

DEAR MADAM PRESIDENT: LETTERS TO WORLD LEADERS #2

(Time Minimum)

**"I recommend you visit my country because . . .":
Goodwill Ambassadors Persuade with Logic and Emotion**

Lesson Sketch

Skills: Students *read* articles about countries around the world; *select* a country to study; *identify* which elements of a country's landscape, culture, and economy are similar to elements in the US, vs. different from elements in the US; *evaluate* what benefit the leader of their chosen country might gain via a visit to the US; and *write* a formal letter *to persuade* the leader of their chosen country to visit the US.

Grades: 9–10

Time: Three 90-minute classes

Featured Resources: AtoZWorldCulture.com or AtoZtheWorld.com articles Maps, Country Snapshot, Cultural Overview, The People, Greetings and Courtesies, Points of Interest, Economy and Trade, The Business Experience, Religion, National Cuisine, Government, Language.

Inspirations

"Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less." ~Marie Curie

"The reality today is that we are all interdependent and have to co-exist on this small planet. Therefore, the only sensible and intelligent way of resolving differences and clashes of interests, whether between individuals or nations, is through dialogue." ~The Dalai Lama

Cultural exchange programs such as the US State Department's International Writing Program and DanceMotion USA

UNICEF's Goodwill Ambassador program

Lesson Overview

Acting as goodwill ambassadors for the United States, students read about countries and cultures of the world; select a country of interest; identify areas in common and areas of difference in landscape, culture, and economy; determine how the leader of the country would benefit from a visit to the US; and write a formal letter to the leader of the country persuading him or her to visit the US using both logic and emotion.

Lesson Steps

Students make a list of countries they are curious about. Students briefly skim articles, and choose one country to focus on. Students complete a prewriting exercise in which they make some guesses and some predictions about the country they're about to study—in particular, students make predictions about the country's similarities to and differences from the US. Students read a series of articles about their countries of interest in order to develop a sense of cultural and economic context, and note how the countries' realities are in line with and/or contradictory to their predictions. Students read articles about the US, and reflect on what existing points of connection and/or desirable points of connection there might be between their chosen countries and the US. After prewriting exercises, students write a formal letter to their chosen countries' heads of state persuading them to visit the US using both logic and emotion.

Standards Met

1. **Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects: College and Career Readiness Anchors for Reading**
 - a. Key Ideas and Details 1, 2
 - b. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 7
 - c. Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity 10
2. **Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects: College and Career Readiness Anchors for Writing**
 - a. Text Types and Purposes 1, 2
 - b. Production and Distribution of Writing 4, 5, 6
 - c. Research to Build and Present Knowledge 7,8,9
 - d. Range of Writing 10
3. **Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts: College and Career Readiness Anchors for Reading**
 - a. Key Ideas and Details 1, 2
 - b. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 7
 - c. Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity 10
4. **Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts: College and Career Readiness Anchors for Writing**
 - a. Text Types and Purposes 1, 2
 - b. Production and Distribution of Writing 4, 5, 6
 - c. Research to Build and Present Knowledge 7,8,9
 - d. Range of Writing 10
5. **Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts: College and Career Readiness Anchors for Speaking and Listening**
 - a. Comprehension and Collaboration 1, 2
6. **Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts: College and Career Readiness Anchors for Language**
 - a. Conventions of Standard English 1, 2
 - b. Knowledge of Language 3
 - c. Vocabulary Acquisition and Use 4, 6
7. **National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Standards for the English Language Arts**
 - a. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

8. **National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies**
a. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

Supplies

- Computer access for each student
- Access to AtoZWorldCulture.com or AtoZtheWorld.com
- Access to online language references like BBC Languages, Omniglot.com, and Forvo.com
- Dictionaries
- Notebooks, pens, etc.
- Printer access
- Envelopes and stamps

Instructional Plan

Student Objectives

Students will:

- Improve reading comprehension skills, note taking skills, abstract reasoning skills, and writing skills.
- Increase geographic knowledge and geopolitical awareness.
- Begin to develop a sense of which languages are spoken in what regions, and have a brief encounter with a language other than English.
- Increase cultural awareness and self-awareness by encountering their own cultural tendencies, and considering how these tendencies condition responses to unfamiliar cultures.
- Present evidence for a proposition in writing.
- Present evidence for a proposition using both logic and emotion.
- Distinguish informal language from formal language; write a formal letter to a head of state.
- Become more sophisticated global citizens able to engage in dialogue with those different from themselves.

Session One

Teacher Introduction

- Introduce the concept of the goodwill ambassador, and the goal of students as goodwill ambassadors. Establish that all readings, prewritings, and discussions are note taking/prewriting exercises toward a final writing exercise—if students complete all steps along the way, the final writing assignment will be a snap.

