Eleanor Roosevelt’s Four Basic Rights

First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, a lifelong advocate of equal rights, used her position as First Lady to advocate against discrimination in the United States. However, Mrs. Roosevelt’s ideas were not embraced by everyone in the pre-civil rights era when segregation and racism were institutionalized in American economics, politics, and society. In this letter from 1944 Mrs. Roosevelt responded to one of her critics, Addie Frizelle, who worried about the desegregation of restrooms and forced social interaction between the races in the government’s movement toward racial equality in some spheres.

The First Lady deftly responded to the woman, dismissing her concerns about socialization and desegregation, while enumerating the “four basic rights which I believe every citizen in a democracy must enjoy. These are the right for equal education, the right to work for equal pay according to ability, the right to justice under the law, the right to participate in the making of the laws by use of the ballot.”
Dear Miss Frizielle:
I have not advocated social equality between colored and white people. That is a personal thing which nobody can advocate. Nobody can tell me whom I shall have inside my house, any more than I can tell others. The only things which I have advocated are four basic rights which I believe every citizen in a democracy must enjoy. These are the right for equal education, the right to work for equal pay according to ability, the right to justice under the law, the right to participate in the making of the laws by use of the ballot.
Questions beyond that are personal things and people must decide them for themselves. I am sure it is true that here in Washington you have found some discourteous colored people. I have found colored people who were discourteous, and I have also found white people who were discourteous. As a matter of fact, I doubt if it does any people anywhere any harm to tell them that you believe they are entitled to certain rights and you are willing to see them obtain those rights. If you have to use the same toilets and wash basins where you work, then all of you must have to take physical examinations, in which case I think you are as safe as you would be in any place where a great many people are coming and going. If you are nervous, there are certain precautions which you can always take.

Sincerely yours,
Eleanor Roosevelt
1. According to Eleanor Roosevelt, who should enjoy four basic rights?
   A women and children in a communist state
   B members of all races in a monarchy
   C every citizen in a democracy
   D all people, regardless of where they live

2. How does Eleanor Roosevelt organize her letter?
   A She first responds to specific concerns of Miss Frizielle’s, then lists four basic rights which she believes every citizen in a democracy should enjoy, and finally expresses a belief about social equality.
   B She first expresses a belief about social equality, then lists four basic rights which she believes every citizen in a democracy should enjoy, and finally responds to specific concerns of Miss Frizielle’s.
   C She first responds to specific concerns of Miss Frizielle’s, then expresses a belief about social equality, and finally lists four basic rights which she believes every citizen in a democracy should enjoy.
   D She first expresses a belief about social equality, then responds to specific concerns of Miss Frizielle’s, and finally lists four basic rights which she believes every citizen in a democracy should enjoy.

3. Read this paragraph from Eleanor Roosevelt’s letter.

“I am sure it is true that here in Washington you have found some discourteous colored people. I have found colored people who were discourteous, and I have also found white people who were discourteous. As a matter of fact, I doubt if it does any people anywhere any harm to tell them that you believe they are entitled to certain rights and you are willing to see them obtain those rights.”

What can you infer from this information about Addie Frizielle?

   A Addie Frizielle supported the same four basic rights that Eleanor Roosevelt did.
   B Addie Frizielle was uncomfortable with the desegregation of restrooms in the workplace.
   C Addie Frizielle considered the colored people and white people in Washington equally discourteous.
   D. Addie Frizielle was upset by the behavior of colored people in Washington.
4. How did Eleanor Roosevelt respond to Addie Frizielle’s concern about the desegregation of restrooms in the workplace?

**A** Eleanor Roosevelt argued that there is not much need to worry about the matter.

**B** Eleanor Roosevelt acknowledged that Addie Frizielle’s concern is a reasonable one.

**C** Eleanor Roosevelt attacked Addie Frizielle’s concern as racist and unfounded.

**D** Eleanor Roosevelt observed that the safety of restrooms varies significantly from one workplace to another.

5. What is the main idea of Eleanor Roosevelt’s letter?

**A** There are discourteous colored people as well as discourteous white people in Washington.

**B** Nobody has the right to tell other people whom they may have inside their houses because social equality is a matter that people must decide for themselves.

**C** Physical examinations help ensure the safety of restrooms in the workplace, but people may take extra precautions if they are nervous.

**D** All citizens in a democracy should have certain basic rights, and questions that do not involve those rights should be decided by people on their own.

6. Read this paragraph from Eleanor Roosevelt’s letter.

“I am sure it is true that here in Washington you have found some discourteous colored people. I have found colored people who were discourteous, and I have also found white people who were discourteous. As a matter of fact, I doubt if it does any people anywhere any harm to tell them that you believe they are entitled to certain rights and you are willing to see them obtain those rights.”

