



Opportunity
Education
Foundation

"Educating Children Around the World"

January 2014

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CELL PHONES OR TOILETS?

- Of the 7 billion people in our world, 6 billion have mobile phones.
- Of the 7 billion people in our world, only 4.5 billion have access to toilets.
- This leaves 2.5 billion people, mostly in rural areas, without means for safe sanitation.

Countries with poor sanitation have the highest mortality rate for children under the age of 5.

Ending open defecation will contribute to a 36% reduction in diarrhea related illnesses which kill 750,000 children each year, this according to Martin Mogwanja, the Deputy Executive Director of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Mr. Mogwanja added, "We strongly support the effort to increase the focus on sanitation...we can reduce the cases of diarrhea in children under five by a third simply by expanding the access of communities to sanitation and eliminating open defecation."

[\(read full article\)](#)

In response to requests from our pen pal educators, we are highlighting resources to help you teach about the harsh reality facing many of our pen pal schools in Africa and Asia - the lack of access to clean water and sanitation.



There are so many interesting approaches to teaching about water and sanitation issues around the globe. Numerous cross-curricular lesson plans and activities can relay the dire consequences of poor access to water and sanitation. These lessons are great discussion and letter writing prompts, debating the importance of cell phones versus toilets.

Click here to share a video resource with students to get the conversation going. We are always inspired by the creativity and generosity of OEF schools that have reached out to bring water to their pen pals.

[H2O for Life](#) is another resource that provides service-learning opportunities that are designed to engage, educate, and inspire youth to become global citizens. They also have lesson plans that incorporate fun activities with hard core facts on WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene).

More great WASH resources for cross-curricular lesson plans, many of which can be adapted to a language arts letter writing lesson, can be found on the www.Water.org website, specifically, <http://water.org/news/lesson-plans/>

Learning more about the issues facing the schools and communities you are writing to, will not only educate, but more importantly engage your students in caring more about the world and finding ways to make it a better place.

IS IT A NEW YEAR?

Is it a new year?

In the US, the school year is half done but many Opportunity Education Foundation schools have just started their new school year in January.

It is helpful to note when your pen pals' school year starts and ends and what holiday breaks they may have, in order to time your letters accordingly.



This is a fun topic to do research on your pen pal school. Research their seasons. Do they have a spring, summer, fall, winter or rainy season and how do these seasons impact the school year?

To help you get started and help you plan your letters, following is a very general schedule of the school year in the countries that we serve:

Cameroon – September through June, with holiday breaks throughout.

Ghana – September through late June, with holiday breaks throughout.

India – School year start dates vary by state; a general term is a June/July start through March finish. There are many holiday breaks that are very interesting according to the state and religious nature of the celebrations.

Lesotho – January through December, with many holiday breaks.

Nepal – April start through March end date, with winter season and holiday breaks.

Sierra Leone – September through June, with many holiday breaks.

South Africa – January through December, with many holiday breaks.

Sri Lanka – January through November, with many holiday breaks.

Tanzania – Generally 3 terms, January – March, May – July and September – November.

Uganda – January to December, with many holiday breaks, and a long break in August.

Zambia – January through December, with many holiday breaks.

THIS SCHOOL NEEDS PEN PALS!

Christel House High School
Capetown, South Africa

OEF is excited to welcome new schools to our expanding high school program!

One of our newest is Christel House High School in Cape Town, South Africa.

This exceptional school works to break the cycle of poverty by providing a holistic learning experience for each child.

The school recognizes that poor children come to the classroom not just lacking the ability to read and write, but with social problems as well, often hungry and living in dysfunctional families. The Christel House approach compliments academics with health and wellness, work-study programs, personal development, family and community outreach.

It is an independent school for children from impoverished families. The school recruits learners from some of Cape Town's poorest communities and gives them access to the kind of education and development that all children need.

Writing letters to this school 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 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!



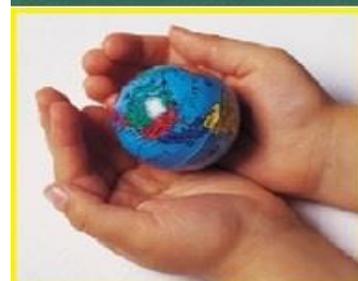
WELCOME NEW SCHOOLS

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.](#)

We are thrilled to have our first pen pal schools in France and Scotland!

Collège Jean Dieuzaide, France
Fair Isle Primary School, Scotland
Markinch Primary School, Scotland
Carmichael Primary School, Scotland
Barsail Primary, Scotland
Rosebank Primary, Scotland
Dublin Coffman High School, Dublin, OH
Kentrige High School, Kent, WA

We have hundreds of schools waiting for pen pal partners – email today and start writing tomorrow!



FEATURED SCHOOL & GIFT CERTIFICATE WINNER

Congrats to Julie H.
a great pen pal educator from
Mount Notre Dame High School, Cincinnati, Ohio!

On behalf of your pen pals from Tanzania, thank you for sending letters. Send me an email at schools@opportunityeducation.org to claim your prize!

Want to win next month?

Just email schools@opportunityeducation.org after you mail your letters and you are entered to win!



START WRITING – RIGHT NOW!

Start your year off right by writing your pen pals!

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

Writing letters is a perfect 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



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 – 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: Tanzania teachers testing their tech skills on the new Opportunity Education Tablet!

TERESA ROLL

OUTREACH & SISTER SCHOOL COORDINATOR

OPPORTUNITY EDUCATION FOUNDATION

www.OpportunityEducation.org

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STAY CONNECTED

