

AXE 2

UNIT 4

# POTUS & FLOTUS IN THE WHITE HOUSE

*How to balance private and  
public life in the White House?*



## YOUR PROJECT

React on an American forum and post your opinion about finding the right balance between public and private life in American politics.



Au menu de cette unité :

### DÉCOUVERTES CULTURELLES

- ★ L'action politique d'Eleanor Roosevelt
- ★ La relation des Kennedy avec les médias
- ★ Les Obama à la Maison Blanche
- ★ La presque-victoire de Hillary Clinton
- ★ L'opinion de citoyens américains

### OUTILS LINGUISTIQUES

- ★ L'expression du conseil et de l'obligation (*could, should, must...*)
- ★ L'irréel (*if clauses*)

## BEFORE CLASS!

Flash to watch!

Watch the video. Be ready to talk about it in class!



# 1 First Ladies in History

How did the First Ladies deal with the public's interest?

## 1 Being under scrutiny

A. Listen to  and use [Worksheet n°12](#) to recap the main information.

B. Why is being a First Lady "the most difficult job in Washington" according to the interviewer?

## 2 Bringing the White House closer to the people

A. Watch the video. What helped Eleanor Roosevelt to get involved in politics in 1921?

B. Describe what she did to be seen as an active President's wife.

C. What did she do after leaving the White House?

VIDEO N°14



HELP!

### Nouns

- achievement /ə'tʃɪvmənt/
- (political) figure
- mass media /mɪ:diə/
- role model

### Adjectives

- approachable
- involved /ɪn'velvd/
- popular
- self-confident
- supportive

### Verbs & expressions

- achieve /ə'tʃiv/ (a goal)
- be in the spotlight ≠ be in sb's shadow
- pioneer sth /pə'nreɪ/
- support sb
- take on (a role) = assume

### Acronyms

- POTUS = President of the United States
- FLOTUS = First Lady of the United States

## 3 Crafting an iconic role

A. Read from l. 1 to l. 11 and say what made Jackie Kennedy iconic in the public eye.

B. Describe her relationship to the media once she had become First Lady.

C. List her responsibilities at the White House (what she did, the consequences on her husband's career).

D. Compare her actions with those of Eleanor Roosevelt.

Even to those who were not alive anywhere near the 1960's, it seems almost impossible to talk about JFK without the inclusion of his wife Jackie – of her grace, her style, her iconicity, and

5 her captivation of an entire world full of viewers.

Instead of passively allowing herself to be seen as one half of a whole, she decisively carved out her own place in the public eye, and in doing so, established not only that she was a crucial part

10 of the Kennedy family, but also that the term First Lady was much more than a simple title. [...]

In many ways Jackie was just as big an asset to her husband's career as he was. Though her pregnancy with John, Jr. limited personal

15 appearances during the 1960 campaign, she was still so determined to be involved that she wrote a newspaper column called "Campaign Wife," answered letters, held interviews, and taped television commercials. After becoming the First

20 Lady, however, even as she willingly continued to allow the press access to her, she insisted on personally controlling and restricting what the media saw of her children and family life. One of Jackie's most significant and symbolic choices

25 was her assumption of responsibility for restoring the White House, literally remaking the way that the public viewed the office of the Presidency, but doing so on her own terms and with a strong awareness of the media's role in the entire

30 project. Broadcasting the whole process greatly contributed to the continual popularity of her husband by detracting from political issues even in the middle of the Cold War.

, 13 Nov. 2011

## 2 Private Home, Public Place

*How did First Ladies make the White House their home?*

1

### Feeling at home



**A. Pairwork.** How did the Obamas manage to live an ordinary life in the White House?

- Pupil A looks for elements of the scene that refer to the Obamas' public life.
- Pupil B looks for elements of the scene that refer to the Obamas' private life.

**B. Imagine** White House official photographer Pete Souza's intention when he took that photo.



The Obamas in the Treaty Room (White House), 2011

HELP!

