



International Connections and Community Spirit

Challenging times, like the one we're in, can reveal the bonds of community and connections that we may have taken for granted or never realized were there in the first place. Physical connections are difficult this during this time of social distancing. Despite this barrier, communities around the world are finding creative ways to come together—whether it's to provide much needed assistance or simply to provide some human connection to cope with isolation.

**How is your community coming together during the pandemic?
How are you and your family maintaining connections while also social distancing?**



The Universal Language of Photography

The International Center of Photography (<https://www.icp.org/>) is inviting people from around the world to share their stories through photography. You can submit your own photos and view what others have contributed using the hashtag #ICPconcerned on Twitter and Instagram.



Check out this article on CNN

READ: [cnn.com/travel/article/international-center-of-photography-pandemic-photos/index.html](https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/international-center-of-photography-pandemic-photos/index.html)



Check out this article from The New Yorker

READ: [newyorker.com/news/our-columnists/coping-camaraderie-and-human-evolution-amid-the-coronavirus-crisis](https://www.newyorker.com/news/our-columnists/coping-camaraderie-and-human-evolution-amid-the-coronavirus-crisis)

- As you look through the photographs coming in from around the world, what are some creative ways that people are dealing with the isolation of self-quarantine?
- What are some issues that communities around the world are having to face? Does your community face any of these same issues?
- *The New Yorker* article talks about ways people around the world are changing their normal customs and habits to practice safe social distancing. What are some permanent impacts the Coronavirus pandemic will have on the way we interact and communicate?

After considering these questions, how would you represent your community to people from other parts of the world? How would you represent your daily life as you have adjusted to quarantine and social distancing?

If you can do so safely, document your own community and daily life through photography. Your photographs do not have to be made with professional equipment. Any phone camera will do!

Here are some creative ways to share your photos:

1. Take part in the International Center of Photography's "Concerned" exhibition. Upload your photos to social media using the hashtag #ICPconcerned.
2. Create an online portfolio using a photo album maker like [MyAlbum.com](https://www.myalbum.com) or photo-sharing site like [imgur.com](https://www.imgur.com).
3. Create a guided tour of your community using Google Tour Builder (tourbuilder.withgoogle.com). With the photographs you took (or some you found online), show the world how your community is responding to the crisis by highlighting the work of specific leaders and organizations. When you are finished, consider posting your work on social media or turn this into a project that you can share with a pen pal.

Photography is a great way to capture snapshots of your community and will also ensure that they are preserved for later generations. Today, we can look back more than a century ago to how communities came together during the Spanish flu outbreak from 1918-1920.



Find a Pen Pal

Our need for human connection is so powerful that it is essential to our well-being. We humans are social creatures by nature and are hard-wired for connection. As we look for new ways to connect and stay in touch during this unusual time, it's clear to see the lengths we will go to maintain human connection—even if it is remote. Social distancing does not mean we can't stay in touch or make new connections. Thanks to technology, it's easier than ever for us to connect with people instantaneously around the world.

Pen pals are a classic way to “meet” new people around the world. There are tons of websites where students and adults can find pen pals to connect with. Most of the websites listed below are free to use. Once you've connected with someone and exchanged contact info, you can communicate through whatever mediums you are comfortable with.

Resources & Instructions

Below are some great websites to help you find a pen pal.

- **Global PenFriends:** <https://www.globalpenfriends.com/>
- **PenPal World:** <http://www.penpalworld.com/>
- **ePals:** <https://www.epals.com/#/connections>
- **International Pen Friends:** <https://www.ipfworld.com/> (payment required)
- **International Pen Pals For Kids!:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/776107409259698/> (ONLY for snail mail)



Check out “How to Find a Modern-Day Pen Pal”

READ: <https://www.marthastewart.com/1538505/how-to-find-pen-pal>

Web apps like [Zoom.us](https://zoom.us) and Google Hangouts (hangouts.google.com) make it easier than ever to communicate face to face via the internet. If the time difference makes it difficult to communicate live with your pen pal or you just don't feel comfortable chatting live on video, try sending short videos or voice messages back and forth. [Flipgrid.com](https://flipgrid.com) is a free online app that makes it easy to post short videos and respond to them. [Whatsapp.com](https://whatsapp.com) is great for texting internationally. If you have limited access to the Internet (or you're just tired of using Zoom and social media), you can always communicate the old-fashioned way with pen, paper, and “snail mail.”

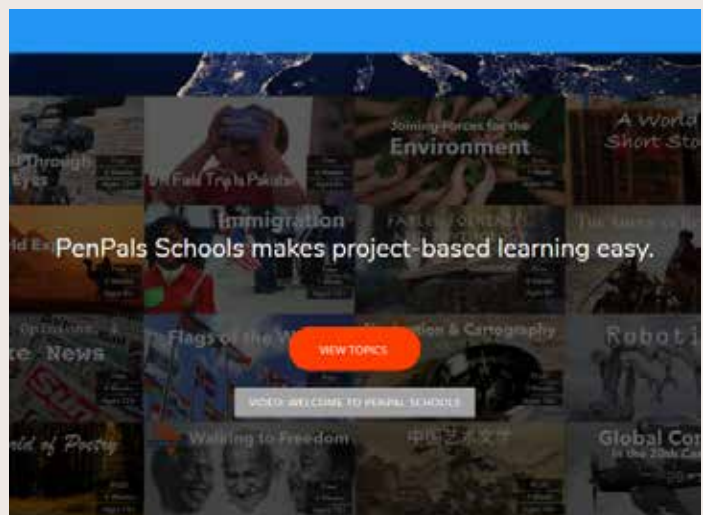
Go Further

Language Exchange

Connecting with a pen pal is a great way to practice a foreign language! If you are learning a language other than English, consider finding a language exchange partner. Many websites, including some listed above, make it easy to find people in other countries who want to share their language with you and practice their English in return.

Pen Pal Project-Based Learning

One website in particular that we are excited about is PenPal Schools (penpalschools.com). Normally, it requires a paid subscription to use, but during this time of quarantine, they have made registration completely free of charge.





Language & Culture

Today, English is spoken as a second language by more people than ever. For students in the United States and other English-speaking countries, this certainly makes it easy to find pen pals around the world! It is estimated that there are at least three non-native English speakers to every native English speaker in the world.

Many non-English-speaking countries now start to teach their children English in school at a young age. This is great for students in English-speaking countries to connect and communicate with other students from around the world. But what about students from other parts of the world who do not speak English?

Some experts predict that English will be one of only three languages (in addition to Spanish and Mandarin) that won't die out by the end of this century.

As more non-native speakers learn English, words and sounds from local languages have joined English to create new ways of communicating. For example, Spanglish, a mix of Spanish and English, is now spoken in the United States and Mexico. Hinglish, a mix of Hindi and English, is becoming more common in India.



Learn why English became an international language

WATCH: [youtube.com/watch?v=iqDFPU9YeQM&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iqDFPU9YeQM&feature=youtu.be)



SCAN ME



Reflect & Consider

- How many people around the world do you think speak English as a second language?
- What is the meaning of globalization?
- Does language represent the culture of a community? How?
- Why do you think English has become the global language?
- Should there be a universal global language? Why or why not?
- What can countries do to preserve their language?

Instructions

Watch the video above and then respond to the questions provided. To share your work, consider making a video of your own.

If you did Activity 1 and connected with an international pen pal who does not speak English as a native language, use these questions to start a discussion about why they think English is important to learn and what their general thoughts and feelings are about learning English as a second language. You might be surprised by their responses!

Students! Answering our questions? Using our strategies? Share them with us at discovery@worldstrides.com.