



A PIRATE'S LIFE WITH LISA BRIGGS



LIVE

NOVEMBER 1 & 2, 2026

Jack Singer Concert Hall, Werklund Centre

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Explorer Mindset in Action

A GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS & STUDENTS

Meet Explorer Dr Lisa Briggs

Dr Lisa Briggs is an underwater archaeologist, scuba instructor, and technical diver. Her current research examines ancient shipwrecks of the Mediterranean Sea, illuminating stories of maritime adventures through scientific tools like DNA analysis. Originally from the United States, she completed her doctoral degree at the University of Oxford and currently lives in England. When not busy scuba diving around the world, she enjoys surfing, sailing, free-diving, reading about cephalopods, and playing the ukelele, banjo, and guitar.

In her National Geographic Live show, *A Pirate's Life*, we'll go on assignment with Lisa to explore how pirating shaped the Roman Empire. We'll also meet the Pirate Queen of China and then head into the lab to follow the most famous renegade of all ... Blackbeard.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS SHOW INCLUDE: Archaeology, Ancient History, Maritime and Trade History, Biology, Geography

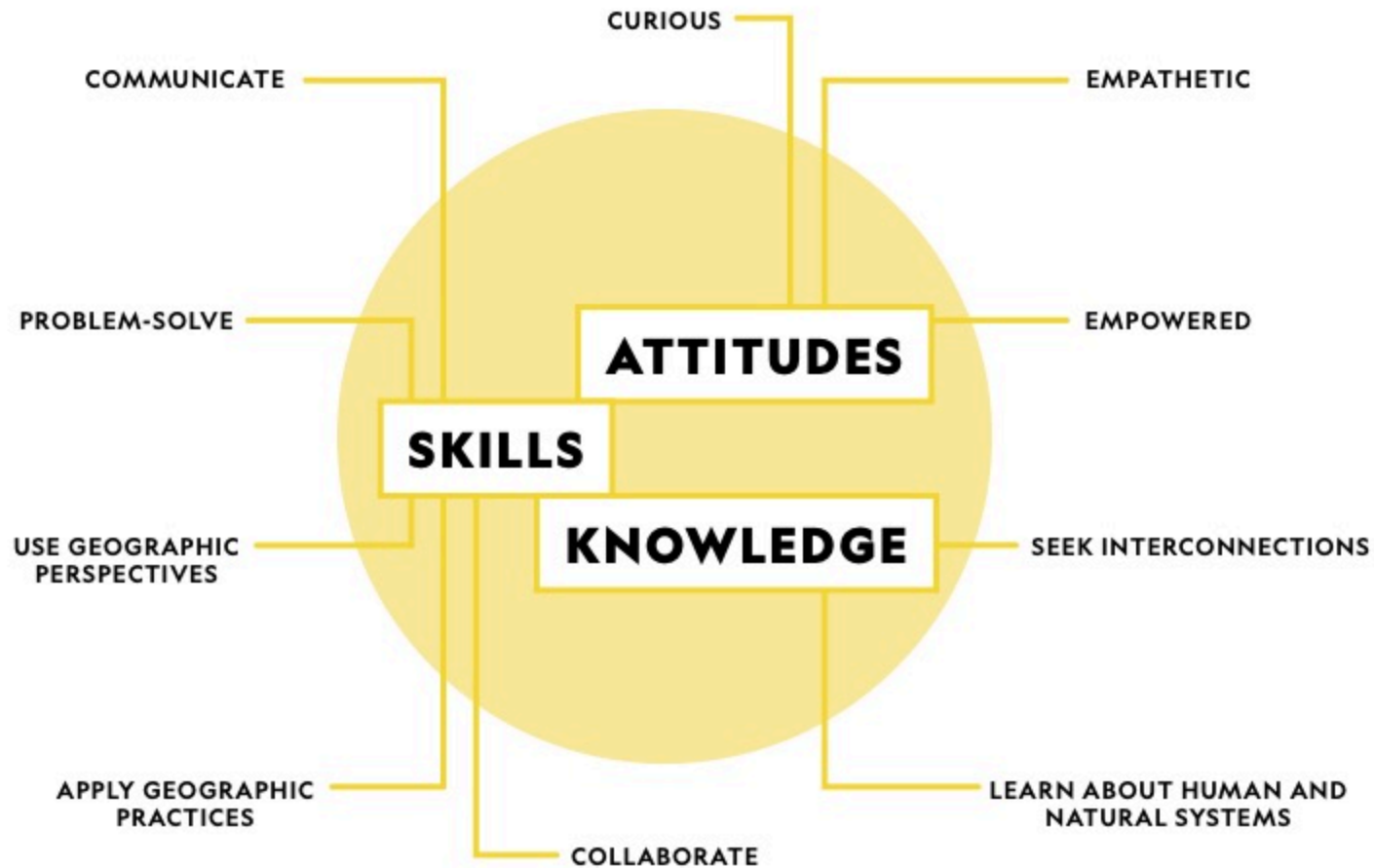


WHAT IS THE EXPLORER MINDSET?

