

PEN PALS

- Grade Level: K-3
- Subjects: Social Studies, Language Arts
- Suggested Time: 1-2 hour introduction, plus 1 hour per month, or when letters arrive



Correspond with pen pals about energy, the environment, and efficiency.

Materials

World map or globe, paper and pens/pencils, or computers with email set up for students; How to Write to Your Pen Pal handouts; materials for reviewing how to write a friendly letter.

Ohio 2010 Standards

Language Arts:

- Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. (1-3)
- Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure. (1)
- Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section. (2)
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. (3)
- With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question. (1)
- Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question. (2, 3)
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. (1-3)
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. (1-3)

Social Studies:

- Maps can be used to locate and identify places. (1)
- Maps and their symbols can be interpreted to answer questions about location of places. (2)
- Physical and political maps have distinctive characteristics and purposes. (3)
- Families interact with the physical environment differently in different times and places. (1)
- Human activities alter the physical environment, both positively and negatively. (2)
- Interactions among cultures lead to sharing ways of life. (2)
- Evidence of human modification of environment can be observed in the community. (3)

Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Write a friendly letter to an international pen pal.
- Describe what he/she is learning about energy environmental issues.
- Write questions asking the pen pal about energy and environmental issues in his/her country.
- Read and respond in writing to letters from a pen pal.

Teacher Preparation

- Many countries are more advanced in energy conservation technology and recycling than the United States. Have your students correspond with pen pals about their environment, recycling and energy efficiency using e-mail, or regular mail. Use the following web site to find pen pals for your students: http://www.studentsoftheworld.info/menu_penpals.php
- Contact potential pen pals' teacher(s) and inform that your class is studying energy and environmental issues. Try to find teacher(s) who are interested in helping students learn about energy and environmental issues as well.
- Arrange for students to use email or regular mail to correspond with pen pals.
- Once the pen pals are selected, you may wish to teach a lesson or unit about the pen pals' country.

Introduction

- Ask students to identify the pen pals' country on a map or globe.
- Ask students what they know about this country.
- Tell students they will be writing to pen pals from this country. Explain that many countries have different approaches to energy, water use, and recycling. They will learn about this from their pen pals.

Activities

- Teach how to write a friendly letter.
- Distribute the Pen Pals Writing Guidelines and go over as a class. Remind students of recent Energy Savings Patrol lessons they may write about. The Pen Pals Writing Guidelines may be easily adapted into a rubric to suit your grading style. The page is designed to be copied two per page.
- Give students time to write the letters, reminding students of the importance of neat handwriting.
- Screen letters and grade (if desired) before sending.
- When the pen pals' letters arrive, give students time to read and discuss the letters. Then remind students to answer all the pen pals' questions in their response, as well as asking new questions.

- Allow students time to find answers to the pen pals' questions, if needed. Students may use the internet, textbooks, library books, or materials from previous Energy Savings Patrol lessons.

Extensions

- The teacher may set up a Skype session or other distance learning opportunity with the pen pals.
- Students may do presentations or projects on different aspects of the pen pals' country.

Closing

Ask students to share one energy or environmental idea they have learned from their pen pals.

Worksheet

How to Write to your Pen Pal Worksheet



Pen Pal Worksheet
