

# Dear Pen Pal

A pen pal relationship gives children a personal connection and valuable insights into another culture.

"I really like learning about the differences and things that are the same about me and kids in other countries. At home I just like to lie down and think about what it would be like to be a kid in another country."

Malini, grade 2

Help children learn to address and stamp their mail correctly!



## Tips for Success

- **Start early!** Finding international pen pals can take some time, so start this process as soon as possible. e-PALS at [epals.com](http://epals.com) is a well-established organization linking classrooms around the world. The Peace Corps World Wise Schools Correspondence Match Program offers a special opportunity to connect with children in seventy nations. For details, go to [peacecorps.gov/wws/correspond/index.html](http://peacecorps.gov/wws/correspond/index.html)
- **Be a reliable and creative correspondent.** Answer your pen pals promptly. Send group letters and individual letters (addressed to the class or to specific partners in the other class). Do projects together, exchanging pictures and poems as well as data charts and graphs. Some topics and ideas are suggested below.
- **A Letter from Adil.** Watch "Dear Adil" (ARTHUR episode #801). Then use the handout on page 12 as a tool for teaching friendly letter format: date, greeting, body, and closing. Adil's letter also suggests topics kids can write about. For more ideas, see "Seven Ingredients for Cooking Up a Great Letter" on the ARTHUR Web site ([pbskids.org/arthur/games/postcards/helper.html](http://pbskids.org/arthur/games/postcards/helper.html)). ARTHUR postcards, for email or regular mail, are provided at [pbskids.org/arthur/games/postcards](http://pbskids.org/arthur/games/postcards)

## Shared Explorations

The activities below can be done with pen pals, or children can broaden their perspectives through research and family connections.

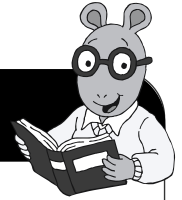
### Exploring Names

**Class Activity 1.** What are the most common boy and girl names in your grade, school, or country? Take a poll. Or, make an alphabetical graph of the names in your class. Which letter is the most common first initial? Ask your pen pals to do this project too, and exchange data.

**Class Activity 2.** ARTHUR is broadcast in 90 countries and 30 languages. Ask your pen pals if they have seen the show. What is Arthur's name in the language of their country? Gather the name for *Arthur* in as many languages as you can.

**Student Letter Topics.** Write to a pen pal or classmate. Tell a story behind your name, for example: Who chose your name, or your nickname, and why? What's the meaning of your name? For inspiration, read *What's Your Name? From Ariel to Zoe* by Marilyn Sanders.

**Extensions.** Ask an older adult: *What were the most popular names when you were little? How did you get your name?* Share your findings with the class.



## Book Links

### PEN PAL BOOKS

*Around the World: Who's Been Here?* by Lindsay Barrett George

*Arthur and the Pen-Pal Playoff* by Marc Brown

*Dear Juno* by Soyung Pak

### EXPLORATION BOOKS AND SOFTWARE

*Games Around the World* by Louise Orlando

*Strategy Games of the World*, computer software published by Edmark

*Back to School* by Maya Ajmera and John D. Ivanko

*Me on the Map* by Joan Sweeney

*Neighborhood Map Machine*, simple mapping software published by Tom Snyder

## Exploring Fun and Games

**Class Activity.** Teach children how to play *Ampe*, a game from Ghana. Two players stand facing each other. One is “Evens” the other is “Odds.” Players clap and count, “One, two, three!” As they say “Three!” they jump and stick out a foot. If players stick out facing feet (one right foot, one left foot) the “Evens” player scores one point. If players stick out opposite feet, the “Odds” player scores. The first player to get 11 points wins. (Source: *Games Around the World* by Louise Orlando). Does *Ampe* remind kids of a game they’ve played before? How is it the same or different?

**Student Letter Topics.** Write to a pen pal or classmate about your favorite sport or toy, or your favorite TV show or music group. Or, tell how you choose which team goes first in a game, or which player is “it” in a game of tag. Ask how your pen pal does it.

**Extensions.** Learn more international games (see Book Links on this page).

## Exploring School Time

**Class Activity 1.** Collect some schoolwork to send to your pen pals. Send some typical school supplies as well.

**Class Activity 2.** Chart your school schedule. Ask your pen pals to send you a similar chart. Go to [www.timeanddate.com/worldclock](http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock), or make copies of the time zone map found in the front of a phone directory. Ask: *What time is it where our penpals are? What are they doing now?*

**Student Letter Topics.** Describe a school project you are working on. What is your favorite or funniest school memory? Or, write about your dreams for the future. What would you like to do? Where would you like to go?

**Extensions.** Kids from around the world drew and wrote about their dreams for the Wake Up World! Gallery ([oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/kidsweb/wakeup/gallery.htm](http://oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/kidsweb/wakeup/gallery.htm)). Send in your submissions as well.