#### Nouns

- (a piece of) furniture
- coffee table
- files / paperwork /'pærpəwɜ:k/
- fireplace

#### Adjectives

- casual /'kæʒʊəl/ (clothes)
- comfortable /'kɒmftərəbl/
- informal
- usual /'ʊʒʊəl/ ordinary /'ɔ:rɪndəri/ average /'ævərɪdʒ/

#### Verbs & expressions

- behave casually
- go into politics

## 2 An ordinary life in an extraordinary place

VIDEO N°15

- A. Before watching.** Imagine what Michelle Obama did to make everyday life ordinary at the White House and why it was important for her to do so.
- B. Watch the video and identify the central figure of the Obama family life at the White House.**
- C. Turn to Worksheet n°13** to know more about the role that person played at the White House.



### 3 Let's garden!

- A. Observe the picture, then read the caption and the quotes.
- B. Sum up what you have understood (Who? What? When? Why?)
- C. At home. Search the web to find out about the garden now that the Obamas have left.

First Lady M. Obama harvests vegetables with school pupils from her organic garden.



"As both a mother and a first lady, I was alarmed by reports of skyrocketing<sup>1</sup> childhood obesity rates [...] I wanted this new White House garden to be a "learning garden."

1 montée en flèche

Michelle Obama, *American Grown: The Story of the White House Kitchen Garden and Gardens Across America*, 2012

"Barack's administration was focused on providing better healthcare, and for me the garden was a way to offer a parallel message about healthy living. [...]"

Michelle Obama, *Becoming*, 2018

### 4 The Victory Garden

- A. Read the text. Why did Eleanor Roosevelt find it difficult to transform that space?
- B. Find how the historical context helped Eleanor Roosevelt in her task.

Though it's certainly the most famous now, Michelle Obama's iconic White House garden is not the first of its kind. Throughout the centuries, the presidential mansion has hosted crops and sheep and all manner of landscaping<sup>1</sup>. But by World War II, the 5 White House lawns were considered purely decorative. A First Lady would have had to fight hard to install a garden by the White House. Luckily Eleanor Roosevelt was up to the task. With wartime Washington straining to support its growing population, sustainable eating<sup>2</sup> was more important than ever 10 and many district dwellers saw it as their patriotic duty to keep from starving to death. Residents grew their own food in backyards, schoolyards, and windows boxes. Everyone from lowly clerks to the Vice President... but not the President. FDR was so against the idea of an executive garden that he 15 reportedly told the federal soil scientists "tell [Eleanor] the yard is full of rocks or something. The people own this place, and don't want it busted up just so she can plant beans." Very likely, the soil scientists knew which side their dirt was buttered on and they told Mrs. Roosevelt the truth. The White 20 House sat on what might have been the most fertile land in the city. And right on the property lived the perfect gardener, little 11-year-old Diana Hopkins. Diana lived in the White House with her father, presidential advisor Harry Hopkins, and was the perfect person for the First Lady's project. Eleanor's plan 25 for the garden was thus: "it will be a small thing, children can grow things they are apt to want to grow in a very small space." The gardeners set aside a 2x2 plot and little Diana cared

- C. How did people react to her project? What impact did it have on the population?



faithfully for the beans, carrots, tomatoes, and cabbage with spade, hoe, and rake.

30 Diana's efforts changed FDR's tune, as in a presidential address the next year he said: "I hope every American who possibly can will grow a victory garden this year. We found out last year that even the small gardens helped". The total harvest<sup>3</sup> from victory gardens was tremendous. It made the difference 35 between scarcity<sup>4</sup> and abundance. The American public, first family included, produced forty percent of their own fruits and vegetables in 1944, opening the way for more food to be sent to troops overseas. So Diana Hopkins probably won the war, is what we're saying. Her and Eleanor Roosevelt.

1 garden design • 2 nourriture durable • 3 récolte • 4 pénurie

Claudia Swain, in

, 25 May 2012

### Your TURN! 5 Answer a survey

**Groupwork.** An American magazine has launched a survey about "The most iconic First Lady in the White House".

In groups, choose your most iconic First Lady, then explain the role she played. Justify your choice.

# 3 If She Had Won

*How did cartoonists prepare for the first American female president?*

1

## The never published cartoons

The following cartoons might have been published by the *New Yorker* if Hillary Clinton had won the American presidential race in 2016. Observe the cartoons and read the texts. Sum up the cartoonists' intentions.



