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Nivel y Grado

Área Académica

Meta

Objetivos

Alineamiento con los estándares de contenido

Materiales

Vocabulario

Actividades

Evaluación

Recursos en línea

Manual del Instructor

Manual del estudiante

Yen Marie López

San Antonio School, Río Piedras

Elementary Level, first to third grade

Academic Area: English, Social Studies, Science, Art

Duration: Four or five days to begin the project and at least one day a month to sustain students exchange throughout the year.

Goal:

Students will enhance the written, oral, and reading skills in English through a Pen Pal Program, which will be using the *coquí* as a link of communication between themselves and students from other schools. Promote students' communication skills in English by publishing their work in the school newspaper.

Objectives:

- Know and describe the characteristics of the *coquí*.
- Practice writing skills by communicating through the mail.
- Practice their artistic expressions by drawing what they learned.
- Develop respect and understanding of other cultures by meeting children from other countries.
- Identify similarities and differences between their culture and that of other children.
- Practice analytical/logical skills by discussing things they have learned from the new pen pal school. (Objectives 5 and 6 require a reply from one or more pen pal schools).
- Develop socializing skills through the establishment of a pen pal friend.
- Use the information learned to create a section for the classroom's newspaper.

Standards of Content:

Department of Education's Standards for the English Program, levels K-3:

1. Oral Communication- The student listens to and uses language effectively to interact verbally/non-verbally in different academic and social environments using different learning strategies and critical thinking skills.
2. Written Communication- The student writes narrative, expository, persuasive and descriptive text demonstrating command of standard English, using research and organizational strategies, and the stages of the writing process.

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3. Reading Comprehension- The student demonstrates confidence, independence and flexibility in the strategic use of reading skills, critical thinking, and the conventions of language for reading a range of simple to complex texts.

Materials:

1. Newspaper articles and storybooks about the coquí.
2. Construction paper, pencils, crayons, and magic markers.
3. Manila envelopes.
4. A picture of the whole class and any objects that represent the Puerto Rican culture.
5. A letter, written by the teacher, that contains the following:
 - a. explanation of what is inside the envelope
 - b. characteristics of the Puerto Rican culture
 - c. instructions about the information you are interested in receiving (culture and customs of the country).
 - d. invitation to establish a pen pal friendship.
 - e. invitation to return a photocopy of the coquí stencil (dressed up with the country's traditional clothes), and a drawing of the animal that represents their country.
6. A classroom newspaper.
7. A world map and a map of Puerto Rico.

Vocabulary:

1. *amphibian*- An animal that is able to live on either land or water.
2. *coquí*- A small frog whose song sounds like its name. It is an amphibian and it is native to Puerto Rico.
3. *countries*- Different places around the world where different people live.
4. *culture*- The way people live.
5. *pen pal*- Someone you write to and who writes back. Usually it is someone you meet through a pen pal program.
6. *palabra*- Words that may come from the pen pal's country of origin.

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Activities/Procedures:

Day 1:

1. Introduce what is a *coquí*. Discuss physical characteristics, habitat and the different species that exist.
2. Read a story that has the *coquí* as its central character. Ask the students key questions about the story and have them recognize which scientific facts are presented in the story.
3. Invite students to trace or draw a *coquí* (it can be realistic drawing or a cartoon).
4. Ask students to write a sentence about the *coquí* below the drawing. They may decorate it as they wish.

Day 2:

1. Explain why the *coquí* is a symbol of Puerto Rico. Show pictures of different countries and the animals used as a national symbol.
2. Explain what a pen pal program is, its basic rules and how one can meet new friends through the program.
3. Explain the procedure to establish communication with students from other schools through mail and/or e-mail. Emphasize the importance of sharing information about each other's culture and customs.
4. Invite students to draw a picture and write a sentence about their favorite place/animal or other cultural aspect of Puerto Rico. They will also write something about themselves.
5. Ask students to bring a manila envelope and an object that represents or symbolizes Puerto Rico. For example: a postcard, a pin, a flag, or other cultural object of their choice (it should be small in size since it will be part of the cultural package that will be sent to the pen pal program school).

* Before starting this activity, the teacher should have the address of the school that has agreed to participate in the Pen Pal Exchange Program. You can write to Puerto Rican schools as well as schools from other countries.

Day 3:

1. Have students form interest groups. Have each group decide about the objects they will include in the cultural package. Each group will show others the objects they brought and explain why they chose it.

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2. Distribute the label with the address of the school where the students are going to send the cultural package and ask them to stick it to the corresponding spot of the envelope.
3. Ask students to prepare the envelope with the label that has the address of your own school.
4. Ask students to write their name and their grade in the envelope and above the address of their own school.
5. Demonstrate how each student should put inside the envelope their drawings and cultural objects, which may include: a *coquí* drawing, a picture or drawing of their favorite place/object or cultural aspect of Puerto Rico, and any other souvenir they would like to send.
6. Explain the process that their letter will go through via the mail service. Have students perform the process, discuss what they think about how the children from other schools will react once they receive their letters.
7. Put in the envelopes copies of the letter that explains the contents of the envelope and what you would like to know about the pen pal schools' country. Add a picture of the class. Mail cultural packages. (For stamps, you can ask each student to bring one dollar. This will help with the foreign letters that need more than one stamp).

