

“Sister Language”

Fall > Teaching > Language Arts (06.F.Teach.Sister_Language)

Season & Location:

Fall, “Back to School”; lessons are conducted in the classroom, but contacts can be made worldwide. Activities will ideally continue through the school year, into summer, and for an indefinite time in the future.

Partnerships/Community Connections:

“Sister Language” project implies the participation of another (or more than one) class or group of youths somewhere in the world. This would likely involve a school – a teacher and/or community members in a foreign country. Students (ours) will likely need someone who speaks or can translate the dominant language in the area selected for the “Sister Language” project (so activities can be coordinated). Some suggested groups would include, but are certainly not limited to - the Maori, Hawaiian kids in the charter school system there, other Dee Ni (Dine) speakers from Alaska/Four Corners area, and other students from the various UNESCO identified language “hot spots”.

Standards* Focus:

Language Arts:

Handwriting:

Write legibly in cursive or manuscript and read cursive fluently.

Writing:

Write for different purposes and to a specific audience or person, adjusting tone and style as appropriate;

Demonstrates knowledge of spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and penmanship across the subject areas;

Use simple and compound sentences;

**“Second Language” standards are addressed by default – consult state scoring guide.*

Additional Standards:

Social Studies:

Geography: Understand the spatial concepts of location, distance, direction, scale, movement, and region;

Use maps and other geographic tools and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a special perspective;

Compare and analyze physical (e.g., landforms, vegetation, wildlife, climate, and natural hazards) and human (e.g., population, land use, language, and religion) characteristics of places and regions;

Understand how people and the environment are interrelated;

Technology:

Use telecommunications and a variety of media to collaborate, publish and interact with peers, experts and other audiences.

Cultural Knowledge:

Students should address at LEAST one of the “Cultural Universals” in the course of corresponding with, and getting to know their pen pal /”sister” class.

Food, Clothing, Shelter, Medicine, Fun, Communication, Government, Tools and Technology, Belief/World View, Transportation, Medium of Exchange, Family, Arts and Aesthetics, and Science.

Vocabulary:

Sister	Dee-sre
Word	Wee-ya
Language	Wee-ya
Food	Srtaa~
Clothes	Naa-tr'vsh
Shelter (house)	Mvn'
Money	Ts'vt
Medicine	Chaa-may
Communication	Na'-'a
Government	Gop-mvn
Tools	Mvlh-naa-dvtlh-nvsh
Transportation (Going)	Tee-see-ya
Family	Da'-ye'
Art (Beauty)	Huu-chan

Phrases:

What language do you speak?	Day wee-ya naa-chii~- 'a
We speak _____.	_____ naa-ch'aa-ghit-'a
We are learning to speak _____.	_____ naa-ch'aa-ghit-'a 'vm-nitlh-ts'it
We are studying (subject area).	(subject area) naa-ch'aa-ghit-'a
How do you say _____?	Daa-'ee-la _____ naa-chii~- 'a
What is the word for _____?	Day-la wee-ya wvn _____?

What is your favorite _____?	Day-la lhan nash-talh?
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Grammar & Language Concepts:

Questions and Answers; Use of dictionary and on line resources; Simple written and spoken sentence structure; verb conjugation, noun possessives; basic linguistics and language preservation methods.

Prior/Concurrent Lesson Plan Materials:

Greetings and Goodbyes (05.HE.04.Greetings and Goodbyes)

Questions and Answers

“Classroom Talk” (06.F.Teach.Resource 1)

Lesson Objectives – After completion, students/instructors will be able to:

Write simple Dee Ni questions, and respond in Dee Ni to the responses;

Learn some words and phrases from a pen pal who is also learning a heritage language;

Practice proper handwriting;

Understand that the Dee Ni language is one of a number of heritage languages that are in danger of becoming “extinct”, and that their efforts to learn and preserve the language are an important part of self-identity;

Work to preserve letter-writing, a rapidly disappearing art form.

Locate their pen pals on a world map, and make a basic description of that region, it’s people, history, and politics.

Lesson Procedures:

Students study the designation of “Language Hotspots” as defined by various linguistic organizations (Enduring Voices, Living Tongues Institute, etc).

Instructor assists students in selecting a cultural group representing one of the “Hotspot” languages, and further assists them in making contact with an individual or group of kids from that culture.

Students study the significance of language in its function as a part of preserving culture, history, and values;

Students study “Cultural Universals” and use them as a template to guide questions.

Questions will follow a formula determined by the classroom teacher; a suggestion is as follows:

“What is your favorite food? (Then translated into Dee NI.) “My favorite food is _____.” (Then translated into Dee NI.) A student could send their “pen pal” a small collection of coins and a paper bill (a ONE dollar bill – preferable not a HUNDRED dollar bill – diuh.); this could be accompanied by a phrase like “This is what our money looks like.” (Common sense would suggest that this part of the exercise would only be relevant if you are communicating with someone overseas, right?) Then followed with “What does your money look like?” ... and so forth and so on.

Students should include artwork, photographs, and gifts where appropriate.

Communication should be done in students’ best handwriting, as an exercise in developing legible writing skills. If that’s not possible, letters can be word – processed. If relationships

evolve to the appropriate point, students could communicate via Skype, web conference, or other Internet communication method.

Students write a report describing the region their pen pals come from – including references to the “cultural universals”.

Assessment:

Materials & Supplies:

There are many websites and print periodical resources for information on the “language hotspots”. The National Geographic Magazine’s website is an excellent resource for links to other information.

<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/enduring-voices/> (Enduring Voices)

<http://www.livingtongues.org/hotspots.html> (Living Tongues Institute)

There are also websites that help educators coordinate pen pal activities.

“Cultural Universals” pen pal letter outline