The Explorer Mindset is a series of attributes, shared values, and commitments that define what it means to be a National Geographic Explorer. We believe that every person has the potential to develop that same Explorer Mindset that drives Explorers to inquire, seek knowledge, and think critically and creatively to solve the world's most pressing problems. This competency-based framework identifies and codifies the *Attitudes*, *Skills*, and *Knowledge* that are indicators of the Explorer Mindset:



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The Explorer Mindset Learning Framework is aligned to and cross-walked against at least 12 global frameworks, including the [US Geography](#), [NGSS Science](#), and [C3 Framework for Social Studies Standards](#), ESRI's Geographic Approach; [OECD](#), [WEF](#), [Asia Society](#), [World Savvy](#), and The Nature Conservancy's global competencies; and National Geographic Education's Globally Inclusive Design Principles.

FIVE QUESTIONS: An Interview with Dr Lisa Briggs

What first sparked your interest in archaeology?

Ancient Egypt! I've been interested in it since I was about five years old. I got a 'Fun with Hieroglyphics' game when I was seven, and have been collecting books about Egypt and dreaming of becoming an archaeologist ever since I could read. This interest in archaeology led me to studying ancient history more broadly, the history of places like Mesopotamia, Greece, and Rome. When I finally got to go to Egypt, I learned to SCUBA dive in the Red Sea and saw my first underwater archaeological site. That led to me shifting my career focus from an archaeologist who works on land to an archaeologist who works underwater.

What's the strangest experience you ever had in the field?

The strangest was definitely playing tug-of-war with an octopus on Blackbeard's shipwreck. I was sent down on a dive with two sterilized plastic tubes to sample the water above the shipwreck. When I arrived at the 'pile,' which was a concreted mass of cannons and anchors and barrel hoops, I saw a huge Atlantic octopus floating in front of me, changing colors and squirting ink. When I got out my first water sampling tube, his tentacle wrapped around it and he gently started to pull. I pulled back and laughed; at first, I thought this was really funny. Then I realized I really needed both sampling tubes! (Not to mention, I didn't want to leave plastic in the ocean in any event!) So I pulled back harder, but he was REALLY strong and eventually twisted the sampling tube out of my hand, and swam away. So, the octopus won that day.



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What's the most helpful thing you've packed for an expedition?

The game Jenga. It's only a simple set of wooden blocks, yet this game has brought hours of fun to my team mates and I, especially during long weeks at sea with no internet or cell phone service. The other thing about Jenga is that you don't need to speak the same language to play. The rules are pretty clear! I work with people all over the world who speak Arabic, or Greek, or Italian, or Thai. Having a game we can play together in the evenings, one that does not require electricity, or internet, or even to speak English, is great! It really helps the team bond.

What advice do you have for young explorers?

Keep at it! Sometimes things do not come naturally to us and it takes a lot of work. For example, I am quite dyslexic and found it really hard to learn how to read. I didn't read well until I was seven years old! After years of working hard and going to the library all the time, now I love to read and can read in four different alphabets (the Latin alphabet, the Greek alphabet, the Arabic alphabet, and ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphs). Maybe because I had to try harder, learning how to read meant so much to me! Hard work pays off, even if it feels difficult at the time.

Do you have any recommended reading for those who want to explore further in your field?

I always recommend 'primary sources' written by eyewitnesses (or at least, written right after the events they describe)! Every good pirate scholar worth their salt should get a copy of Captain Charles Johnson's *History of the Most Notorious Pirates*. He wrote it right after the events it describes, and it talks about Blackbeard, Anne Bonny and Mary Read, and Henry Avery, the most fascinating pirates of the Golden Age. The language may be a bit stuffy, but that's half the fun. Read it, and ask yourself a lot of questions: What might be true and what might be an exaggeration? Would Captain Charles Johnson gain something by sensationalizing the accounts of these pirates (selling more copies of his book, perhaps?!). As often as you can, read primary sources' and always ask questions of the material. Finally, books are always better than what you can find on the internet, so go to as many libraries as you can.



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BEFORE & AT THE SHOW: Learn about the Explorer Mindset and Look for Examples

We recommend providing this list to students in advance or discussing the attributes in class. At the show, remind students to look for examples in the Explorer's story & work!