### A Hillary's victory by Cun Shi

"How did you want to picture Hillary's victory?"

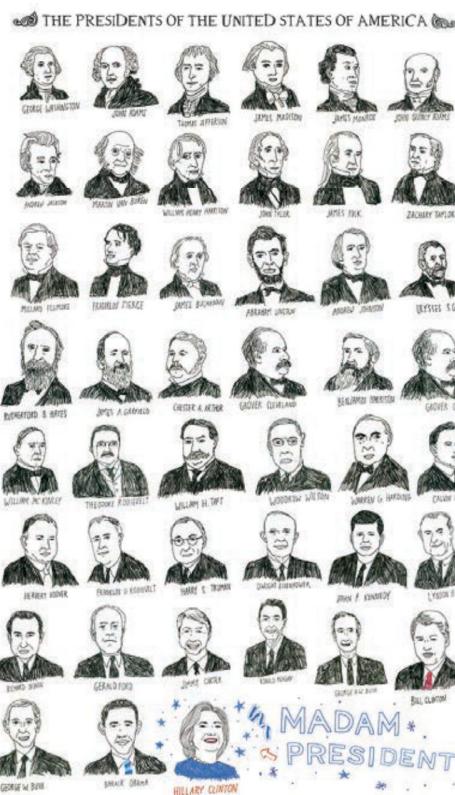
"My initial idea was to incorporate aesthetic elements from vintage election posters. I did a lot of visual research and studied photos taken from different angles in order to get a better sense of her features<sup>1</sup> and expression". [...]

"What were you thinking as you made the illustration?"

"Can't remember... but the last thing that was going through my mind at the time was Hillary losing the election".

1 facial characteristics

, 21 November 2016



### B Hillary's victory by Julia Rothman

"Tell us more about this cartoon."

"Jennifer Kinon, the creative director for the Hillary campaign, called me up on the Tuesday before Election Day. She told me she wanted an illustration for after the victory, something that showed every president<sup>5</sup> and then Hillary, like one of those vintage president charts. She needed it as fast as possible so she could get approval [...]. That evening I started drawing the presidents one by one, pretty quickly, trying not to care about likeness<sup>1</sup> too much, just making them recognizable. I posted it on Instagram the day before the election, and a friend texted me, "Not yet! 10 You'll jinx<sup>2</sup> it. Wait until tomorrow." So I took it down."

"What were you thinking as you made the illustration?"

"I was thinking, Wow, so many white men!"

1 ressemblance • 2 porter la poisse

, 21 November 2016

### HELP!

#### Nouns

- drawing /drɔːɪŋ/
- sketch
- the Stars and Stripes = the Star-Spangled Banner

#### Adjectives

- awe-inspiring /əʊnspaɪərɪŋ/
- impressive
- majestic
- recognisable

#### Expressions

- look like
- rise to power
- shatter the glass ceiling

# 4 Private Mistakes, Public Figures

Should US citizens care about their politicians' private lives?

## 1 An ideal political leader?

- A. Read the text. Find what the journalist expects from presidential candidates.
- B. Say why, according to the journalist, the 19-year-old student would not have been a good political candidate.

The [presidential] candidates [...] may not respect each other privately, but as candidates for president, they claim to be leaders. If you are going to lead you have to set an example of how to treat those who disagree with you. [...]

5 I am not arguing that our presidents should have led decorous private lives. I want leaders who have lived, who have made errors, fought fights, done business, fallen in and out of love. [...] I want the president to have lived a life like I have. In a democracy, the leader ought to be drawn from

10 the people [...].

When I was in college, I knew someone who intended to go into politics. He was 19 and systematically avoided anything that might prove "a problem" to his future career. What he avoided was everything that a normal 19-year-old might do.

