

# CIVICS IN REAL LIFE

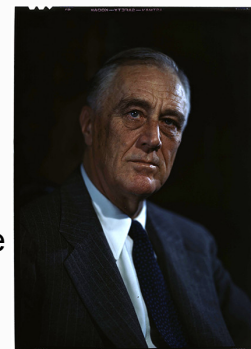
Civics is all around us. There is a lot to know about the government and how “We the People” interact with the government and each other. Let’s help each other expand our civic literacy.

## First 100 Days



The **first 100 days** of a presidential administration is considered by many to be an evaluation period of the chief executive’s productivity and effectiveness as it relates to the accomplishments of his policy agenda. In the beginning of any new administration, **high hopes** exist for new presidents to be able to affect positive change as they attempt to move the country towards their vision and fulfill electoral promises.

This time frame for evaluating a president’s performance dates back to 1933, with the first administration of **Franklin Delano Roosevelt**. Within his first **100 days** of being president, FDR implemented his fireside chats, created programs for his “**New Deal**,” and negotiated and advanced 76 pieces of legislation, most designed to help get America’s economy back on track from the Great Depression. Roosevelt’s productivity was so significant that it has become the yardstick by which subsequent presidents are measured and what the first 100 days of any administration has come to symbolize.



Since Roosevelt, no other president has come close to achieving what he did within those 100 days, which makes it important to note that for a president to accomplish as much as FDR did within what is politically a short time frame, he must have the cooperation of the Congress. Collaboration is essential because Congress is the other half of the policy-making



equation. They have the power to make the laws and the president has the power to enforce them. Without congressional cooperation, any president’s policy agenda would be in jeopardy, which helps to explain why subsequent presidents have fallen short of FDR’s record. This raises the question, is it fair to hold presidents to such a level of accomplishment when there is a **divided government**? While there has traditionally been a ‘**honeymoon period**’ granted to a new president as they get up to speed in office, is that general goodwill during the first months on the job harder to achieve in the present day? Regardless of the answers, it is unlikely a president’s job performance will be evaluated any differently within the first three and a half months of their administration, while attempting to meet the historical bar set by Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

**To Think and To Do:** The Biden administration has high expectations for its first 100 days in office, hoping to pass a series of laws affecting a number of government programs. Between January 20 and April 30, President Biden’s 100th day in office, track how many pieces of his legislative agenda get passed by the Congress and signed into law. The current presidential leaders and the legislation passed within the first 100 days are:

President of the United States	Pieces of legislation passed in the first 100 Days
Franklin Delano Roosevelt	76
Harry Truman	55
Donald J. Trump	28
Joe Biden	?

**Learn MORE** about the First 100 Days.

Free registration may be required.

A **President’s First 100 Days**, from C-SPAN.org



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