

Using Keypals to Learn About Another State

The Students

This activity is designed for 4th grade students who are learning about different states in the country. Two classrooms from two different states in two different areas of the country will participate.

The Required Resources:

This assignment assumes that both schools have the following technology:

- Internet connection
- Computer lab
- Computers in classroom
- Student email access
- Digital cameras
- Webcam (optional)

The Activity:

This activity is aimed to teach students from one state about another state (preferably from another part of the country) by talking with a peer from that state. Based on the traditional pen-pals activity, students will communicate with their "keypal" using various forms of technology, including email, and audio and video chatting. Students will be required to find out information about their keypal's state by simply having a conversation. They will be required to find out what state their keypal is from, the state capital, famous places to visit, and famous people from the state, as well as any other information they want to find out about. They will also be required to learn about their keypal's everyday life. Students will be allowed to take and send pictures of their home state to help better inform their keypals.

NOTE: To ensure the safety of the students, all work will be done IN SCHOOL.

For students to properly teach their keypals, they will have to have learned about their own state first, thus, this activity assumes that this has occurred before or is concurrently happening during the activity.

Students will be required to make an oral presentation about their keypal and their keypal's state based on the information they received. They may use a PowerPoint slideshow in their presentation to show any pictures they have received from their keypad.

After all presentations are made, students will come together in groups of 3 or 4 and talk about their experience doing this activity. They will come up with a list of pros and cons, and ideas of how to make the activity better, overall.

The Questions and Hypotheses:

Students will be expected to come up with questions to ask their keypal. Some questions may include:

- What is the capital of your state?
- What is the population of your state?
- Is it crowded where you live?
- What kind of music do you listen to?
- What sports do you play?
- What games do you play?
- What is the geography of your state?

More advanced students may come up with these questions:

- What type of restaurants are in your town?
- How far is it to the nearest city?
- What is the climate like where you live?
- What is a typical day in school like?