

Math 222: General Pen Pal Pointers

Your pen pal letters will be kept in a folder with clasps (provided by me). Add paper as you go along for you and your pen pal to use. You do not want to have too much paper, but you don't want your student to have to add more.

First Letters:

1. Decorate the folder with a math theme. Be creative – your design should be eye-catching and interesting. It represents your child's first impression of you. Be sure your name and your pen pal's name are on the front of the folder.
Note: Be mindful of the fact that these folders get a lot of use and abuse this semester. You may want to avoid designs that will likely be damaged in transport week-to-week.
2. Include a picture of yourself – tape it on the inside cover of the folder. If there are other people in the picture, be sure to identify yourself and the other people in the picture. **Do not** ask the student for a picture of himself/herself.
3. Introduce yourself. Tell your pen pal about your background and interests. Mention your major, hometown, siblings, favorite sports, etc. You may want to include why you want to be a teacher or what grade you want to teach.
4. Ask your pen pal about their family and pets. You might inquire about their favorite colors, sports, TV shows, etc. You might ask what they like the most about school or math.
5. Ask your pen pals what they are doing in math right now.
6. At the end of your letter, include an introductory geometry question about polygons, angles, or lines. Remember to use a ruler to keep your lines nice and straight.

You can use the information above as a check-list. You will lose points if you have not completed everything in the list.

Things to remember for all letters:

1. **Do not send presents.** (Even if your pen pal sent you something.)
2. Your letter should be **at least one page** of your normal handwriting. (If you write small, you can write $\frac{3}{4}$ page, but absolutely no less.) You should put your math problem on the next page to avoid over-crowding.
3. Print legibly. Set an example of what good, clear printing should look like. Don't use all caps or odd styling. Use correct grammar and punctuation. Your work is a model for your students.
4. Make your letter an attention-getter by using such things as color, stickers, interesting pictures, etc.
5. Always answer your pen pal's questions – when you don't it gives the impression that you are not really reading what they wrote and do not care about them.
6. Look for clues revealing your pen pal's interests, and find ways to relate them to mathematics. For example, if your pen pal likes baseball, maybe you could send a word problem about baseball.
7. Do not exchange home addresses, email addresses, or FaceBook access.
8. Your pen pal is very excited about getting a letter from you and writing to you. Do not take this commitment lightly. It is an important component of the course, and it means a great deal to your child.
9. Have fun!