

Write a welcome message to your students' pen pals

Tutorial 9

Welcome to In2Books!

In this tutorial, we suggest how to introduce your class to your students' pen pals.



In this tutorial, we suggest how to introduce your class by writing and sending a message to your students' pen pals through the Mail Center on Teacher Place.

Reaching out to your students' pen pals will make them feel like they're part of your classroom and make them more engaged in the program.

Goals of this tutorial

Learning Objective

- ✓ Write A Letter To The Pen Pals

This tutorial will:

- explain why reaching out to your students' pen pals is a good idea;
- provide suggestions for writing your message; and
- show you how to send your message.



In2Books pen pals want to help their students become better readers, writers, and thinkers. Adult pen pals become more engaged if they know their students' teachers are excited about their participation in the program and see them as allies. Pen pals will feel more committed to students if they know that you'll keep them informed of your expectations and be pleased to receive messages from them.

Why welcome pen pals and introduce your class to them?

Learning Objective

- ✓ Write A Letter To The Pen Pals

When you welcome pen pals, you start many good things. Your welcome:



- helps pen pals feel like they're part of the classroom,
- opens the communication pipeline,
- allows you to provide guidance,
- shows how you value the In2Books program and the pen pals as mentors, and
- enables you to communicate schedule expectations.

Why introduce your class to the pen pals?

Making a connection to your pen pals early on in the year is important. It makes your pen pals feel like they're part of the classroom. It gives you the opportunity to share useful information about your students as a class. It allows you to provide guidance and shows you value the In2Books program and pen pals as mentors. Pen pals will know they can reach out to you with questions. Most importantly, it allows you to set the pace and manage expectations. Pen pals are busy people and need to know what you need from them and what they can expect from you and your students.

What might you want to include in a welcome message?

Learning Objective

- ✓ Write A Letter To The Pen Pals

Tell about yourself.

- Your teaching experience
- What you teach
- Why you are an In2Books teacher
- Your interests



Share helpful information about your students and school.

- Grade
- Age
- Setting of school
- Computer access

Here are some suggestions for what you might want to include in your welcome message:

- Tell the pen pals how much you appreciate their participation.
- Pen pals will also want to know something about you and your class. Talk generally about where your school is located. (For safety purposes, do not name the school or its exact location.) Consider discussing your teaching experience and explaining why you decided to participate in In2Books.
- Pen pals also often want to know their students' grade so that they have a sense of how to write their letters. Please also include information about the school that might be helpful, e.g., demographics, computer access, etc.

Write a message welcoming the pen pals to your class!

Learning Objective

✓ Write A Letter To The Pen Pals

Dear Pen Pals,

Thank you for being pen pals for my 3rd grade students this year. They're so excited to have adult friends and we all look forward to getting to know you better and having robust discussions about the books. We are creating a map that shows where each of you is from and have put all of your letters up on our In2Books Bulletin Board.

Our classroom is in a small town in Idaho. I have been teaching for about six years and I love to play the piano and read mysteries.

We will be selecting our fiction book this week. I will send you some information soon about our schedule. Meanwhile, we hope you enjoy your first letters from your students. I will send my next message in about a week.

Cordially,
Sharon

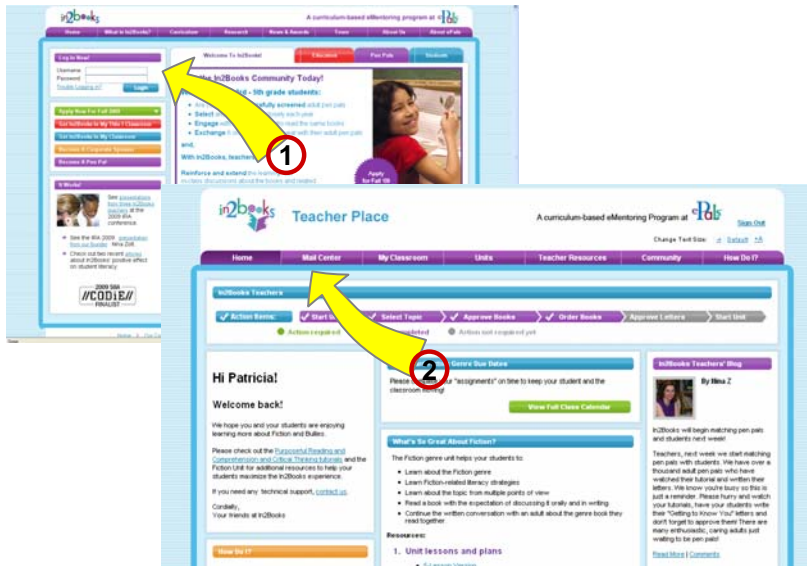
TIP: The first message doesn't have to say a lot – it's just reaching out to show your appreciation and to begin the dialogue.

