

# A TALE OF TWO TOWNS *(cont.)*

## Materials

- factual information about your community (If possible, find printed texts that include some history of the town.)
- All About Our Community questionnaire sheet
- access to computers with an Internet connection and an email account
- Scoring Rubric for presentation
- Digital Camera
- Maps of the United States

## Procedure

### Preparation

- Review basic map reading.
- If possible, go on a field trip around town, and work with parents and other adults in the community to find the answers to the questions on the All About Our Community questionnaire sheet. Students will then email the questionnaire to their selected e-pals to answer and return.
- On the town field trip, children can take digital photos of important places, and include them in the mailing to their e-pals. They can post them on the class web site, along with a narrative of each important place. This helps to foster feelings of connection to the project and the community.
- When the questionnaire is returned, the group of students who received it prepare a presentation for the class. When they are preparing the presentation, they will use the scoring rubric to guide them in their preparation. While students work on the presentation, encourage them to engage in conversations with their group about the information they have received, and the things they have learned about their own town. These conversations will help to build an improved and shared understanding of the topic. They will make connections between the things they have learned and how it affects their lives.
- Set up e-pals for the students. Here are some suggested web sites for connecting your students with students around the country:

<http://www.epals.com>

<http://www.iecc.org>

<http://www.mightymedia.com/keypals>

<http://www.ks-connection.com/penpal/penpal.html>

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## Step-by-Step Teacher and Student Instructions

1. The first lessons should focus on the history of your community. Use any materials you have available to you including any special guests you can invite to share their knowledge with you. After the completion of the history piece of your community, introduce the concept of basic needs, and discuss how people in your town used to meet their needs, and how their needs are being met in the present day.
2. Take the field trip through the community to see important places. Take digital pictures.
3. The students now should be prepared to start filling in the questionnaire about the community they live in. This should be done with their small group, and some brainstorming of possible sources of information should be done with the whole group. The students might need to take the sheet home to consult with parents or other family members. Groups will be heterogeneous and teacher selected, consisting of 4–5 students.
4. The students should make initial contact with the group of e-pals they have selected (or the teacher has selected for them). They should send a copy of their completed sheet about their own community and a blank sheet to be filled out by the group of students in another town.
5. While they are waiting for the reply, the group should find the community on the map. They should also get started on the visual aid for the presentation. This will require a little research by the group. The visual aid will be a poster showing the city/town placement within the state, and include the information that the students gather. Suggested information for the poster, along with the map: highlights of the town, nickname/logo, pictures of things that are grown and or manufactured there, interesting historical facts, fun things for kids to do, population. If the e-pals send photos of their town, these will be included in the visual aid also.
6. When the group receives the reply, they will need to meet and prepare the oral presentation, and add any new information to the visual aid.
7. Each student in the group will fill out the rubric to be sure they have met all the requirements, then present the oral report to the class.

## Assessment/Evaluation

Fill out the rubric for each of the group members as they do their oral presentations. They will also be evaluated on the accuracy of the information included in the questionnaire they fill out regarding their community. The students will be encouraged to discuss the differences between the two communities and give some reasons why they think there are differences. Both large and small group discussions to reflect on the differences will be facilitated as the information is received from the e-pals. Take anecdotal notes as groups work together.

## Extensions

- The students could continue to communicate with their e-pals to discuss other aspects of life in their community.
- The community questionnaire along with the digital pictures taken from the field trip could be attached to the class web page. More information could be included with the pictures.
- The community study/comparison could be extended to include towns outside of the United States.
- Parents could be asked to supply the email addresses of family members in other states instead of using the suggested web sites.

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## Rubric

### Oral Presentation

#### Visual Aid

(10) Accuracy of information \_\_\_\_\_

(10) Neatly labeled and colored; easy to read \_\_\_\_\_

#### Presentation

(20) Speaks clearly, easy to understand \_\_\_\_\_

(20) Accuracy of information \_\_\_\_\_

(20) Comparison of the two communities \_\_\_\_\_

(10) Did a fair share of the work \_\_\_\_\_

#### Use of computers

(5) Used time wisely to complete assignment \_\_\_\_\_

(5) Followed directions \_\_\_\_\_

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## All About Our Community

We live in \_\_\_\_\_ . It is located in the state of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ people live here.

Our school is called \_\_\_\_\_ and it has \_\_\_\_\_ students, grade \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_ .

Our town gets its water from \_\_\_\_\_

The natural resources we have in our area are \_\_\_\_\_

The kinds of houses we live in are \_\_\_\_\_

The building materials used in the houses are \_\_\_\_\_

Farmers in our area grow \_\_\_\_\_

Here are some of the things that are manufactured near us: \_\_\_\_\_

Some of the things our parents do for jobs here are \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ , and \_\_\_\_\_ .

# A TALE OF TWO TOWNS (cont.)

## All About Our Community (cont.)

Our town was founded in \_\_\_\_\_.

This is how it received its name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Our town's nickname is \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_.

It costs \_\_\_\_\_ for a gallon of milk, and \_\_\_\_\_ for a gallon of gas.

It costs \_\_\_\_\_ to see a movie.

Our two most popular grocery stores are \_\_\_\_\_

and \_\_\_\_\_

Two department stores we like to shop in are \_\_\_\_\_

and \_\_\_\_\_

A popular thing to play or collect is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

For fun we like to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When our families go away for the weekend, we \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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## Sample Introductory letter

Dear E-Pal,

We would like you to please read the information we have sent you about our town. We are also interested in having you fill out a questionnaire about your town and sending it back to us so we can use the information to see how other communities in different parts of the country are like ours, and how they are different. If it is possible, we would love to see some pictures of the places you live. If you want to learn more about our town, we made a movie, and you can see it at our website. Thanks so much for your help!

Sincerely,