### HELP!

#### Adjectives

- deceitful = dishonest
- (un)educated = (un)informed
- ethical = upright
- (un)reliable = (un)trustworthy /trʌstwɜːðɪ/

#### Verbs & expressions

- deceive sb
- (dis)trust sb
- expect sb to + V
- meet sb's expectations

I couldn't articulate then what I can now: I do not want to be  
15 led by someone who has led a life free of trial, error, remorse and forgiveness. [...] I want to be led by someone who has grappled<sup>1</sup> long and hard with life. [...] Abraham Lincoln was clearly manic-depressive. John F. Kennedy was a prodigious womanizer. Thomas Jefferson was in constant financial difficulty. Dwight Eisenhower had a frightening temper. There was more to all these men and having them lose elections because of their vices would have been disastrous. What would we have done without them? Yet, none could be elected today.

1 fight

George Friedman, *The Huffington Post*, 30 September 2016

## 2 Citizens' opinions

- A. Read these posts. Recap the main ideas in each one.
- B. What differences are there between these opinions and the journalist's (in activity 1)?

1

In many other countries it is expected that politicians will have affairs. The US was formed partly by Puritans, so the expectations are different. I think it is most significant when the people who lay claim to family values display anything but family values.

Kathryn B., Dallas, Texas

2

If we are a liar in our "private life", why should anyone expect us to behave differently in our public lives? The public needs to be able to trust their elected representatives, and actions do matter. The old saying "actions speak louder than words" does apply here. That is why the public should care about a politician's private life.

Doug C., Atlanta, Georgia

3

Being a role model is something that all public officials should take as a requirement before they decide to pursue public office.

Hans H., Spring Lake Park,  
Minnesota

### YOUR PROJECT

Read 3 more posts on the subject on [Worksheet n°14](#).

React and post your opinion! 

# RULE THE GRAMMAR!

## L'EXPRESSION DU CONSEIL ET DE L'OBLIGATION

Le conseil et l'obligation s'expriment grâce à des auxiliaires modaux.

Le choix du modal permet une gradation dans le degré de contrainte.

Suggestion	Conseil	Obligation
<i>You could send flowers to the White House.</i> Tu pourrais envoyer des fleurs à la Maison Blanche.	<i>You should apologise to the President.</i> Tu devrais présenter tes excuses au Président.	<i>You must tell her the truth.</i> Tu dois lui dire la vérité.

### Rappel sur les modaux :

- Ils s'utilisent sans *do* / *did* pour former la forme interrogative ou négative.
- Ils ne prennent pas de *s* à la 3<sup>e</sup> personne du singulier.
- Ils ne sont jamais précédés ou suivis de *to*.

### Différence entre *should* et *ought to* :

- Avec *should*, celui qui parle exprime un avis personnel.
- Avec *ought to*, celui qui parle exprime une idée moins personnelle.

*I think the president should tell the press.*

Celui qui dit la phrase exprime son opinion = Je pense que le Président devrait le dire à la presse.

*A President ought to speak properly.*

Celui qui dit la phrase exprime une opinion partagée = Un Président devrait parler correctement.

► P.293

## L'IRRÉEL (IF CLAUSES)

Ces constructions fonctionnent comme en français : on applique la concordance des temps.

Plusieurs constructions sont possibles :

### • Hypothèse irréelle portant sur un fait présent :

If + présent + would + base verbale

*If you were in power, it would be a disaster.*

Si tu étais au pouvoir, ce serait une catastrophe.

### • Hypothèse irréelle portant sur un fait passé :

If + passé + -en + would + have + -en

*If he had been elected, he would not have retired in Texas.*

S'il avait été élu, il n'aurait pas pris sa retraite au Texas.

### • Expression de regrets ou de souhaits (irréel ou non encore réalisé) :

Certaines tournures, par exemple : *if only... ; I'd rather... ; I'd sooner... ; it's (high) time... ; I wish...* déclenchent l'utilisation du présent.

→ *If only you could be a better governor!*

Si seulement tu pouvais être un meilleur gouverneur !

→ *It's time you started preparing for the election.*

Il est temps que tu te mettes à préparer l'élection.

→ *I wish she were president.*

J'aimerais qu'elle soit présidente.

► P.292

Malheureusement, cette page n'était pas disponible lors des opérations de téléchargement de ce manuel. Si elle le redevenait, cette ressource serait mise à jour dans les plus brefs délais.

ID : 55

Raison : Erreur d'analyse XML : mal formé

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