



**Opportunity**  
Education  
Foundation

"Educating Children Around the World"

**August 2014**

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## 2 SURE TO SUCCEED – INTRO AND ICEBREAKER IDEAS!

A Letter Lesson on Names is an excellent way to welcome your new students and introduce them to the pen pal program. This is also a great icebreaker lesson plan to get everyone acquainted.

Teachers should be sure to participate in the following activities to help students get to know you too!

Art – Using only the letters found in a student's first name, design a name tag or wall art that incorporates principals of design or have fun with graffiti art methods. The lesson can be simplified for younger students but emphasize that the letters should contain elements that represent something important about the student (hobbies, sports, food).



Vocabulary Ice Breaker – This activity is good for introductions and for practicing the alphabet. Start with the sentence: My name is \_\_\_\_\_. Follow with a sentence that includes a word that starts with the first letter of their name: I am \_\_\_\_\_.

For example, My name is Joe. I am a jumper. He can even demonstrate his skills if you want to promote a more active approach at vocabulary development.

Have students alphabetize themselves and form a circle for introductions of their names and words. You can get creative with new sentence for another round of the activity such as, "I like to\_\_\_\_"

Extra Curriculum Connections:

History – What was the most popular name the year you were born? Discuss how culture has shaped the baby naming process. How have famous actors or television shows, movies and books influenced names? Two sites to help you get started: <http://babynamewizard.com/namevoyager/lnv0105.html>  
<http://www.ssa.gov/OACT/babynames/>

Mathematics – Summarize your research on name popularity in percentages or graphs, by year, by country, or by name.

This lesson works well with the OEF letter lesson that can be found in the June newsletter.

[http://www.opportunityeducation.org/uploaded\\_files/newsletters/81c8508a216102779254ac638f7b882d\\_OE-NL-0614.pdf](http://www.opportunityeducation.org/uploaded_files/newsletters/81c8508a216102779254ac638f7b882d_OE-NL-0614.pdf)

In the June lesson, students were asked to research how they were named. Offer extra credit for research on how your pen pals' country or culture name children. Ask students to provide as many examples as you they can, explain research methods, and summarize in a presentation to the class. Be sure to follow the September OEF newsletter for another Name Letter Lesson that will explore nicknames and bullying.

For now, you have creative classroom decorations and introductions done, so task students to write a letter to their pen pals explaining their names and why they chose to decorate the letters as they did. Be sure to either copy the artistic names or send the originals once they have served their decorating purpose along with these letters of introduction to your pen pals overseas!

## AFRICA. AMAZING. LIFE-CHANGING.



"People often think of Africa as a single place, one large continent that is all the same. So my "surprise" from each of my visits is learning how unique each country is and experiencing what makes each country on the vast continent different."  
– Cathy Intemann, New Mexico

Africa, well said. This was Cathy's third trip visiting Opportunity Education Foundation schools in Africa. This year the focus was on presenting professional development to OEF teachers and offering best practices for the OEF Education Program. Cathy put together a dynamic presentation on Professional Learning Communities, encouraging teachers to collaborate to maximize their scant resources.

**"The best part of this trip for me ended up being the relationships that I built with fellow educators. I expected to make connections with the children, but I ended up making closer connections to the educators at Eden Garden. I felt empowered to provide them with as much support as I could due to their enthusiasm about learning from me." – Melissa Girard, Colorado**

Amazing. While Melissa is a fairly young teacher, her expertise in English as a Second Language was simply amazing to our OEF teachers and staff. We all learned a lot watching her demonstrate an OEF lesson using ESL strategies. What was even more inspiring was watching how well the teachers at Eden Garden in Moshi, Tanzania, immediately embraced the methods and put them to use.

**"Thank you so much for the opportunity to join the OEF team on the Tanzania trip and for helping me with my project! It was an unbelievably meaningful, thrilling and moving experience in so many ways and it's not something I'll soon forget.**

**It was a privilege to work with so many amazing adults and children.**

**I am eagerly looking forwards to completing the fund raising so that the students in the schools that embraced the project with open minds, hearts and courage, will be able to see the fruition of their work and enthusiasm.**

**I just wanted to mention that I loved the idea about helping the girl who stood up for installing doors on the toilets and I think it sets a fantastic precedent for rewarding courage amongst students." – Amir Mamdani, NYC**

Life-changing. The only question is, whose life will be changed more?

OEF was fortunate to have Amir and his mom and dad, Mahmoud and Atoosa, visit our schools and present youth leadership education.

This engaging 17 year-old spoke to students in OEF schools asking them to identify issues in their school/community and tasking them to feel empowered to find the solution. Once the issues were discussed, a spokesperson was elected from the group to appeal for votes to find a solution to the issue.

Examples of problems and solutions include improving playgrounds, supplying water tanks, purchasing chickens for a sustainable food source and even providing doors for the wide-open toilet stalls. Amir specifically referenced the 12 year old girl, who stood up in front of giggling classmates to promote her project of replacing the damaged or missing doors to the toilet stalls – that are open to the play area. Ignoring the snickers, she chastised her peers saying, it is not proper and we should do something about it.

Amir is helping them do something about it. He has taken their top-voted issues back to his NYC school community to fund raise for resources to help these schools. The project completion will be under the watchful eyes of all these OEF students who had a voice in seeing change in their lives.

But whose life changes more...as Amir said, "It was an unbelievably meaningful, thrilling and moving experience in so many ways and it's not something I'll soon forget."

What can you do?

