

PEN PALS

- Grade Level: 4-6
- 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; Pen Pals Writing Guidelines; materials for reviewing how to write a friendly letter.

National Standards

Language Arts:

- Reading for perspective.
- Evaluation strategies.
- Communication skills.
- Communication strategies.
- Applying knowledge.
- Multicultural understanding.
- Participating in society.

Social Studies:

- The world in spatial terms.
- Places and regions.
- Environment and society.
- The uses of geography.

Ohio 2010 Standards

Language Arts:

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. (4)
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience. (4-6)
- Write routinely over extended time frames for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. (4-6)
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. (4-6)

- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. (4-6)

Social Studies:

- People have modified the environment since prehistoric times. There are both positive and negative consequences for modifying the environment in Ohio and the United States. (4)
- Globes and other geographic tools can be used to gather, process and report information about people, places, and environments. (5, 6)
- Variations among physical environments in the Western and Eastern Hemispheres influence human activities. Human activities also alter the physical environment. (5, 6)
- Different perspectives on a topic can be obtained from a variety of historic and contemporary sources. (6)

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 or collaborate with a social studies teacher on 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 and water conservation and recycling. So their letters will include some discussion about energy and environmental issues.

Activities

- Review 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, or assign as homework. Allow time to type letters if desired.
- 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

- 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.

Worksheet

How to Write to your Pen Pal Worksheet



Pen Pals Writing
Guidelines