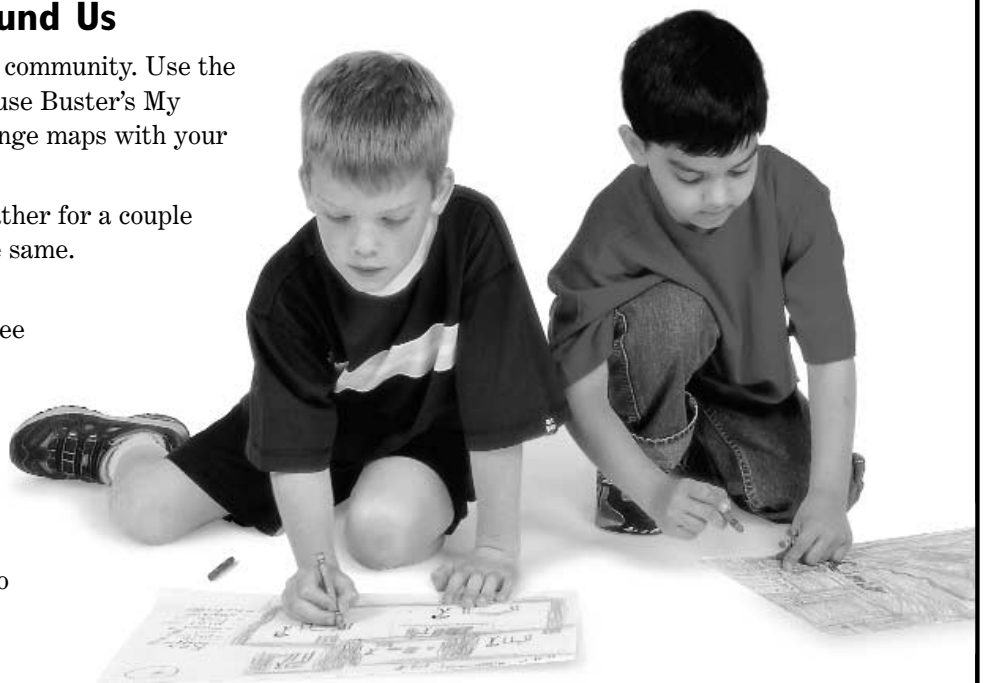
## Exploring the World Around Us

**Class Activity 1.** Create maps of your community. Use the mapping resources in Book Links or use Buster’s My Town map (page 5) as a guide. Exchange maps with your pen pals.

**Class Activity 2.** Chart your local weather for a couple of weeks. Ask your pen pals to do the same. Exchange and compare the data.

**Student Letter Topics.** What do you see when you look out your window? What’s your favorite outdoor place, or your favorite season? Draw and write.

**Extensions.** Go to [wunderground.com](http://wunderground.com) to check the daily weather in the country you are studying. Compare to your local weather.



# A Letter from Adil

This letter is to my pen pal, Arthur. He lives in Elwood City, USA. That's a long way from Turkey where I live, but we have a lot in common.