"Do not hesitate to experience a part of the world that is often misunderstood and under-appreciated. You will give more than you get, you will learn more than you could ever study, you will be enriched more than you could ever spend, and you will be appreciated for your presence but you will also appreciate the richness and beauty that no photograph will ever capture and no travel book will ever express." – Cathy Intemann.

Come visit OEF schools. Share your talents – whatever they may be – with OEF teachers and students.

Get rich by giving yourself away.

For more information on the OEF Education Experience, 2015

[Click Here For Brochure](#) or Email: [schools@opportunityeducation.org](mailto:schools@opportunityeducation.org)

## WELCOME NEW SCHOOLS!

We welcome the following schools to our free, international pen pal program which is a fun and easy way to meet Language Arts, Social Studies and History/Civics standards – share [this link](#) to invite others to join.

Welcome to:

Lasley Elementary, Lakewood, CO

Prairie Crossing Elementary, Parker, CO

York Elementary, York, NE

Central Preston, Kingwood, WV



OEF would love to have more international schools – if you have educator friends, anywhere in the English speaking world – forward them to us and we will connect their school to one of our outstanding schools in Africa or Asia.

Email today and start writing tomorrow! [schools@opportunityeducation.org](mailto:schools@opportunityeducation.org)

## THESE SCHOOLS (still) NEED PEN PALS!

Looking for a special pen pal school for Michael Pre & Primary School in Arusha, Tanzania. As it is only a K through grade 2 school, it's a great opportunity for an ESL class or younger English learners to practice their written skills. Michael Primary is located in a tourist area close to Mount Kilimanjaro and the Serengeti.

Your students will love to learn about life in Tanzania and perhaps dispel some misconceptions about living in Africa.

Or perhaps you are thinking India?

Darshan Vidyalaya (Vidyalaya means school in Hindi) is a private school located in Trivandrum, Kerala, India. The state of Kerala has been a major source of spice exports from as early as 3000 BCE and is well-known for its pepper. The school was founded in 1992 it has grown to accommodate 350 students from pre-school to grade 4.

Writing letters is an excellent opportunity to learn more than textbooks or even the internet can offer...just email us and we will put a Welcome Folder in the mail to you today!

Email [schools@opportunityeducation.org](mailto:schools@opportunityeducation.org) and you can start writing today!

If you already have a pen pal, refer a friend to our [OEF Pen Pal](#) link.

If you prefer a different school, simply email us and note what grade and country you would like to write to and we can get you writing, right away!



## FEATURED SCHOOL & GIFT CERTIFICATE WINNER

Congrats to Jennifer Aisenberg from Olympic Middle School in Shelton, Washington.

On behalf of your pen pals from Masite Anglican Primary in Lesotho – thank you for sending letters!

Jennifer, send an email to: [schools@opportunityeducation.org](mailto:schools@opportunityeducation.org) to claim your prize!

Want to win next month?

Just email [schools@opportunityeducation.org](mailto:schools@opportunityeducation.org) after you mail your letters and you are entered to win!



## START WRITING – RIGHT NOW!

Now is the perfect time to write your pen pals!

No lesson plan is needed, but if you need one – we have them!

Writing letters is a great activity to keep students productive during homeroom, study hall or downtime.

You can also integrate cross-curricular objectives into lesson plans that we have created to maximize learning through letters.

[Click Here for Letter Ideas and Resources](#)

[Click Here for Letter Lesson Plans](#)

We also have 4 options to stay up to date with our international pen pal program.

OPTION 1: To keep up with our "Friends" – we have a Facebook page just for you!

Visit our Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/OpportunityEducation>

OPTION 2: Unable to get on Facebook? No worries.

Visit our Pen Pal Blog. <http://opportunityeducation.wordpress.com/>

OPTION 3: Pinterest. <http://www.pinterest.com/opportunityed/>

OPTION 4: Twitter. <https://twitter.com/OpEdFoundation>

Check out our social media for interesting ideas, stories, and links to help generate enthusiasm and discussion about education plus lesson plans to integrate pen pal letters into your standard requirements.



## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Write Your Pen Pals!

Even if it's been a while, now is still the best time to write. The name, address and mailing instructions are available on our website start by [clicking here](#).

You can also email: [Schools@OpportunityEducation.org](mailto:Schools@OpportunityEducation.org)

Get Others to Write!

We have 355 schools very eager to have English speaking pen pals.

Share the following link – and make sure you CC [schools@opportunityeducation.org](mailto:schools@opportunityeducation.org) – to get a gift certificate. [Click Here to Refer A Friend and Get a Gift Certificate!](#)



## Visit an Opportunity Education School!

Take a life-changing trip to teach, share and learn in an Opportunity Education school in Africa or India.

[Click Here to Learn More.](#)



### Picture of the Month:

On behalf of everyone at Opportunity Education Foundation we offer our deepest gratitude for the time and talents shared in our Tanzanian schools by the amazingly diverse and gifted group pictured.

A full week of teaching, professional development, vision screens, followed by a fun and flawlessly executed safari thanks to Martin Russell and Tanzania Vision Travels while in the excellent care of our guides – Yusuph Temba, Jesse John Mfoi, Ally Simundu, and Emmanuel Kimaro. Unfortunately not in this photo – we also want to thank Mahmoud, Atoosa and Amir Mamdani for assisting with the vision screens and leadership presentation. Finally we are all grateful for the vision and leadership of the OEF Benefactor, Joe Ricketts and OEF President, Jim Ricketts for generously supporting the education of children and teachers – all over the world!

For more information please contact:

**TERESA ROLL**

**OUTREACH & SISTER SCHOOL COORDINATOR**

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