

## Pen Pal Volunteer Instruction Sheet

You have been assigned an elementary student as Pen Pal. They will write you a letter and it is important to be patient, compassionate and reliable to write them back. Their letters may have spelling or grammatical errors. Your role is to not correct them, it is to be a positive model and have unconditional support for them as a Pen Pal. Your letters can be handwritten or printed from the computer, the only requirement is mail them through the postal service.

There will be a Pen Pal connection at the end of the school year where you will be able to “meet” your Pen Pal. Due to Covid, it will mostly like be virtual event.

### The First Letter

Being a Pen Pal is an easy way to volunteer and encourage a student. There are things that you can do to lay a foundation of a fantastic mail relationship.

### **Use Their Name**

You don't need to repeat it a bunch of times throughout the letter, but definitely use their name specifically in the greeting. You should also use your name, early on in the first letter, even though it may already be on the envelope. This way you complete your introduction and greeting.

### **Write a Simple Greeting**

Before you get into your main content of the letter, take time to say hello, and mention that you are excited to be writing them. An example, “It's nice to meet you through letters.” A greeting helps the reader transition into the letter instead of diving right into the details. Think of the letter as a conversation.

### **Tell Them the Basics About You**

What would you tell a person that you just met? Let them know about you (of course only what you are comfortable telling them).

### **Ask a Few Questions**

For a first letter, it is good to give the reader a few things that you would be interested in learning about them. For example, “what do you like to do after school?”

### **Write a Closing**

You have a lot of options for closing a letter, but it is good to thank your Pen Pal for taking the time to read your letter. You can always add that you look forward to learning more about them.

## **Addressing the Envelope**

The easiest way to get your letter to your student is to use the return address that was on your letter. Or:

Student's First Name

c/o

Teacher Name

School Address

## **Ideas for Future Letters**

- Tell them about a typical day for you
- Share photos
- States and Countries that you've visited
- Things that you do every day
- Things that make you happy
- Your favorite tv show, movies, food, games, music, books etc.
- Sports you play (or played)
- Unusual facts about you
- What you do for work (or used to work)
- Your favorite subject when you were in school
- Your favorite toy, as a child
- The best teacher you ever had
- The most important thing you ever learned
- What fictional character you would like to meet

**If you have any questions, concerns, difficulty or if your address changes, please contact:**

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