenburg describes the circumstances under which FDR took office and how the mood changed in the days after his inauguration. How does he use primary and secondary sources not only to make his point, but to paint a vivid picture?
8. What two points about FDR's temperament is Leuchtenburg trying to make on pages 8-10? How does his choice of quotes help him make these points?
9. Why does a discussion of temperament lead naturally into a discussion of FDR's relations with the media?
10. Note on page 15 how Leuchtenburg uses the "Not only...but also" structure in his topic sentence to shift from one topic to the next. What are these two topics?

11. Leuchtenburg argues for FDR's skill as a chief legislator on pages 16-18, but to make his argument stronger, a good historian must present the other side of the story and then show that it does not measure up to one's own point of view. How does Leuchtenburg try to do this? [Note the "To be sure"..."Still," construction on page 17.]
12. Note the *kinds* of evidence that Leuchtenburg introduces to demonstrate that FDR was very skilled in dealing with Congress. One kind is to quote people who make this point. What other kinds of evidence does he use? What sources does he use? [See footnote 50]
13. When Leuchtenburg finishes making the point that FDR was a skilled advocate for his legislative program, what is the next point he moves on to? [See first full paragraph on page 19.] Why do you think he made this choice?
14. In FDR's view, what were the duties and responsibilities of government? To what extent were his ideas new or controversial? What evidence does Leuchtenburg use to answer these two questions?
15. What evidence does Leuchtenburg introduce to refute the charge of FDR's critics that the President was a "traitor to his class?" Does he present his evidence in a compelling way?
16. How did FDR face the challenge of getting his programs implemented, in other words, how did he become an effective chief administrator?
17. How does Leuchtenburg use evidence to present both sides of the case on the issue of whether FDR was a good administrator? Note how he structures this discussion: first he presents one side with supporting evidence, then he presents the other. Note also that you can follow his line of narrative simply by reading each topic sentence. How can an author be even-handed and yet still advance a thesis in a compelling way?
18. What kinds of sources does Leuchtenburg use in his discussion of FDR's intelligence? How would you summarize Leuchtenburg's view on this topic? To what extent does his use of evidence make a good case for his point of view?
19. In his discussion of FDR and the Imperial Presidency, does Leuchtenburg present the comparisons between Nixon and FDR fairly? Does he let FDR off too easily? Is he too hard on FDR (or Nixon?) or does he present an even-handed assessment? How does he structure this discussion – how does the narrative unfold? Can one draw from this section that being a "modern" president may not necessarily be the best approach to the office?
20. How does Leuchtenburg's discussion of FDR's personal significance as the "great man" in history help to support the thesis of his article?