

12 The Flag We Love

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

TOTAL RUNNING TIME

10:06

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The opening interview segment is appropriate for discussions of careers, authoring as a profession, writing for a non-English-speaking market, and how education is changing. *The Flag We Love* is a portrait of the many faces of the American flag. Each time the American flag is flown, we get intricate snapshots of American life, present and past: Olympic athletic achievements, First Amendment rights, wars on foreign soil, patriotic celebrations in small towns.

SUGGESTED USAGE—MIDDLE SCHOOL

PRIOR TO THE PROGRAM

Ask your students how many times they've changed their minds about what they'd like to be when they become adults. Ask if any of the career choices they've pondered were a direct result of exposure to different career options through an event or a project at school. Let your students know that they will be watching a brief video segment from an episode of the series *Heroes Read*. In this segment, author Pam Muñoz Ryan will share how she learned to read as a child, and the effect it had on her idea of career options.

Be sure to preview the video segment so that you might spot concepts that are particularly conducive to your students and curriculum. If

you have time and feel it appropriate for your classroom, finish the episode, viewing the author reading *The Flag We Love*. The author intersperses the reading of the text of her story with interesting facts about how the illustrations, by Ralph Masiello, were conceived and completed, as well as facts about the American flag that students of all ages will find interesting and compelling.

WHILE VIEWING

Some of the discussion points made possible by this author interview segment include:

- Muñoz Ryan also writes for the Japanese market, writing in English and having the works translated into Japanese. Ask students if they think the author needs to write in a different way for the Japanese market.
- How does the author's childhood compare to your students?

If you choose to view the story segment of *The Flag We Love*, the following discussion or pause points may be useful:

- Ask if any students noted the significance of flags at televised segments of Olympic ceremonies. Describe other venues on TV where you might expect to view flags.
- Discuss the issues of First Amendment rights defended by the flag.

AFTER VIEWING

- Invite an alumnus, parent, or grandparent to share how reading and English were taught in their day. What has changed in one and two generations in your own school district? How might English be taught in the future?
- Find out when the Pledge of Allegiance was written. Who was the author?

SUGGESTED USAGE—ELEMENTARY

PRIOR TO THE PROGRAM

Ask your students how many of them can recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Then ask how many know all the words of the first verse of the “Star Spangled Banner.” The second? Ask students to tell you what they know about the American flag—for example, how many stars and stripes it has, when it was made, and by whom. Keep a record of this information.

Inform your students they will be seeing some interesting facts about something they see every day, thanks to a book by author Pam Muñoz Ryan called *The Flag We Love*. As always when utilizing video in the classroom, preview the episode for opportunities for pause points to emphasize concepts or provide discussion.

WHILE VIEWING

One option for pause points could be to review the vocabulary list with your students. Ask them to listen hard for these words, raising their hands when the words turn up in the video. Others include:

- Talking about positive results of anger using Masiello’s frustration with the Pledge of Allegiance artwork.
- Asking students to identify Lincoln from the image on the funeral train illustration.
- Raising a discussion about why the flag is present at sporting events.

AFTER VIEWING

- Have students read another book about the flag, and compare how author Pam Muñoz Ryan presents the concepts and information with the style of the second book’s author. Use a chart to collect their findings.
- Have students create posters that document “Flag Facts”; for example, what the red, white, and blue of the flag mean, the proper method of display of the flag, etc.

VOCABULARY

research	references	connotations
intentions	dedication	radiant
allegiance	pledge	sepia
diligent	casket	solemn
liberty	unfurled	righteous

RELATED WEB SITES

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

<http://www.icss.com/usflag/the.pledge.of.allegiance.html>

Information about author Francis Bellamy of Rome, New York, and how the Pledge of Allegiance came into being.

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: A CENTENNIAL HISTORY, 1892–1992

<http://www.vineyard.net/vineyard/history/pdgech0.htm>

Unexpected tidbits of information, including when and why schools began flying flags!

JUSTWRITE.ORG

<http://www.justwrite.org/>

Story-starter ideas, children’s works, and sites of interest for publishing children’s work.