How can Eleanor Roosevelt’s tone in this paragraph be described?

**A** urgent and distressed

**B** angry and combative

**C** calm and thoughtful

**D** warm and friendly

7. Read these sentence from the letter.

“I have not advocated social equality between colored and white people. That is a personal thing which nobody can advocate. Nobody can tell me whom I shall have inside my house, any more than I can tell others.”

What is the relationship between the third sentence and the previous two?
A  The third sentence helps to illustrate the meaning of the previous two sentences.
B  The third sentence compares the ideas expressed by the previous two sentences.
C  The third sentence contrasts the ideas expressed by the previous two sentences.
D  The third sentence suggests an alternative to the ideas expressed by the previous two sentences.

8. What are the four basic rights that Eleanor Roosevelt believes every citizen in a democracy should enjoy?
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
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9. Addie Frizielle worried about the desegregation of restrooms and forced social interaction between the races in the government’s movement toward racial equality in some spheres. Did Eleanor Roosevelt share these worries? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
_____________________________________________________________________
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10. Eleanor Roosevelt believed that every citizen in a democracy should have four basic rights. Beyond that, she believed that people must decide matters for themselves. Is the matter of social interaction one that people must decide for themselves or one that is covered by the basic rights which every citizen should enjoy? Support your answer with evidence from the letter.
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Vocabulary

Word = Useful vocabulary in this reading selection (Some are provided. You supply more).
Definition = Define each word.
Synonym = Provide a synonym for each word.
Etymology = Circle any etymological words parts in each word and define them in this column.

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In September 1620, during the reign of King James I, around 100 English men and women—many of them members of the English Separatist Church—set sail for the New World aboard the Mayflower, a three-masted merchant ship. They landed on the shores of Cape Cod, in present-day Massachusetts, two months later, and in late December anchored at Plymouth Rock, where they would form the first permanent settlement of Europeans in New England. Though more than half the original settlers died during that grueling first winter, the survivors were able to secure peace treaties with neighboring Native American tribes and build a largely self-sufficient economy within five years.
Journey to the New World

Among the group traveling on the Mayflower in 1620 were close to 40 members of a radical Puritan faction known as the English Separatist Church. Feeling that the Church of England had not sufficiently completed the necessary work of the Protestant Reformation, the group had chosen to break with the church altogether. The Separatists had sought religious freedom before, fleeing England in 1607 and 1608 to settle in the Netherlands, first in Amsterdam and later in the town of Leiden, where they remained for the next decade. Wanting to secure their English language and heritage, and seeking more economic opportunity, the group—later known as the Pilgrims—laid plans for a voyage to the New World aboard the Mayflower.

Did you Know?
Three more ships traveled to Plymouth soon after the Mayflower, including the Fortune (1621), the Anne and the Little James (both 1623). Passengers on these first four ships were called the "Old Comers" of Plymouth Colony, and were given special treatment in later colonial affairs

Surviving the first year in Plymouth Colony

For the next few months, many of the settlers stayed on the Mayflower while ferrying back and forth to shore to build their new settlement. In March, they began moving ashore permanently. More than half the settlers fell ill and died that first winter, victims of an epidemic of disease that swept the new colony. Soon after they moved ashore, the Pilgrims were introduced to a Native American man named Tisquantum, or Squanto, who would become a member of the colony. A member of the Pawtuxet tribe (from present-day Massachusetts and Rhode Island) who had been kidnapped by the explorer John Smith and taken to England, only to escape back to his native land, Squanto acted as an interpreter and mediator between Plymouth’s leaders and local Native Americans, including Chief Massasoit of the Pokanoket tribe. In the fall of 1621, the Pilgrims famously shared a harvest feast with the Pokanokets; the meal is now considered the basis for the Thanksgiving holiday for the Thanksgiving holiday.
All the adult males aboard the Mayflower had signed the so-called Mayflower Compact, a document that would become the foundation of Plymouth’s government. Though the Separatists were a minority in the group, they formed its powerful center, and would entirely control the colony’s government during its first 40 years. William Bradford, a leader of the Separatist congregation, was one of the framers of the Mayflower Compact, and would serve as Plymouth’s governor for 30 years after its founding. Bradford also kept a voluminous journal chronicling the ship’s voyage and the founding of Plymouth Colony.