Student Directions

Which country would you like to visit? Select a country

- Go to AtoZWorldCulture.com or AtoZtheWorld.com.

- Peruse list of countries.
- Identify three countries you are curious about. Skim materials for these countries: get a quick sense of where the country is, who lives there, and whether you are curious about the place.
- Choose one country to mentally visit for this exercise.

Teacher Introduction

Set the stage for the series of prewriting exercises by establishing expectations. In terms appropriate to existing classroom activities and curricula, explain that these prewriting activities are to be taken seriously as generative writing practices that result in an easier time completing a formal writing assignment, but they are not formal writing assignments themselves. The idea is to get ideas flowing on the page, and for students to leave themselves notes to come back to later when they get stuck, but prewriting is not the time to worry about writing beautiful sentences or spelling everything perfectly.

Student Directions

Learn about your chosen country: Comparing expectations to reality

- Go to Maps—understand where countries are. Complete the following readings and prewriting exercises for both countries.
- Place your bets: Prewriting #1
 - Based on this country's location, what are your expectations regarding the culture? In what language/s do you guess that people greet each other? Are any of these languages spoken in the US? Do you guess that most residents have their roots in this country, or do you expect a large recent immigrant population? Do you expect that most residents are of the same ethnic background and religion, or do you expect a high degree of ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural diversity in this place? How does the degree of diversity compare to diversity in the US? What do you suppose is important to residents of this country? What would you say is important to residents of the US? Do you imagine an intricate ritual of greeting in this country, or a loose, laid-back greeting style? What role do hierarchy and social status play in the culture? Do you expect that people's experiences of living in this country vary depending upon social status, gender, ethnicity, and/or age? If so, how? What are the major economic sectors of the country (meaning, what kinds of businesses are there, what kinds of things do people do for a living, and with what other countries does this nation have established trading relationships?) How do these different experiences compare to your sense of the experiences of different kinds of people living in the US? Overall, how do you suppose this country's culture/s is/are different from the mainstream culture and other cultures found in the US.
- Read the articles Country Snapshot, Cultural Overview, The People, and Greetings and Courtesies
- Place your bets: Prewriting #1A
 - So far, how do your guesses before reading compare to the lives of this country's citizens? What is as you expected, and what surprises you?
- Read Points of Interest, National Cuisine, Religion, and Language
- Place your bets: Prewriting #1B
 - Which Points of Interest would you most like to visit? Why? Which would you least like to visit? Why?
 - Which foods would you most like to try? Why? Which would you least like to try? Why?

- Which elements of the cuisine seem most similar to what's served in the US, vs. most different from what's served in the US?
- Which language/dialect would you most like to learn? Why? Which language/dialect would you least like to learn? Why? Do people in your chosen country speak a language or language/s you already speak, or that you know other people in the US already speak?
- Which religion, if any, is practiced in this country that you also practice? Are any religions practiced in the country familiar to you, though you do not practice them yourself? Do you see religions practiced in this country that you know are practiced in the US? Overall, what seems most similar and most different about the religious landscape in your chosen country, relative to the US?
- Read The Business Experience and Economy and Trade
 - Does this country already trade with the US? If so, what is traded?
 - If not, does this country make anything that we seem to need in the US? What?
 - Do we make anything in the US that this country seems to need? What?
 - If business leaders from your chosen country and from the US sat down together for a meeting, what do you think they would discuss? How do you think they would interact?
 - Overall, how compatible does the business style of your chosen country seem with what you perceive to the US business style? Why?
- Look at the top sections of the Government article to ascertain government type. If you are not familiar with this type of government, visit the CIA World Factbook listing of government types, the CBBC types of government page, or these government descriptions from teacher Dave Stutz.
- Place your bets: Prewriting #1C
 - Is this the same government type as in the US, or a different one?
 - Are you familiar with the idea of this type of government, or is it brand new to you?
 - Does living in a country with this government type appeal to you?
 - What about just visiting a country with this government type?
 - What do you think the leaders of this country could learn from the US government style?
 - What do you think the US government leaders could learn from your chosen country's government style?

S e s s i o n T w o

Teacher Introduction

- Invite students to share some highlights of their notes so far. Ask students to remain alert to any shifts in perspective they experience while listening to their classmates' responses to the readings—students should be making notes on their prewrite pages or scratch paper regarding any new ideas that occur to them during this discussion.

