Little Green Pen Pals

Little Green Thumbs

We invite our Grade 1 to Grade 4 classrooms to take part in the Little Green Pen Pals project, an optional extension of the Little Green Thumbs (LGT) program. Little Green Pen Pals engages students in cultural exchange, inquiry-based learning, literacy and opportunities to build friendships across Canada!
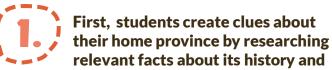
What is it?

We want to match your LGT classroom with a LGT pen pal classroom located elsewhere in Canada! This cross-curricular, inquiry-based project started as a seed of an idea involving classrooms in Saskatchewan and Newfoundland. Two classes matched up as pen pals, and did not know where in Canada their "pals" were located. Each class then took on the task of discovering where their pen pals were located– in what province and what city! To do this, students had to communicate information about their home province, city and school, and had the opportunity to learn about another part of Canada, too!

Correspond by using:
- Hand-written letters and/or drawings from your entire class or individual students
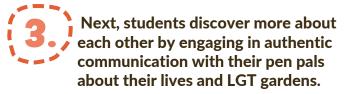- Emails
- Photos
- Videos
- Skype sessions

What do you do?

With your guidance, your LGT students will create location clues for their pens pals!

1. **First, students create clues about their home province by researching relevant facts about its history and culture.** Because internet searching can be a big task for younger grades, lessons can be taught focusing on "key-word searching" using kid friendly sites (Kidrex is a good one), reading web sites for information, and taking jot notes.

2. **After students pinpoint their pen pals' home province, now they must figure out their city!** Your students must learn about their own hometown in the process too. This could involve more research, brainstorming and even a trip to city hall!

3. **Next, students discover more about each other by engaging in authentic communication with their pen pals about their lives and LGT gardens.**

Relationship Building

During the project, Skype with your pen-pal classroom, as an opportunity to ask questions and get answers. Students can send pictures of cultural traditions that they've celebrated, or pictures of the weather to compare and contrast. Get students to share stories and pictures of their Little Green Thumbs garden and garden celebrations. You can even pair up a student in your class with a pen-pal student and get them to exchange friendly letters!

After you are connected with your pen-pal teacher, you can establish similar learning objectives. Discuss what you want your students to achieve during the project: learning about another location in Canada, building relationships, practising social, literacy and comprehension skills, letter writing etiquette and more!

Students can learn:

- Writing skills
- Technology skills
- Research skills
- Reading comprehension skills
- Social and emotional skills
- Collaboration skills
- Geography knowledge

Timeline

This is a semester-long project that will operate from January – June 2019.

1. **Enroll** (by November 20, 2018) Let us know that you want to participate, then fill out a simple survey provided by your provincial LGT co-ordinator.

2. **Connect** (by December 10, 2018) We will send you more information about the project, and connect you to your Little Green Pen Pal partner teacher.

3. **Discover** (January to June 2019) Let the learning happen!

Important Information

1. The Little Green Pen Pals pilot project is open to Grade 1 to Grade 4 Little Green Thumbs classrooms.

2. The project involves a commitment from January to June 2019.

3. A minimum of three letter exchanges is recommended. We urge you to get your students to hand write their letters to their pen pals. Emails and Skype sessions, however, are fantastic complements to hand-written correspondence

4. After you register your Little Green Thumbs classroom in the Little Green Pen Pal project, you will be given your pen-pal teacher contact information to get you started.

Are you as excited as we are? Contact your Little Green Thumbs coordinator for registration information.