**Growth and decline of the Plymouth Colony**

With peace secured, the colonists in Plymouth were able to concentrate on building a viable settlement for themselves rather than spend their time and resources guarding themselves against attack. Squanto taught them how to plant corn, which became an important crop, as well as where to fish and hunt beaver. Though Plymouth would never develop as robust an economy as later settlements—such as Massachusetts Bay—agriculture, fishing and trading made the colony self-sufficient within five years after it was founded. Many other European settlers followed in the Pilgrims’ footsteps to New England. As the settlers sought to occupy more and more land in the region, relations with Native Americans deteriorated, and sporadic violence broke out that would culminate decades later in the bloody King Philip’s War of 1675. By that time, the ideal of Plymouth Colony—conceived in the Mayflower Compact as a self-contained community governed by a common religious affiliation—had given way to the far less lofty influences of trade and commerce, and the devout Pilgrims had fragmented into smaller, more self-serving groups. Still, the original concept served as the foundation for many later settlements. These included John Winthrop’s Massachusetts Bay Colony, founded in 1630, which became the most populous and prosperous colony in the region. Plymouth’s influence in New England declined accordingly, until it was absorbed by Massachusetts in 1691.
1. What was the Mayflower?
   A  a ship that reached Plymouth in 1623, shortly after the Anne arrived
   B  a ship that carried around 100 English men and women to Cape Cod in 1620
   C  a ship that took a Native American man known as Squanto from North America to England
   D  a ship that carried John Winthrop to the New World, where he founded Massachusetts Bay Colony

2. The article explains why some of the people aboard the Mayflower wanted to travel to the New World. What is one of the reasons that some of the people aboard the Mayflower wanted to travel to the New World?
   A  They wanted more economic opportunity.
   B  They wanted to rejoin the Church of England.
   C  They wanted to bring English customs to the Netherlands.
   D  They wanted to increase trade between England and the Netherlands

3. Squanto’s help was important to the colonists’ survival in Plymouth
   What evidence from the text best supports this conclusion
   A  "Soon after they moved ashore, the Pilgrims were introduced to a Native American man named Tisquantum, or Squanto, who would become a member of the colony."
   B  "A member of the Pawtuxet tribe (from present-day Massachusetts and Rhode Island) who had been kidnapped by the explorer John Smith and taken to England, only to escape back to his native land, Squanto acted as an interpreter and mediator between Plymouth’s leaders and local Native Americans, including Chief Massasoit of the Pokanoket tribe."
   C  "In the fall of 1621, the Pilgrims famously shared a harvest feast with the Pokanokets; the meal is now considered the basis for the Thanksgiving holiday."
   D  "Squanto taught them how to plant corn, which became an important crop, as well as where to fish and hunt beaver. Though Plymouth would never develop as robust an economy as later settlements—such as Massachusetts Bay Colony—agriculture, fishing and trading made the colony self-sufficient within five years after it was founded."

4. Read these sentences from the text
   "Many other European settlers followed in the Pilgrims’ footsteps to New England. As the settlers sought to occupy more and more land in the region, relations with Native Americans deteriorated, and sporadic violence broke out that would culminate decades later in the bloody King Philip’s War of 1675."

Based on the information in these sentences, why might relations between European settlers and Native Americans have deteriorated?
A The winter of 1675 was unusually harsh and resulted in a scarcity of food throughout New England.
B The policies of King Philip were less friendly to Native Americans than the policies of King James I.
C Native Americans became upset by European settlers taking over more and more land.
D Communication between European settlers and Native Americans became more difficult after Squanto's death.

5. What is the main idea of this article?
A Members of the English Separatist Church broke with the Church of England because they felt that it had not sufficiently completed the work of the Protestant Reformation.
B The original destination of the Mayflower was a region near the Hudson River, but rough weather resulted in the ship landing on the shores of Cape Cod instead.
C The Separatists formed the powerful center of the group on the Mayflower and would control the government of Plymouth Colony for its first 40 years.
D Plymouth Colony, founded in 1620 by a group of English men and women, was the first permanent settlement of Europeans in New England.

6. Read this sentence from the text.
“Though Plymouth would never develop as robust an economy as later settlements—such as Massachusetts Bay Colony—agriculture, fishing and trading made the colony self-sufficient within five years after it was founded.”

Why might the author have used em dashes in this sentence?
A to provide an example of one of the "later settlements"
B to suggest that later settlements would take more than five years to become self-sufficient
C to express surprise that Plymouth Colony's economy was not more robust
D to emphasize the importance of agriculture in Plymouth Colony

7. Read this sentence from the text.
“With peace secured, the colonists in Plymouth were able to concentrate on building a viable settlement for themselves rather than spend their time and resources guarding themselves against attack.”

What phrase could replace "With peace secured" without changing the meaning of the sentence?
A Before peace had been secured
B Until peace had been secured
C Although peace had been secured
D Because peace had been secured
8. By 1675 the ideal of Plymouth Colony as a community governed by a common religious affiliation had given way to the influences of trade and commerce. What had happened to the Pilgrims by this time?

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9. One important accomplishment of the settlers of Plymouth Colony was to secure peace treaties with neighboring Native American tribes. What was another of their important accomplishments?

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10. Explain how Plymouth Colony may have served as a foundation for later settlements. Support your answer with evidence from the article.

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