ATTITUDES: Explorers Wonder About the World

CURIOUS - Explorers engage with the world around them. Explorers observe, document, and ask questions about where things are and why they are there.

EMPATHETIC - Explorers care about other people, cultural resources, and the environment. They are respectful and committed to making the world a better place. They value and understand their own and others' points of view, acknowledging differences.

EMPOWERED - Explorers recognize their ability to protect people, cultural resources, and the environment. Explorers are leaders who utilize their knowledge, confidence, means, and ability to take action and make a difference.

SKILLS: Explorers Learn By Doing

USE GEOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVES - Explorers use perspectives (including geological, ecological, historical, economical, political, cultural and spatial perspectives) at different scales (local, regional, and global) as they observe, analyze, visualize, and model spatial patterns, processes, and change over time of the human and natural systems.



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APPLY GEOGRAPHIC PRACTICES - Explorers use practices such as mapping, inquiry, and citizen science to explore geographic questions, investigate, examine, assess problems. Explorers think critically as they create new insights and understanding.

COLLABORATE - Explorers engage with the communities in which they work, including a wide variety of partners and stakeholders on their team.

PROBLEM SOLVE - Explorers seek solutions to problems to protect and sustain the wonder of our world. Explorers are capable decision-makers, able to identify alternatives and weigh trade-offs to make well-reasoned decisions based on factual knowledge. Explorers pursue bold ideas and persist in the face of challenges.

COMMUNICATE - Explorers are storytellers who communicate about their work through a variety of methods (scientific, academic, and narrative) and media. Explorers communicate to inspire others to protect and sustain the wonder of our world.

KNOWLEDGE: Explorers Build Geographic Knowledge

LEARN ABOUT HUMAN AND NATURAL SYSTEMS - Explorers become informed as they study the physical properties of the planet, the human and natural systems spread across it, and the diverse creatures we share our world with.

SEEK INTERCONNECTIONS - Explorers strive to recognize and understand the intricate and interconnected systems of the changing planet we live on. They examine how humans coexist and interact with the environment and the ways places and people impact each other.



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AFTER THE SHOW: Questions to Guide Discussion About the Explorer Mindset in Action

CURIOSITY -

How does this curiosity show up in this Explorer's journey?

What are you curious about & how might this spark your own journey of exploration?

EMPATHY -

Can you identify examples of empathy in this Explorer's work?

Why do you think empathy is important to exploration and discovery?

EMPOWERMENT -

How has this Explorer taken action to make the world a better place?

What steps could you take to make a difference?

USE OF GEOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVES -

Can you identify the various perspectives and scales that this Explorer uses in their work?

How might exploring something at the local scale differ from exploring it on a global scale?

How might an historical perspective change provide different insights from an economic perspective?



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APPLICATION OF GEOGRAPHIC PRACTICES -

Where has this Explorer applied geographic practices in their work?

How might you employ geographic practices like map making or critical thinking to explore and investigate?

COLLABORATION -

How does collaboration help to make this Explorer's work successful?

If you could put together your own 'dream team' of collaborators, who would be on it?

PROBLEM SOLVING -

Describe a moment when this Explorer faced a problem. How did they tackle it?

Describe a time when you have faced a tough challenge. What did you do? What decisions did you make?

How does facing problems help us to develop persistence? Why might persistence help an Explorer?

COMMUNICATION -

What methods of storytelling were used in the show that you saw?

Did you have a favorite moment in the show? What made it stand out?

If you told a story about your own discovery, what methods might you use to capture your audience's imagination?



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LEARNING ABOUT HUMAN AND NATURAL SYSTEMS -

What human and/or natural systems were explored in the show that you saw?

How did this Explorer map, record, or analyze these systems as part of their work?

What human or natural systems can you identify that are part of your own environment?

SEEKING INTERCONNECTIONS -

What interconnections can you describe in this Explorer's area of study?

How do those interconnections impact their work?

What interconnected systems impact your everyday life and environment?

ACTIVITY SHEET (pages 10 - 15 below)

Teachers may want to either print the following activity sheet or use it to guide discussion.

Each section is meant to lead students through an understanding of how a National Geographic Explorer works. In section 2, learners will have an opportunity to follow the Geo-Inquiry Process, which consists of five phases: ASK, COLLECT, VISUALIZE, CREATE, and ACT.

