

**TEACHER GUIDE**

# 1940 DOC. #1: FDR Poster and Willkie Sticker

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

George Washington’s decision not to seek a third term had set a pattern for all other Presidents to end their presidency after two elected terms. Ulysses S. Grant had considered making a third run but the scandals in his second term ended that hope. When Franklin D. Roosevelt accepted the Democratic Party nomination for the third time in 1940 he broke the tradition. Roosevelt said that he was willing to serve his country in a time of need if called upon to do so. Republican candidate Wendell Willkie criticized him for wanting to continue his “one-man rule.”

Willkie also warned that Roosevelt would involve the United States in a European war that would mean “wooden crosses for sons and brothers and sweethearts” (Boller 253).

Roosevelt assured voters that “Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars.” He went on to say, “Of course we’ll fight if we’re attacked. If someone attacks us then it isn’t a foreign war, is it?” (Boller 254).

> **Project** the document.

**QUESTION** How are Uncle Sam and FDR portrayed in this poster produced by the “Independent Voter’s Committee of the Arts & Sciences for Roosevelt”?

**SUGGESTED ANSWER** Uncle Sam’s look says, “I mean what I say.” Roosevelt looks dignified, serious, and sincere.

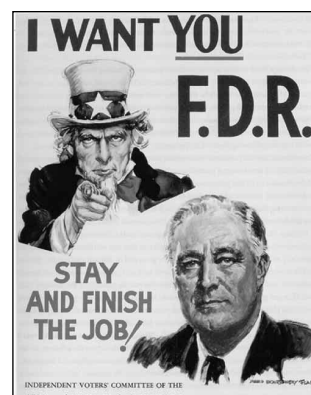
**EVIDENCE** Uncle Sam looks serious and is pointing straight at you, the voter

**QUESTION** How is Uncle Sam portrayed in order to convey the Republicans’ message in this sticker?

**SUGGESTED ANSWER** Uncle Sam’s look and body language say “No way” to a third term for FDR.

**EVIDENCE** he is frowning, his jaw is set, and he is pointing downward with his thumb

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**PowerPoint Slide**

**SEE NOTE** →

QUESTION

**Why do you think these artists chose Uncle Sam to communicate their message?**

SUGGESTED ANSWER

Uncle Sam is a symbol of authority and history. The message conveyed by the image is "Listen to him, he knows what he's talking about."

**FURTHER QUESTIONS**

Roosevelt said that if the United States was actually attacked and then retaliated it would not really be a foreign war. Do you think he's right? Why or why not?

Was it acceptable for Roosevelt to seek a third term? Why or why not?

**NOTE**

The poster was created by artist James Montgomery Flagg who had used a similar design for a recruiting poster for World War I in 1917.

**ADDITIONAL INFO**

With war looming, many voters felt it best not to change leadership. Although the Republicans lost the battle for public opinion against FDR's third term, they were able in 1951 to pass the 22nd Amendment to the Constitution prohibiting third terms for Presidents.