Student Directions

- Read the Cultural Overview, Country Snapshot, and Economy and Trade articles for the United States. Skim over some of the other materials for the US.
- Prewrite #2: Reflecting on your own country

- What surprises you about these articles? What did you learn about the US that you didn't know before? What do you agree with in these articles? What, if anything, do you disagree with?
- What about your chosen country strikes you as most similar to the US? What seems most different from the US?
- Where do you see a possibility for mutual benefit for the US and your chosen country? For example, if they make cell phone technology and we need cell phone technology, a trading relationship could benefit both of us. Mutual benefit could also be social or cultural: for example, if different groups in your chosen country and in our country are struggling with similar problems—health problems, environmental problems, how to live together peaceably—then maybe cooperation could help both countries. (If you are stumped, go back to the Economy and Trade article, as well as the Cultural Overview and Country Snapshot, and see if any points of connection emerge.)

Teacher Introduction

- Ask students to share their thoughts regarding the US readings. With what in the US articles do they agree and/or disagree? Do these articles reflect their personal experiences of living in the US? What do they notice that is similar and different in the countries they're reading about, relative to the US? What kinds of ideas do students have regarding possibilities for mutual benefit for other countries and the US? Ask the class to expand/critique some ideas that students volunteer, and make room for general brainstorming. As discussion winds down, remind students of expectations for prewriting.

Student Directions

- Prewrite #3: Why should the leader of your chosen country come here?
 - How does the country's location relate to the benefit of a visit?
 - How does the country's landscape/environment relate to the benefit of a visit?
 - How does the country's most prominent religion or religions relate to the benefit of a visit?
 - How does the country's cuisine relate to the benefit of a visit?
 - How does the country's language relate to the benefit of a visit?
 - How does the country's appeal as a travel destination relate to the benefit of a visit?
 - How does the country's government type relate to the benefit of a visit?
 - How does your overall sense of the country's culture affect your decision?
 - Overall, what are the strongest factors in favor of this country's leader visiting the US?

Teacher Introduction

- Review with students the difference between persuading with logic and persuading with emotion. Discuss some relevant examples—especially of facts or ideas that could be used for both logical and emotional appeal. For example, since the United States draws water from resources it shares with Canada and Mexico, the interests of United States citizens regarding clean drinking water are intertwined with the interests of Canadian and Mexican citizens. If one wanted to invite a Canadian or Mexican leader to visit the US to collaborate on environmental policy, one describe the economic benefit of reducing costs for water treatment (logic); and/or one might describe the benefit to children's health of access to clean water (emotion); and/or one might describe the reduction in health issues—and health costs—when children and adults have access to clean water (emotion and logic). Ask students to present their arguments, and invite the class to decide how to use particular points for logical and/or emotional appeal.

Student Directions

- Prewrite #3a: Preparing to persuade
 - Look over your answers to "Prewrite #3: Why should the leader of your chosen country come here?", and at the strongest factors in favor of a visit.
 - Divide a piece of notebook paper into two columns, "logic" on the left and "emotion" on the right.
 - Which of your factors in favor of a visit lend themselves more to logic-based argument? List these on the left side of the page, and make a note about how you might explain the logic of these points to a foreign leader.
 - Which of your factors in favor of a visit lend themselves more to emotion-based argument? List these on the right side of the page, and make a note about how you might inspire feeling about these points in your letter to foreign leader.

Session Three

Teacher Introduction

- Remind students of the role of goodwill ambassador. Prepare students to transition from discussing their visit requests and rationales informally with their peers, to addressing heads of state in writing via formal language. Students will begin with researching their letter recipients.

Student Directions

Letters to Leaders: Goodwill Ambassadors in Action

- Go to the Government section for your chosen country
- Look for the name and title of the head of government and/or head of state (the head of state might also be called the chief of state).
 - The head of government is a top official responsible for government administration and management—this person is in charge of the daily business of governance in the country.
 - The head of state is a country's chief public representative, and this person may or may not have actual governing powers. Heads of state serve a symbolic role in representing their nation. Heads of state often serve as goodwill ambassadors who improve their country's relationships with other nations around the world.
 - In some countries, such as the US, the roles of head of government and head of state are combined in one office: the president. In other countries, such as England, the roles of head of government and head of state are performed by the holders of two different offices: the prime minister is England's head of government, and the queen is England's head of state.
- Choose your letter recipient: Depending upon the nature of the country's government and the nature of your letter, you might want to write to the head of state, the head of government, or to the single person who is both the head of state and the head of government.
 - In a country with a separate head of government and head of state, if one of the reasons you wish the leader to travel to the US relates to the nature of the government and its laws, the head of state might be the appropriate recipient for your letter. If your interest in travel is primarily cultural, such as in the country's religion or cuisine, you might write to the head of state.
 - Either way, carefully write down your recipient's official title and correct full name spelling.