Day 4:

1. Display a world map and a map of Puerto Rico in the classroom. Explain that when a student receives a new letter from any of the pen pal schools, he or she will locate the place where it came from on the map and stick a colored flag on it.
2. Practice with some chosen countries and see if they can find them in the map.
3. You may introduce the use of e-mail to begin electronic communication with the pen pal schools.

Once you start receiving replies:

Day 1:

1. Announce the arrival of the cultural package. Review the process the letters went through in order to get to their classroom.
2. Open the envelopes and ask students to read the letters they may contain. Show students the cultural objects sent by the pen pal school. Let students talk about the *coquí* dressed up with the outfits of that country, and the animal that is presented as a symbol of the pen pal school country.
3. Have them locate the countries of the pen pal school on the map.

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4. Invite students to form small groups. Designate a different pen pal school to each group (this depends on how many responses you have received) and have them draw and write a sentence about what they learned and what they liked the most of their new pen pals. Once finished, let them read what they wrote out loud.
5. Ask students to bring a newspaper article, in English, related to the country where their pen pal is from. Ask parents to help their children to select, read and make a list of the new things learned about the country from the article.

Day 2:

1. The teacher should prepare children for writing an article for the school newspaper by: discussing what is a newspaper, reviewing the name of the sections, the key characteristics and key elements to consider when writing a newspaper article.
2. Ask students to summarize the newspaper article related to their pen pal school country. Students should use the list they made with their parents to share the new things they have learned about the country.
3. Inform students that school newspaper will have a new section entitled “*Coquí Meets a New Friend*”. It will be a section dedicated to the new pen pals they have met. This section has the purpose of sharing with other people (parents, teachers and friends) the information learned about other countries, cultures and customs.
4. The teacher should assist students in the process of deciding which drawings and information will be included in the section. The students must choose from all the information and drawings sent to them and the list of new things about each country. They will also choose the order in which the countries and the drawings will be displayed. Make sure the students agree on the reasons for including or excluding information and drawings and also for the order selected.
5. The section “*Coquí Meets a New Friend*” will be published by the teacher following the display and the contents selected by the students.

Evaluation:

- The students will be evaluated emphasizing their written skills in English. The following Writing Assessment Rubric may help.

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You can also make up your own rubrics for the oral and reading skills.

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Content Accuracy	The writing contains accurate facts about the topic.	The writing contains 2-3 accurate facts about the topic.	The writing contains 1-2 accurate facts about the topic.	The writing contains no accurate facts about the topic.
Grammar and Spelling	Writer makes no errors in grammar or spelling.	Writer makes 1-2 errors in grammar and/or spelling.	Writer makes 3-4 errors in grammar and/or spelling.	Writer makes more than 4 errors in grammar and/or spelling.
Capitalization and Punctuation	Writer makes no errors in capitalization and punctuation.	Writer makes 1-2 errors in capitalization and/or punctuation.	Writer makes 3-4 errors in capitalization and/or punctuation.	Writer makes more than 4 errors in capitalization and/or punctuation.
Format	Drawings and sentences comply with all the requirements needed for a friendly correspondence.	Drawings and sentences comply with almost all the requirements needed for a friendly correspondence.	Drawings and sentences comply with several of the requirements needed for a friendly correspondence.	Drawings and sentences comply with less than 75% of the requirements needed for a friendly correspondence.
Ideas	Ideas were expressed in a clear and organized fashion. It was easy to figure out what the drawings and sentences were about.	The idea of the drawings were expressed in a clear manner, but the organization of the sentences could have been better.	The idea of the drawings and the organization of the sentences were not very clear. It took more than one reading to figure out what they were about.	The drawings and sentences seemed to be unrelated. It was very difficult to figure out what they were about.

Extended Activities:

The great thing about this project is that it can easily be integrated to many academic areas and a variety of themes. It may be a whole year project, if you decide to keep corresponding with the pen pal schools. You may try a more technological approach by using a camcorder to record messages instead of writing them down and use e-mail to complement the cultural package and regular correspondence. Using technology will let the students practice their oral and socializing skills, as well as develop technological skills.

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References:

Some Spanish websites on *coquí*:

<http://welcome.topuertorico.org/coqui.shtml>
<http://www.coqui.org/coqui/>

Pen Pal Websites:

<http://fpmail.friends-partners.org/partners/ccsi/penhome.htm>
<http://teachers.net/projects/penpals>
<http://www.epals.com>
<http://www.wiredkids.org/teachers/penpals.html>
<http://www.zen.org/brendan/kids-pen.html>