

A NEW NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SPECIAL
AMBASSADOR: UNDER FIRE OVERSEAS

Premiering Wednesday, September 4, 2002, at 8 p.m. ET/PT on PBS (check local listings)

Kids' Activity Guide

Today, more than ever, the United States has a huge stake in maintaining political harmony with nations everywhere. Much of this responsibility falls to an elite group of women and men trained in the delicate and demanding arts of diplomacy — the ambassadors. Stationed at over 160 embassies throughout the world, America's ambassadors use their diplomatic talents to help keep America's relations stable and strong in the midst of crisis and calm, terror and tragedy.

Kindergarten through Grade 4

Benjamin Franklin was the first ambassador of the United States. During the Revolutionary War, he was charged with the task of persuading a reluctant French king to support America in its fight for independence from Great Britain. Appointed in 1776, Franklin was an immediate celebrity on the streets of Paris. His great popularity and steady diplomatic skills earned him the respect of foreign leaders. Later, he was essential in negotiating the delicate peace agreement between the new U.S. and Great Britain.

Read a biography of Benjamin Franklin to your students. Then, have students create a diorama portraying an event from Franklin's life. Provide students with shoeboxes, construction paper, cardboard, string, scissors, glue, and other craft supplies. Be sure to have extra copies of the biography on hand so students can refer to the text or pictures. When the dioramas are complete, have students present them to the class, explaining the event in Franklin's life that they've depicted.

Grades 5 through 8

One job of an ambassador is to share information about his or her home country. Tell students that they will get to play the part of ambassador for a day. Assign each student or group of students a country. Their job is to research the countries they've been assigned and prepare a presentation for the class. Each student or group of students will be responsible for finding out the following information about their country:

- geographic location
- language(s) spoken
- traditional food
- traditional clothing
- traditional music
- dominant religion
- major holidays/events
- climate
- type of government

-more-

Have students present their information to the class. If possible, have each student make a costume depicting the traditional dress of their country and prepare a traditional food dish for the class.

Grades 9 through 12

After only nine months on the job, Wendy Chamberlin resigned from her post of U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan. She was at a high point of her diplomatic career as the ambassador to one of the largest American embassies in the world in a country on the front lines of a massive military operation and on the front pages of the world's newspapers. But her newfound success came at a cost to her family. When the U.S. State Department deemed Pakistan unsafe for all but essential embassy workers, Chamberlin's two teenage daughters were forced to return to the United States. Chamberlin, a single mother, faced an important decision: her career or her family. Chamberlin, at the request of her daughters, decided to leave her assignment early, rather than endure continuous separation from her children.

Have students discuss the conflict between the responsibilities of an ambassador and role of a parent. Possible discussion points include: How do you feel about Ambassador Chamberlin's decision? What would you do if you were in her shoes? Would the responsibility you have to your family outweigh your duty to your country? What would you do if you were in Ambassador Chamberlin's daughters' shoes? Would you want your mother to abandon her career if it interfered with her being a parent, or would you want your mother to have a chance to pursue her career?

#

Media Contact:

Alanna Zahn
National Geographic Television & Film
202-775-6725 azahn@ngs.org