- See if your recipient has a personal bio online. Using Google and a little luck, you may find that the leader you'll be writing to has a personal biography on his/her government's web pages.
 - Do you have anything in common with your letter recipient? If so, jot it down on your prewriting pages or a new piece of scratch paper. This could come in handy in your letter.
- Find your recipient's mailing address: Visit the US State Department's list of Foreign Consular Offices in the United States. For countries that have an embassy office in the US, you can address your letter to:

[Recipient's title and full name]
c/o* [Embassy name and address]

(*c/o means "care of," and is used to indicate that you are sending a letter to one person via placing it into the care of another person, who will deliver it. For example, you are sending your letter to a head of state or head of government by sending your letter to the country's embassy, and trusting that embassy staff will forward your mail to their official.)
- For countries that do not have an embassy office in the US, you'll have to do a little internet digging to find the address. Try Googling in search of your country's government Web pages, and follow your nose from there. If you need help, ask your teacher.
- Find your recipient's proper title. Try The Protocol School of Washington's guide to forms of address.

Teacher Introduction

- Review the five basic parts of a formal letter, described below. Ask students to discuss how this format is different from the presentations they have already given to their classmates.

Student Directions

Review the parts of a formal letter, listed below. Use the five parts to outline and draft your letter to the leader of your chosen country.

- Five basic parts of a letter
 - Heading: At the top of the page, place the date, your address, and the address of the person you're writing to. To see how these elements are arranged, visit the Formal Letter Writing page on Using English, and see the "Layout of a Formal Letter" segment near the top.
 - Salutation: Address your recipient as suggested by The Protocol School of Washington's guide to forms of address. If the leader you are writing to is not covered by this reference, then respectfully address your intended recipient with his or her full formal title and full name. For example, "Dear Captain Elizabeth Cady Stanton, . . ."
 - Body: The body of the letter is the letter's introductory and main paragraphs—all but the short closing paragraph at the end.
 - Closing: In the last paragraph, writers often complete the three Rs: 1) wRap it up, 2) Remind the reader of a key point or request, and 3) give Regards to the recipient.
 - Signature: Choose a formal sign off like "Most Respectfully" or "Sincerely." If a specific sign off when addressing your recipient is suggested by suggested by The Protocol School of Washington's guide to forms of address, use it.

Teacher Introduction

- Direct students to outline their letters. Suggest to students that they start with their presentation notes, and expand/adapt/rearrange these materials into the form of the formal letter. Remind

students that they've already prepared most of the content of their letters via their presentations. Now it's time to expand on what they shared in their presentations, and to present their travel decisions in writing, vs. in speech, and in more formal language.

Student Directions

- Outline the body of your letter: For a formal letter, vs. a personal letter, you need to think through ahead of time what you will say and how you will say it. Luckily, you've already prepared your thoughts a little bit through preparing your presentation for your classmates. Your aim in your letter is to courteously express what has attracted you to this leader's country, and to do so using formal and appropriate language—you are acting as a goodwill ambassador representing your country's friendly curiosity about another country.
 - Introduction: Let your recipient know right away who you are and why you are writing. This will let a busy recipient know that you appreciate his or her time. Once you've established your identity (American student) and reason for writing (to invite the leader of the country to visit your country), let the leader know what s/he will get out of visiting to the US. Offer at least three reasons s/he will benefit from visiting the US. Offer a mix of reasons based on logic and reasons based on emotion.
 - Evidence Paragraph 1: Explain in detail the first reason for visiting, and how that reason benefits the country's leader.
 - Evidence Paragraph 2: Explain in detail the second reason for visiting, and how that reason benefits the country's leader.
 - Evidence Paragraph 3: Explain in detail the third reason for visiting, and how that reason benefits the country's leader.
 - Conclusion: Summarize your invitation to the leader to visit, and express your goodwill toward the recipient and his/her nation. The closing is a good place to include something you have in common with the person you're writing to, if you haven't done so already. Remember the conclusion's three Rs: 1) wRap it up, 2) Remind the reader of a key point or request, and 3) give Regards to the recipient.

Teacher Introduction

- Ask students to draft their letters using the outline suggestions above, plus their own notes from prewriting exercises and discussions with their classmates. To set the tone, in a class discussion, ask students to identify some examples of formal and informal language. You might ask one student to share a sentence that s/he would include in an e-mail to a friend, then ask another student how this sentence could be retooled to be suitable for addressing a head of state.

Homework

Student Directions

- Draft your letter to your chosen recipient using your outline and your own notes from prewriting exercises, discussions, and presentations. If you get stuck, move past the tricky passage and come back to it later.

Optional Teacher and Student Directions

- Send! And congratulate each other on your success as goodwill ambassadors.