

# iEARN

## International Education And Resource Network

<http://www.iearn.org>

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### TEDDY BEAR PROJECT



#### How it works

After registration teachers are matched to a partner class to work with in the project. The classes send each other a Teddy Bear or other soft toy by airmail. When it arrives the bear writes home a diary message by e-mail at least once a week describing its adventures, the places it has been as well as the things it has seen and done. The project aims to encourage authentic writing by providing children with a real audience. They write their e-mail messages as if they are the visiting bear. Sometimes internet videoconference between two classes may deepen their friendships. The project is designed to fostering tolerance, understanding – and to assist in the break down of cultural barriers.

Since 1996, over 5000 classes have exchanged teddy bears between many countries including Argentina, Canada, Ecuador, England, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Scotland, Ireland, New Zealand, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Mongolia, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, South Africa, Turkey, the USA, Australia and many more. After they were matched, participants sent each other bears, maps, photos and local souvenirs by airmail. Many teachers and students developed close associations with their partner classes. Some schools will develop web pages demonstrating their participation in the project, including the children's artwork. These pages can be linked to form the project home page.

#### First-hand opinions

The Teddy Bear project has changed my professional life. I always asked my teacher when I was a student why I had to write compositions if nobody was going to read them. Then, I became a teacher and went on asking myself the same question. My students hated writing. That's why I'm so happy now: my students ARE EAGER TO WRITE because they have somebody in some part of the world who will read what they write!!! We have partner schools in Pakistan, Russia (two different schools), Argentina and Australia. We love the forum!! Many thanks for this great opportunity!!!

*Veronica Zonteponte, a teacher of English from Argentina.*

My first graders and I participated this year in the project until the last day of school! We exchanged bears with Ms. Radita Neagu and her classroom of second graders from Focsani, Romania. It has been a wonderful experience for the students in both countries. Even though our students have an age gap, it hasn't made a difference. They love learning about the students and their traditions. It has truly been a rewarding experience. Our class decided to send the gifts that would tell the students about Delaware. They were very excited about this. They personalized the gifts by telling why they picked their item. Much to our surprise the students were so happy to receive the gifts that they too are sending us gifts. This has been a marvelous experience that I wish to do once again in the future.

*Jennifer Fisk, Delaware, USA*

**Ages:** All

**Project languages:** English, German, Spanish

**Project description:** <http://www.iearn.org/projects/teddybear.html>

**Curriculum area:** Language, Social Studies, the Arts

#### Project facilitators:

Tatsuya Inagaki at JEARN (iEARN-Japan)

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