MATH 221/222 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 your 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 the name of your pen pal’s teacher.

For your first pen-pal letter you should:

1. Introduce yourself; tell your pen-pal about your background and your interests. Mention your major, hometown, siblings, favorite sports and other recreational activities, why you want to be a teacher, and anything else that will help your pen-pal get to know you.

2. Ask your pen-pal about their family, their siblings, and pets. You might inquire about their favorite colors, sports, teams, TV shows and games and what they like best about school.

3. Ask what the pen-pals are doing in math right now.

4. Ask your pen-pal the math question we have discussed.

5. Include a picture of yourself. If there are other people in the picture, tell your pen-pal who they are. It may be tempting to include small gifts along the way. Let’s wait until the end of the semester and give each of the children a gift bag at the pen-pal party.

Things to remember for all pen-pal letters:

1. Print legibly. Set an example of what good, clear printing should look like. Don’t use all caps or odd stylings. 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 by trying to cram too much into a small space. You might want to place your letter on one page and your math question(s) on another.

4. As you create math problems, use only a few that are purely computational. Rather, use sentences to create a context for your questions. Consult the South Carolina standards for your pen pal’s grade level to help you structure appropriate math problems.

5. Always answer your pen-pal’s questions.

6. Look for clues revealing your pen-pal’s interests and find ways to relate them to mathematics.

7. Your pen-pal is really excited about getting a letter from you and about writing to you. Don’t take this commitment lightly. It is an important component of the course and it means a great deal to your child.

8. Have fun!