

Read Around the Planet



Packet for Coordinators



What is the TWICE “Read Around the Planet” event?

Read Around the Planet is a celebration of NEA’s Read Across America. Classrooms use interactive video to connect with other classrooms “around the planet” and read to each other. The activity is sponsored by [TWICE](#) and Polycom, in cooperation with NEA.

TWICE provides the **registration tool**, **matches classrooms** with partners, and supplies **support documents**. Participating classrooms are responsible for their own video connections and developing their own reading activities for the event.

**Disclaimer. While we are using this name to be inclusive to our international friends, this name does NOT guarantee U.S. schools an international connection. They will be matched randomly in this project with usually over 90% of the participating classes from the United States.*



Getting Started

Do you have the right equipment?

This activity is open to all K-12 students in public and private schools who have access to two-way interactive video equipment (ISDN or IP). If you are unsure whether or not you have access to this type of equipment, or **don’t** understand these terms, you should be working with your school's technology coordinator. This project does not work with a web cam hooked up to a computer. Your equipment should be able to do H.323 (IP) or H.320 (ISDN) videoconference connections.

Talk to your technical people

Read Around the Planet (RAP) days can be very time intensive. Planning ahead for support is essential. Talk to your local technology coordinator to see if they have time to assist with multiple connections per day. Also, it is of utmost importance that you communicate with your technology coordinator to make sure that no changes are made to the network or equipment setup after successful test calls and before the actual connection.

Do you check your email?

Email is the main form of communication for this event. Please don’t sign up unless you can **answer email within 36 hours**. Because of the complexity of matching, it is essential that you be available via email to work out any scheduling issues.

Please ask your technology coordinator to whitelist the TWICE email addresses: admin@twice.cc and verify@twice.cc and sue@twice.cc so that you will receive important announcements and information about this event.

Equipment verification

Your building or district videoconference equipment must be **verified** with one of the TWICE Verification Partners **before** you or your teachers can register for this activity. Equipment verification will help prevent classes from being mismatched due to technical incompatibilities. **Verification does not eliminate the need for a test call to the partner school.**

By the end of November, your building or district tech coordinator should complete the Verification process in CAPspace. Step-by-step instructions for verification can be found at www.twice.cc/verify. After successful verification, videoconference coordinators and teachers will be able to request matches beginning the first Monday in December.



Commitment

When you register, you and your colleagues are committing to videoconference with your partner class. If you give incorrect information, the class you are matched with will be left without a partner after weeks of preparation. **Please double check everything before you register!!** Make sure you, the teacher(s), and the technician are all available for the days your school is participating in Read Around the Planet. When a class backs out of this event, it is almost impossible to find someone for the partner class to connect to. This means disappointed kids, and we don't want that!



Scheduling

TWICE provides a matching service for point-to-point videoconferences between schools. Teacher matching is done based on your registration information. Each teacher's class will be matched with a class to exchange reading activities. Each connection is scheduled for an hour: 15 minutes for testing cameras and microphones and introductions; 30 minutes for the reading activities (15 minutes per class); 15 minutes for exchanging information about respective schools and communities.

Before you start talking to teachers, it is imperative that you double check that:

1. There are no conflicts with your school's standardized testing, vacation, and event calendars.
2. You have technical support available for the times you are signing up.
3. The equipment is reserved for the days of the Read Around the Planet event.

Plan to trust the matching system not to schedule videoconferences at the same time. For each request, **please enter ALL the times that the teacher can do** even if the times overlap with other requests. The matching system will make sure your videoconference system is used for only one connection at a time.

The "leftover pile" is the list of match requests without a partner that it takes us sometimes up to two weeks to resolve after registration closes. When the coordinator schedules many match requests each with just one time entered, there is a much higher chance of several of those requests ending up in the "leftover pile" and are very difficult to find match with a partner. So please enter ALL the times that each teacher can do.

If you are planning to do more than one or two connections, we highly recommend that you make a chart to keep track of teacher information, matching school contact information, and communications between you. A **sample schedule** (Event Chart) is included in this packet and is available at the www.twice.cc/read/ web site.

Special requests

We are unable to accommodate special requests for specific types of partners due to the size of this project and the necessity of using software to match partners. If you are not comfortable with working with a random partner for this project, please use the idea to do your own similar videoconference instead of registering with us.



Registration Tasks: December through January

When registration opens, sign up for all of your teachers for all of the times that they can possibly do. You will find it easier to make sure everything is correct if you sign up for them. Make sure you enter **all the times** that each teacher can do.

If you are coordinating for multiple buildings and have just one videoconference room/mobile cart, we recommend selecting one or two days of the event for each building. Then still enter **all the times** that each teacher can do during those days. Do NOT select just one time for each teacher, as this increases the likelihood of making it difficult for us to find a partner for you.

If you have to cancel for some reason, please cancel as soon as possible. Matches are done during the last few weeks in January. Once you are matched, your cancellation means disappointed students at your partner school. Please do everything possible to make sure you don't let your partner school down. Helpful coordinators will help find another teacher to take the place of teachers who cancel.

