

Getting Started with In2Books in Your Classroom

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Lesson 1 Essential Activities: Introduce In2Books

[Lessons
and
Calendar](#)

The In2Books program, the community and the concept of pen pals are introduced to your students.

Common Core State Standards Addressed:

Speaking and Listening grades 3-5

1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions on grade 3-5 topics, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
2. Determine the main ideas and supporting details of information presented in diverse media and formats including visually, quantitatively, and orally
3. Ask and answer questions about information from a speaker, offering appropriate elaboration and detail.

Objectives (Key concepts, skills and knowledge)

- Students learn that In2Books is a learning community.
- Students learn how In2Books works.

Evidence of Student Success

- Students explain how In2Books works.
- Students share what each person does in the In2Books program.
- Students describe what pen pals do.

Preparation

1. Arrange for a computer and a projector on the day you want to show the class the In2Books video and the yearlong letter-writing sequence. Preview and select an [online video to show](#). We recommend either "In2Books on NBC" or "What is In2Books?"
2. To display the [yearlong letter-writing sequence](#), the [founder's letter](#) and a [slide of Student Place](#), use an overhead projector with the prepared transparencies.
3. Most schools have permission for their students under 13 to use the Internet. Check to see if your school already has obtained the permissions. If not, copy the *Program Explanation and Permission Form*. (It comes in both English and Spanish.) Although optional, we also encourage you to send home the [In2Books Family Guide](#). Both can be downloaded from the **Class Roster** page of Teacher Place. Select **My Classroom** on the purple navigation bar and then **Class Roster** from the drop down list.
4. Create an In2Books bulletin board. For the Getting Started unit, include the Founder's letter and an enlarged format of a friendly letter with its five main parts labeled: heading, greeting, body, closing, and signature. Post the printed letters from the yearlong letter- writing sequence. Later, when students have received their pen pals' "Getting To Know You" letters, create a map showing where the pen pals live. Include a list of their characteristics, interests and professions.

Activities

1. Introduce In2Books and how it works

15 minutes

Explain to your students that they will participate in In2Books this year. In2Books is an online community of people who love to read, write and talk about books.

a. How it works:

i. Students:

- are matched with safe adult pen pals
- participate in six units:
 - A Getting Started unit – students and pen pals exchange "Getting To Know You" letters; and
 - 5 Genre units – fiction, social studies, biography, traditional tales, and science.
- Students get to choose and read 5 books over the course of the year; these books are theirs to keep.

- During each unit the students and pen pals write to each other about life and the important issues in the books.
 - ii. Teachers reinforce and extend learning with:
 - in-class discussions about the books; and
 - related instruction in genre and literacy skills.
- b. In2Books is a virtual community so they may never meet other participants in the community in person. They will get to know them through their exchange of letters on the Internet and participating in the In2Books community.

Things to point out about In2Books:

- In2Books is a national community of booklovers with students in more than 44 states.
- The members of the In2Books community are:
 - Students
 - Teachers
 - Adult Pen Pals
 - In2Books and ePals employees
- Students have participated in In2Books for more than 10 years.
- In2Books is part of ePals, a free safe and secure social network for meaningful learning.

During the school year, your students will select up to five books from different genres, fiction, social studies, biography, traditional tales, and science to read with their pen pals. Your students and their pen pals will exchange online letters to the students about the important issues in the books. In this way your students will have personal models of adult thinking and thought-provoking questions. Student Place will be your students' headquarters for writing and receiving letters and learning all about reading, writing, and thinking.

- c. Students love In2Books
 - i. "I love all the books In2Books sent me. My pen pal's letters are great."
 - ii. "My pen pal was really somebody I could talk to when things went wrong."
 - iii. "You can talk about your book and say things you didn't get."
- d. Explain why you wanted to bring In2Books to your classroom

2. Show the In2Books video

5 minutes

Explain to your students that this is a video of a real In2Books classroom. Ask your students to write down three things that interest them about the video. Then have them share their comments in a pair-share, followed by a share out with the entire class.

3. Share the In2Books founder's welcome letter

5 minutes

Students learn best when they make personal connections. Knowing that real people are behind In2Books increases their excitement and helps them feel that they are participating in something special. Pass out copies of the founder's letter. Be sure to tell your students that this welcome letter is from the founder of In2Books, not from one of their pen pals. You may want to post it on your In2Books bulletin board.

4. Show the yearlong letter-writing sequence

5 minutes

Share the yearlong letter-writing sequence print outs that were accessed from In2Books' login page. Explain that students will read up to five books this year and write to their pen pals about them. Highlight the kinds of genres and exchange of letters that they will explore. There are five genres: fiction, social studies, biographies, traditional tales and science. You may want to print out a copy of the fiction letters and post them on your In2Books bulletin board.

5. School-home connection

5 minutes

Have your students take home the Family Guide and any permission slips you deem appropriate.

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