



Opportunity Education

"Educating Children Around the World"
www.OpportunityEducation.org

Sister School Newsletter

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Welcome Back



We hope this newsletter will refresh your minds with information about writing letters to your pen pals and renew your hearts with the joy of sharing your lives and learning with children around the world.

Thank you for being a Sister School!



they were meeting him/her.

Body: Ask students to run their hands down their body from their head to their toes and say, "body". Explain that the body is where they get to share what they have to say and ask questions for their pen pal to answer. Explain that you will come back to this and talk about ideas to write about in the body.

Closing: Ask students to pretend they are zipping or buttoning a jacket or sweater up as they repeat, "closing". Remind students this is where they say good bye.

Signature: Ask students to stamp their foot, clap their hands, or maybe even trace their own signature in the air with their fingers as they say, "signature". Repeat the parts of the letter with the actions several times to help students remember the parts.

Develop ideas for the body of the letter: Talk with students about what they might want to share in their letter. Suggestions include an introduction to themselves, description of where they live, their school, family, hobbies, and interest. Write their ideas on the board allowing students to choose which topics they would like to write a paragraph about.

Proceed with the writing, reviewing the parts of a letter as you go. If writing an entire letter the first time is overwhelming to students, you may want to make it easier by using one of the following modifications:

- You could make a group letter which you can model on the board at the same time.
- You can choose a main idea for each paragraph and ask students to write three sentences for each paragraph.
- You can have students as a class decide on the first two sentences of each paragraph and have students write the third sentence independently.
- You can have students decide as a class the content of all three sentences in each paragraph with students filling in just one or two words.

Example: If the paragraph is about "my school" you can have students write three sentences about school or decide as a class what the sentences should be with students filling in the blank on a sentence about their favorite subject. "My favorite subject at school is _____." (To extend the paragraph they could write their own sentence about why their favorite subject is their favorite.)

When the letters are done, allow students to draw pictures and decorate their letter.

If possible, attach a picture of the student to the letter they wrote or ask each student to write their name on a separate piece of paper and hold it in front of them while taking small group pictures to send.



Younger students may write a simple "fill in the blank" letter, like this example, with the help of their teacher. They can also add drawings and a photo of themselves.

Dear Friend,
My name is _____
I am _____ years old. I go to _____ school.
I have _____ people in my family.
My favorite color is _____.
My favorite food is _____ I like _____.
I like to _____.
Your Friend,

Since it's the beginning of a new year, and for many of you, the first time you've had your students write letters, let's review some answers to questions you might have.

DO STUDENTS WRITE A SPECIFIC PEN PAL?

If this is your first letter, it is best to start out, "Dear Friend." Once you receive responses, you can determine if it works better to have individual students address letters to one another. Teachers who have been in our program report that writing class to class works well since individual students advance or change schools. Your letters will be shared by many at your pen pal school – we encourage you to do the same. Have students share and compare their letters.

WHAT - IF ANYTHING CAN I SEND ALONG WITH THE LETTERS?

Your pen pals will treasure your letters, pictures and photos. If you would like to send something more, please keep in mind: The lighter the material you mail, the less expensive, for example stickers, drawings, photos, bookmarks.

HOW SHOULD I START – DO I WRITE FIRST OR DOES MY PEN PAL?

Start writing right now! We have no rules on how you want to use the pen pal program because we are amazed by the unlimited creativity of our teachers. If you need a little help to get started, we can suggest that you write an introductory letter, "ALL ABOUT ME!" telling about yourself, your family and your school.

WHEN THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN THE TARGET SCHOOL AND THE SISTER SCHOOL IS NOT THE SAME, HOW DOES THE PEN PAL PROGRAM WORK?

Please don't let the size of your pen pal school concern you. Whatever letters you send will be shared by all. Everything is very well-received by your pen pals. You have the flexibility to make the program work to fit your classroom or school needs. If you don't receive a letter for each one of your students, you could copy a few so each student has a letter to hold. This will be important to them.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO MAIL LETTERS?

OE pays for the return postage for all the letters and materials from your pen pals to you. This allows the schools in Africa and Asia to be in our program that could never afford the postage. Your school will be responsible for the postage mailing to your pen pal school. We appreciate your efforts to send letters and would like to offer tips on how to minimize the postage fees.

<http://postcalc.usps.gov/> United States Postal Service is the least expensive method we have found, you can easily determine the cost of your package using this site.

We appreciate your generous efforts to mail letters or collect supplies and realize that it might be cost prohibitive for you to mail. A "Pennies for Our Package" Campaign might be fun for your students to bring change from home and see how quickly they can raise money to send their package. Approach your PTO. Many parent organizations are happy to help when they hear about the program. Let us know if it is difficult for you to mail your letters and we may be able to help. We hope you can find a creative way to ship your package, because it will definitely bring joy to your pen pals overseas!

WHEN CAN WE EXPECT A RESPONSE?

We live in an era of expectations of immediate responses to all communication— emails, texting, etc. Letters are a lesson in patience and deeper communication. The relationships you are building are worth the wait – that being said, it will take 2-6 weeks for your letters to arrive at your pen pal school. Travel time in most of the countries we serve is very slow. We encourage our schools to send an immediate response and this will take minimally 6 weeks or more depending on the school year schedule for your pen pals.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE WRITE?

This should be determined by whatever works best for you and your students. We would encourage you to write as often as possible but know that your academic schedules are demanding. Most of our schools manage 2-4 exchanges of letters a school term.

For more specific guidelines and information regarding starting the Sister School program in your school, please [visit our website](#) or click on the following link to Sister School Resources on the site:

[Visit our Sister School Resources!](#)



**Opportunity
Education**

Focus on Schools

YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

We'd like to share one of many notes we receive from teachers in OE schools, expressing appreciation for the OE program of which the pen pal program is a very critical piece.



Dear Friend,

How are you? Opportunity Education Foundation, you are my inspirer, empowerer, and engager. These three characteristics are just short for you as you demonstrate with all of your students around the world including me.

We express our gratitude for the support we received from you for our growth as not only students, but also teachers and citizens around Tanzania. I feel good to share learning experiences. We are like a sponge that can only absorb. I know how much you wish to share with us at CARE-JHS but I love how you open your heart and share well.

As an educator, you can ensure a role of heightening my knowledge in academics by promoting a good environment of learning. I feel like I am able to not only share my contribution, but also know it is actually considered and appreciated. Thank you for being genuine. Thank you for seeing me as a good friend in learning and sharing. Thank you for being one the few great teachers. May you inspire others to achieve the greatness you have.

*With gratitude,
John*

Care English Medium School today has a total population of 268 students ages between Nursery and Primary 7. It was established in 2009 by John Falbert to meet

the learning needs of the community. The school employs 16 teachers and is equipped with 4 classrooms. Annual student fees are the principal income for the school. Care English Medium School faces issues such as a lack of computers, books and science facilities. The school is looking forward to developing opportunities for staff and for students through Opportunity Education.

Welcome New Schools

**Ascension Catholic School
Aurora High School
Rockbrook Elementary School
St. Anthony Catholic School
St. Augustine Indian Mission
Sts. Peters and Paul
Valentine Middle School**

This School Needs Pen Pals

The letter from John to their Sister School is from this school. They need a new Sister School, as their previous school is no longer active.





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