While we do our utmost to find everyone a partner, online registration does not guarantee you a match. We expect over 2000 classes to participate in this event and it is difficult to find a matching class for every request. We make every effort to match you; however, we can only work with those that signed up for the event and the times that you enter.



Communicating With Your Assigned Partner: February & March

Late in January or early in February you will receive an email notifying you of your partner information. If the email gets caught in your spam filter, you can find the match information in CAPspace at <http://projects.twice.cc>. Copy all the important information into your scheduling chart. Immediately begin communicating with the partner(s) to set up test calls, confirm the date(s) and time(s), and discuss the content of your respective presentations. Contact the partner coordinator via email and/or phone to discuss and arrange the details of the connection.

TWICE provides the registration, matching, and support materials for this event; however **it is the responsibility of the partners to make their connection a successful education event.**

Winter breaks

If your school will be on winter break in February, let your partner(s) know immediately when you will be unavailable. Try to do test calls before your winter break, if possible.

Scheduling conflicts with partner

If for some unforeseen reason (i.e. snow day or unexpected illness), your connection cannot work on the date and time assigned to you, please work with your partner(s) to reschedule in March. Remember **March is Reading Month!** Your connection will be just as successful and fun on another date!

In addition, if there are weather related reasons you can't connect on the day of the videoconference(s), **please call all partners as soon possible to alert them.** Remember that some students take buses a long distance to participate in the RAP videoconference. Don't forget to contact your respective tech people to let them know if a videoconference has been cancelled.

If, after every effort, you cannot work it out with your partner school, then try the following in order:

1. Try a connection with a local school.
2. Contact your regional educational service agency for assistance in finding another partner.



Assisting Teachers with Presentations

As coordinator, you should meet with your teachers to assist them with their students' presentations. Make sure they are comfortable with the technology and the methods of presentation. You will find additional presentation and project ideas in the Teacher Information packet accompanying this project and online at www.twice.cc/read/.

New teachers

Teachers who are new to videoconferencing will need extra assistance in preparing their presentations and making the connections. Plan to support these teachers. Make sure you have enough time between multiple connections to assist teachers.



Check It Off!

Whether you are a seasoned pro at videoconferencing, or a newbie to this technology, we recommend using the checklist in this packet to help you complete your key tasks for this event. The TWICE Read Around the Planet event is a great activity for your students, so plan ahead, relax, and enjoy the activity with them!

Read Around the Planet Coordinator Checklist

Phase I – Verification

- Our Videoconference equipment can do **H.323** (IP) or **H.320** (ISDN) connections and can connect to sites outside our district.
- My phone number is listed correctly in CAPspace (Check My Settings).
- A representative from our building (or district) has begun the verification process (see www.twice.cc/verify).
- We have verified our equipment and advertised the event and registration website to our local staff.

Phase II - Registration

- I have scheduled tech support for the times we're signing up for.
- I have checked our school's standardized testing, vacation, and event calendars to make sure there are no conflicts.
- I have registered my teachers online (or assisted them in registering) and I made sure all of the registrations have more than one time option listed.
- I have checked over the registration list online to make sure everything is correct.
- (if applicable) My regional office has been contacted about use of the videoconference system and/or equipment during March.

Phase III – Partner Assignment

- All partner assignment emails have been reviewed and verified that our site's information is correct.
- (if applicable) I'm using the Event Chart to track multiple connections. (You can also download the .csv file to track multiple connections in your spreadsheet software.)
- I've checked with my tech contact on the necessary test calls.
- The videoconferencing camera(s) and microphone(s) are in good working order.
- (if applicable) Connection date(s) and time(s) were arranged with the regional office.
- We've completed test calls and found solutions to unsuccessful test calls.

Phase III – Presentation Preparation

- I've discussed presentation plans with my teachers and assisted them with the preparation for their students' presentations.
- I've made sure each of my teachers talked to their partner ahead of time, but that if they haven't heard from their partner teacher, they are still hanging in there.

Phase IV – Activity Day(s)

- Essential phone numbers are accessible - room phone, tech contact, troubleshooting.
- I've planned to assist teachers with the connections and presentations.

Sample Event Chart Template

<p><u>Summary</u> Date: Time: Who Dials: Trouble Phone #: Notes:</p>	<p><u>My Teacher Info</u> Name: Building: Grade: Notes:</p>	<p><u>Partner Info</u> Teacher: Email: Phone: Coordinator: Email: Phone: Tech Person: Email: Phone: DL Room Phone: Grade Level:</p>
<p><u>Summary</u> Date: Time: Who Dials: Trouble Phone #: Notes:</p>	<p><u>My Teacher Info</u> Name: Building: Grade: Notes:</p>	<p><u>Partner Info</u> Teacher: Email: Phone: Coordinator: Email: Phone: Tech Person: Email: Phone: DL Room Phone: Grade Level:</p>
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