

## Math 221 Pen Pal Pointers

Your pen pal letters will be kept in a folder with clasps and (perhaps) pockets. Add paper as you go along for you and pen pal to use. Decorate the folder with a math theme. Be sure your name and your pen pal's name are on the front of the folder. In the bottom right hand corner, print **Mrs. Hornsby** to indicate your pen pal's teacher.

For your first pen pal letter:

1. Introduce yourself. Tell your pen pal about your background and your interests. Mention your major, home town, siblings, favorite sports, and other recreational activities. Mention why you want to be a teacher, or anything else that will help your pen pal get to know you.
2. Ask your pen pals about their families, siblings, pets, etc. You might inquire about their favorite colors, sports, teams, TV shows, games, what they like about school, etc.
3. Ask your pen pals what they are doing in math right now.
4. Include a picture of yourself. If there are other people in the picture, tell your pen pal who they are.
5. Return the journal on Thursday, Feb. 24th.

For all pen pal letters:

1. Print legibly. Set an example of what good, clear printing should look like. Don't use all capital letters or strange letter styles. Use correct grammar and punctuation. Your work is a model for your pen pal.
2. Make your letter an attention-getter by using such things as color, stickers, interesting pictures.
3. Don't skimp on paper. Don't try to cram too much into a small space. In fact I would suggest double spacing your printed text.
4. When you ask math questions, don't make them all purely computational. Use words. Ask word-problem questions. However, keep in mind the grade level and ask appropriate questions.
5. It is tempting to include small gifts - let's save that for the end of the semester when I am hoping that we can arrange a meeting with the children.
6. Always answer your pen pal's questions.
7. If your pen pal includes a math problem that is done incorrectly, gently point it out and suggest a correction.
8. Look for clues to what your pen pal is interested in and try to find a way to relate it to math.
9. When you ask your pen pal a math question, leave space at the end of your question for the answer.
10. If you ask your pen pal a question and it does not get answered in the next letter, ask it again. If it is a math question, perhaps a hint is necessary. Ask if your pen pal would like a hint.
11. Your pen pal is really excited about getting a letter from you and about writing to you. Don't take it lightly. Don't put off writing until the last minute. Make this a priority.
12. Have fun!