August 10, 2003

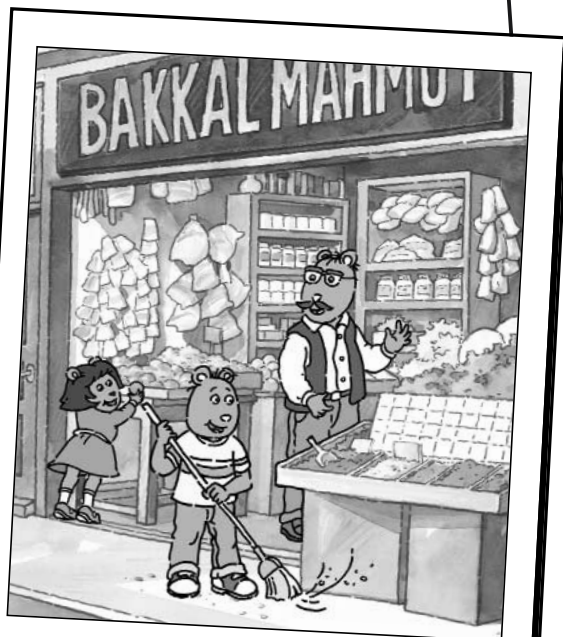
Dear Arthur,

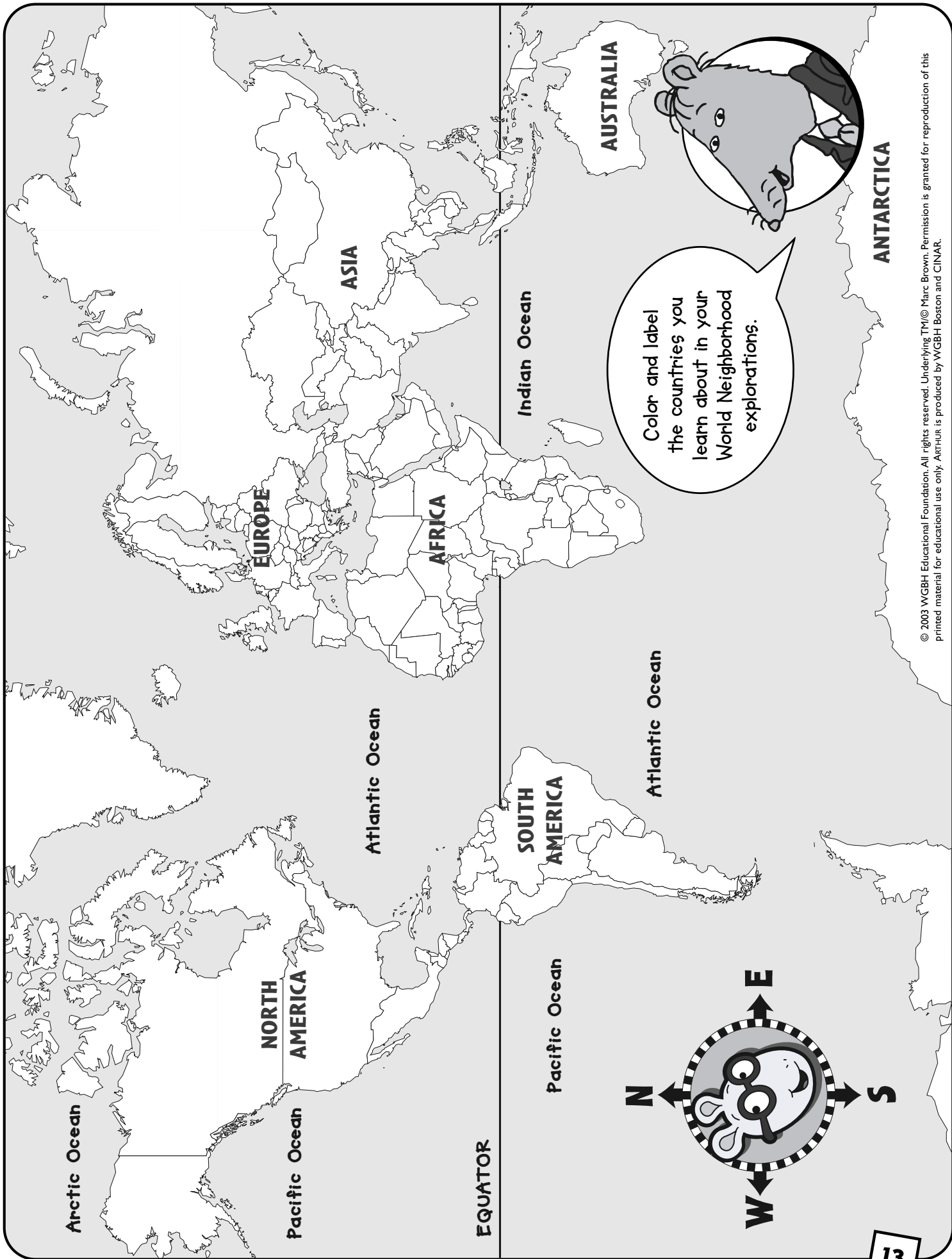
How is everyone in Elwood City? Thanks for sending me that picture of you and Buster in front of the Sugar Bowl. It was funny! You both look a little different than I thought you would. Was Buster really eating Calamari Crunch ice cream? We don't have that flavor here in Turkey. My favorite dessert is *sutlaç*, which is Turkish rice pudding. You should try it sometime.

After school, my friends and I listen to music or play soccer or basketball. This week my friend Onder and I are practicing for a big chess tournament. Onder is a better player than I am. He'll probably win.

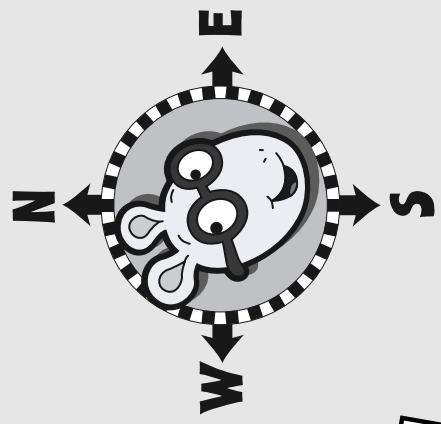
Sometimes after school I help out at my dad's grocery store. In Turkish, we call it a *bakkal*. Here's a picture of me helping out. My sister Ayse is trying to help, too. Please write back soon.

Your friend,  
Adil





Color and label the countries you learn about in your World Neighborhood explorations.



© 2003 WGBH Educational Foundation. All rights reserved. Underlying TM/© Marc Brown. Permission is granted for reproduction of this printed material for educational use only. ARTHUR is produced by WGBH Boston and CINAR.