Write a message welcoming the pen pals to your class. The message doesn't have to be long or fancy, it just needs to demonstrate to your pen pals that they're a part of your classroom and you appreciate their participation. Take a minute to read the sample message above. We suggest you send your message within a week after being matched.

To write your message, go to the **Mail Center** on Teacher Place.

Learning Objective

- ✓ Write A Letter To The Pen Pals



Key Steps

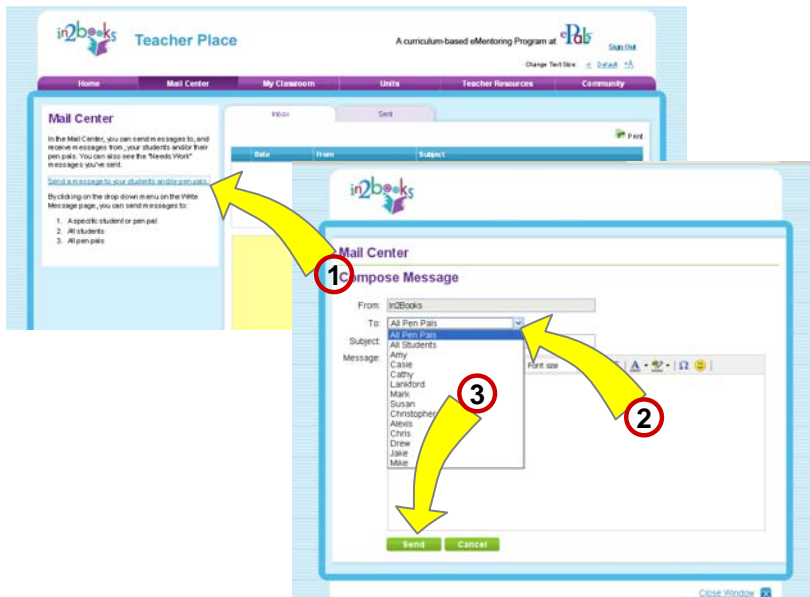
1. Sign in to Teacher Place.
2. Click on the **Mail Center** tab on the purple navigation bar.

You can write and send your message through the Mail Center. To do this, sign in to Teacher Place and click on the Mail Center tab on the purple navigation bar.

Click on the hyperlink, [Send a message to your students and/or pen pals](#). A new window will open up where you can write your message.

Learning Objective

Message Pen Pals



Key Steps

1. Click on the hyperlink, [Send a message to your students and/or pen pals](#).
2. From the drop-down menu for recipients, make sure the addressee is “**All Pen Pals**.”
3. Compose your message.
4. Include a subject like “Welcome to our Class!”
5. When you’ve completed your message, click on the green **Send** button.

Click on the hyperlink, “Send a message to your students and/or pen pals.” A new window will open. When you compose your message, be sure the addressee is “All Pen Pals.” This will allow you to send one message to all of the pen pals at once. Compose your message and add a subject such as “Welcome to our class!” Click on the green **Send** button when you’ve completed your message.

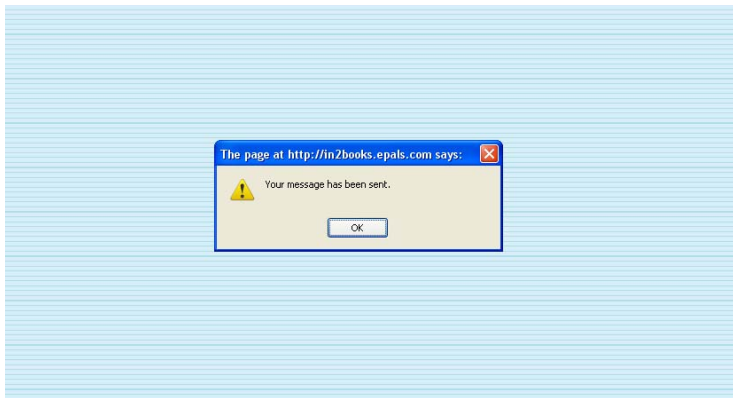
A confirmation box will appear when your message has been sent.

Learning Objective

 **Message Pen Pals**

Key Steps

Click on okay to close the box.



The window will notify you that your message has been sent. After clicking on "OK," the window will close.

Review

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Pen pals will appreciate receiving mail from you throughout the year. The more they know about what you're doing in your classroom, the better their letters will be. We suggest that you send your first welcome message within a week after your students have been matched.

Please:

(1) Close this window.

(2) Get credit for this tutorial by clicking the large green button on the page you will see.

(3) Continue on to the next tutorial.