For more about how to use the Geo-Inquiry Process with your learners, visit:

<https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/geo-inquiry-resources/>



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1. Explorers Learn About the World

What is your Explorer's name and where is he/she from?	Provide a brief (1-2 sentences) description of your Explorer's work.
Name:	What:
Birthplace or Place of Residence:	How:
	Where:



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2. Explorers Are Curious

Mark what interests you most about the Explorer's work.				
ASKING QUESTIONS <i>I am curious about:</i> ☐ The Explorer's work location and why it's important. ☐ The Explorer's question(s) and problem(s). ☐ How the human and natural worlds are affected by the problem.	COLLECTING INFORMATION <i>I am curious about:</i> ☐ The data gathered and method of collecting it. ☐ The Explorer's involvement in communities. ☐ Other team members that work with the Explorer.	VISUALIZING INFORMATION <i>I am curious about:</i> ☐ How the Explorer organizes collected data. ☐ How the Explorer makes sense of collected data. ☐ How the Explorer uses maps and graphs.	CREATING STORIES TO INSPIRE CHANGE <i>I am curious about:</i> ☐ How the Explorer creates stories to share their work. ☐ How the Explorer shares their stories. ☐ How the Explorer's stories inspire others to act.	ACT <i>I am curious about:</i> ☐ How the Explorer will solve their question(s) and problem(s). ☐ How the Explorer works with others to solve their question(s) and problem(s). ☐ What motivates the Explorer to take action.
In the space below, share WHICH area initially sparked the most curiosity and WHY.				



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3. Explorers Seek Understanding

Complete the following statements based on what you saw in your Explorer's show:
I'm fascinated by
For me, the most important aspect of my Explorer's work is ...
I now understand why my Explorer ...
I think my Explorer's work is impactful because ...
I was inspired by ...
If I was an Explorer, I think I would ...



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4: Explorers Stop and Think

Reflect on your Explorer's presentation and share one area of his/her work towards which you feel most connected. Draw a picture or symbol or write a word or phrase that best represents this area of work and be prepared to circle up and share your WHY with your classmates.

National Geographic Explorers work with communities and invite others to join their cause. How could you become involved in your Explorer's work?



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5: Explorers Impact Others

PART 1: Complete each statement below by marking the box that best represents the impact of your Explorer's work at the local, regional, and global level(s).

My Explorer impacts the local community...	☐ a little.	☐ somewhat.	☐ a lot.
My Explorer impacts surrounding regions...	☐ a little.	☐ somewhat.	☐ a lot.
My Explorer impacts other countries or global areas...	☐ a little.	☐ somewhat.	☐ a lot.
What area (local, regional, global) does your Explorer impact the most and WHY?			



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PART 2: Think about what you heard during the show. Now, read each "I CAN" statement below and write "yes" or "no" and provide an example that shows your understanding of the statement.

"I Can" Statements	Yes or No	Example
I can identify where my Explorer works.		
I can explain how my Explorer's work is connected to an issue in my community, regionally or globally.		
I can summarize the factors that control and affect my Explorer's work.		
I can perceive the financial impact of the problem that my Explorer is researching.		
I can explain past events that have affected my Explorer's work.		
I can understand the impact that humans have on my Explorer's area of focus.		
I can explain how landscape has an effect on my Explorer's work and/or the problem they're trying to solve.		



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For more information on this Explorer's field and related areas of study, visit these resources from National Geographic:

Articles:

- [Read Lisa's "Explorer of The Month" article from National Geographic Kids Magazine](#)
- [Explorer Profile: Christopher E. Horrell, Marine Archaeologist](#)
- [The ancient Phoenicians built a maritime civilization around the Mediterranean](#)
- [Underwater Archaeologist: Dr. Guillermo de Anda](#)

Collections:

- [Into the Depths: Black scuba divers search for buried shipwrecks on slave trading routes around the world](#)
- [Idea Set: Teach Archaeology, Conservation and Preservation at Home](#)

Videos:

- [Explorer Classroom | Sunken Pirate Ships](#)
- [Discover Decompression Diving](#)
- [Ancient Shipwrecks of the Black Sea](#)
- [Ancient Mariners of the Mediterranean](#)

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A Pirate's Life
with Lisa Briggs
Nov 2, 2026

Diving the Great Barrier Reef
with Erika Woolsey
Jan 25 & 26, 2027

Earth After Dark
with Babak Tafreshi
Mar 15, 2027

Saving Nature's Symphony
with Ben Mirin
Apr 12, 2027



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**Joel Lipkind &
Sally Sprague-Lipkind**
Randy & Luba Pettipa s

Earth After Dark
with Babak Tafreshi

Davey, Jane & Nyssa

Dr. Ian & Nicola Dawe s

Saving Nature's Symphony
with Ben Mirin

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