



Opportunity Education Foundation

"Educating Children Around the World"

June 2014

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WHAT'S IN A NAME?

"What's in a name?

That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

Shakespeare probably wasn't thinking of naming practices around the world when he wrote that quote.

Long ago, people in Europe lived in small farming villages where everyone knew their neighbors and there was little need for last names. Only as the towns grew did a need arise to find ways to differentiate between two people who shared the same first name.

So the last name in many countries were derived by the place you came from or the profession of your ancestors, think of names like Shef-"field" or Barber.

Similarly, in India, the last name is often the same name of a person's caste, which could also indicate your origin or profession. There are many other 'traditional' ways of choosing the first name of an Indian child. If the baby's horoscope is consulted, in northern parts of the country, every star is associated with a letter of the alphabet and baby names begin with the first letter of the constellation they are born under. In south India, the baby may be named after the constellation itself (or a variation of the name). It is also common to choose from one of the millions of Hindu god or goddess names.



The meaning of names given to a Chinese baby may be known only to the baby's parents. Parents sometimes give their boys plain or meaningless names to trick evil spirits into overlooking them. Girls are usually given more elaborate or graceful names, denoting beauty and virtuous qualities. Unlike in the USA where we love to share baby names before birth, in China it would be considered very bad luck for a baby to be properly named before birth. An unborn baby may be given a false name (or "milk" name), to confuse evil spirits. According to ancient Chinese wisdom, if an unborn baby is referred to as an animal, or as ugly, the evil spirits won't consider him worthy of harm.

Hispanic cultures commonly have a first name, middle name, and two last names (last name one would be the baby's father's last name and last name two would be the name of the baby's mom's dad's last name. Confused yet?

This is part one of a letter lesson to be followed up next month.

Even if you are out for the summer, this is a great icebreaker lesson plan to get you started when classes resume.

Get students to ask their parents how they were named. Research how your pen pals' country or culture name children. Explore the use of family names, first names, middle names, religious/saint names and more. Assign students specific countries or cultures that may have a link to their own heritage. Ask students to provide as many examples as you they can, explain research methods, and summarize in a presentation to the class.

Questions to start the conversation may be, how did you come to be named, who made the decision about your official names and when. Task students to organize their information in a detailed, explanatory letter to their pen pals!

DANK JE, DHAN' YAVADA, AND MANY THANKS, TO ASTRID SMITH!

OEF would like to express our deepest gratitude for the service and dedication of Ms. Astrid Smith, who worked with the United Mission to Nepal (UMN), the OEF facilitator in Nepal.

UNM has been doing charitable work in Nepal since 1954. The genesis of UMN followed a revolution in the 1950's when Nepal opened up to foreigners.



**Astrid Smith, far left,
moving mountains, of OEF supplies!**

A group of expatriate missionaries in India was granted permission by the government to open a hospital and run women/children clinics in the Kathmandu Valley. It was one of the first outside organizations allowed to work in the country.

Ms. Smith and her Nepali staff work hard with the aim of not owning the projects and institutions permanently but to train people and divest ownership to the Nepali government and local institutions. As UMN's Education Advisor – and Opportunity Education's principal contact – Ms. Smith firmly established the OEF program and went above and beyond to ensure the teachers had all the resources they needed, including translating our teachers' guides into the local language.

With a Bachelor's degree in Education and a Master's degree in Child Development, Ms. Smith specialized in caregiver support for guardians of children with special needs. She has taught in the Netherlands and prior to joining UMN led a team in Aceh, Indonesia to rebuild the capacity of teachers and caregivers following the December 2004 tsunami.

Originally from the Netherlands, Ms. Smith is returning home with her family; husband Nico, son Stephan and daughter Elseline. We are grateful for all her efforts to train her successors at UMN. Her energy and passion will be missed by all and we wish her the best of luck as she will continue to pursue her passion for educating children in the Netherlands.

TAKE A SEAT!

Thanks to R. M. Marris Magnet Center in Omaha, Nebraska – their pen pals at Uganda Martyrs Primary School in Kampala will be able to take a seat.

Students at Marris host a variety of creative fundraisers throughout the year for their pen pal school. In the past they have donated books, supplies and even a water tank that is featured on the following [OEF video](#).



This year they raised money to furnish the OEF video lesson room for their pen pals. Uganda Martyrs dedicates one room for the OEF TV that plays the video lessons. The students have to take off their shoes before they enter the room (pictured). The staff takes great care to keep the room dust free and clean for the students who have had to sit on the floor.

Thanks to their pen pals, the room will now have the furnishings needed to seat the students comfortably as they learn their OEF lessons.

Magaret Kijjambu, the principal at Uganda Martyrs made sure to send me an email to pass along to their pen pals, offering their gratitude for their generous donations.



Brenda Larson is the pen pal coordinator at Marrs. She has empowered her students to know they can do a lot of good in this world from writing letters to raising money!

We love to hear good news from our pen pal schools – please email me with your stories and we will share to help inspire others to maximize the pen pal program benefits for all our students!

THIS SCHOOL NEEDS PEN PALS!

St. Vincent School in Songea, Tanzania

Songea derived its name from Songea, who was a famous warrior of Shona ancestry, hanged in 1906 during the time of German colonial repression of the Maji Maji rebellion.

Maji means water in KiSwahili and the people believed that magic water would keep them safe from German bullets. Unfortunately this did not work out. Upon capture, Songea had been spared death because he had surrendered. However, he could not face the shame of living as his fellow warriors died, so he demanded to be hanged along with them.



Established in 1984, St. Vincent's Songea, looks after a total of 140 boarding students from pre-school to grade 7. The 23 teachers make use of 22 classrooms. As with many OEF schools, the school's lack of water is a big obstacle to educating students. Imagine having a boarding school with no reliable water source.

While facing many challenges, the school still performs well and is eager to connect to a pen pal school.

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 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 Melanie Childers of St. Mary's Catholic School, Ponca City, Oklahoma.

On behalf of your pen pals from St. Charles English Medium School in Tanzania – thank you for sending letters!

Melanie, send an email to: 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!

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

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.](#)

NEED HELP FINDING SCHOOL SUPPLIES?

Playtime/Schovertime Inc. has a long history of helping teachers equip their classrooms and locate hard-to-find or discontinued items.

OEF depends on owner Terry Jenson to help us fill orders for wide variety of supplies we send to our schools overseas.

Recently we had immediate need for a special order of magnetic boards, (pictured) which are hugely popular and beneficial to OEF students.

Terry was able to get them for us quickly and at a great price.



PLAYTIME / SCHOVERTIME

<http://www.playtimeschoolsupply.com/>

If you are looking for educational products for children from birth to middle school age, their friendly staff of former/current teachers can help you find what you need.

Playtime/Schovertime Inc.

info@playtimeschoolsupply.com

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Picture of the Month: Menallen Elementary is giving a hand!

Students pictured at Menallen Elementary in Pennsylvania have designed a canvass mural to share with their pen pals, Uhuru Peak School in Arusha, Tanzania.

Menallen painted half of the mural with handprints. OEF will deliver it to their pen pal school that will then finish the other side of the mural and send it back.

Menallen also sent the mural painting materials and a digital camera to capture the finished project!

We are always delighted and amazed by the creativity of our schools' correspondence projects. Let us know how we can help you send a special hello to your pen pals!

For more information please contact:

TERESA ROLL

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STAY CONNECTED

