

Read Around the Planet



Packet for Coordinators

Special Version for Building Matches



What IS the TWICE Read Around the Planet event?

Read Around the Planet is a celebration of NEA's Read Around the Planet. 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 new name to be inclusive to our international friends, this name does NOT guarantee U.S. schools an international connection. They will be matched randomly as usual in this project.*

Special Note: Regular participation in the RAP event means that each teacher is matched with a different partner based on time, day, grade level, and technical connection. A special Building Match means buildings are matched by general grade level based on the number of teachers who signed up. The two building coordinators are responsible for matching the teachers and negotiating times and dates.

Why a Building Match?

This year, consider a "building match"! Instead of one test call per teacher and pulling your hair out with many different test calls, partner up with another building, do one test, and negotiate the dates & times together! Do 30 min. connections back to back if you want. Negotiate around lunch and recess! Have the flexibility of connecting during March!



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.

Equipment verification

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

In November, your building or district tech coordinator must sign up for a verification test online by completing a form at the TWICE web site. At sign up, technical information about your school building's equipment will be collected. After the verification sign-up form is submitted, the technical contact or coordinator will be contacted to schedule an equipment verification test. After successful verification, building coordinators and teachers will be able to request matches beginning December 1.



Special Building Match Details

Recommended for experienced RAP building coordinators only.

Buildings will be matched elementary to elementary, and middle school to middle school, based on the number of teachers signed up. ***We don't recommend building matches for high schools and middle schools with inflexible schedules.*** It will be up to the building coordinators at the two buildings to negotiate times and which teachers are matched together.

If you want to do a building match, you must:

- Designate one RAP liaison/contact per building for communication purposes.
- Be flexible to work with the partner school.
- Be willing to have all/most of your teachers participate in the project.
- Be willing to have teachers buddy up for a connection if necessary.
- Have at least 6 classes committed to participate.

Building matches are best for buildings with access to videoconferencing IN the building.

We cannot guarantee an exact number of teachers matched with another building. In addition, while we encourage classes to connect during the March 1-3 time frame, we also encourage you to be flexible with issues that come up (snow days, etc.).



Commitment

When you register for a building match, you are committing to a certain number of teachers who will participate. Matches are based on that commitment. If you give incorrect information, some classes may 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 connection. 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!



Registration Tasks: December through January

There are two types of registration. If you are doing the building match, **DO NOT register** your teachers in the regular RAP teacher registration. Instead, register for the Building Match. As soon as you receive an email confirming registration, check the information to make sure it is correct. Checking this beforehand will make the event smoother for everyone!

If you have to cancel for some reason, please cancel as soon as possible. Matches are done by the last week 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.

Online registration does not guarantee you a building match as requested. While over 600 classes participate in this event annually, it still is difficult to find a match for every request. We make every effort to match you; however, we can only work with those that signed up for the event.



Special requests

We are unable to accommodate special requests. If you are looking for a special class connection, please use the Collaboration Collage listserv (www.kn.sbc.com/wired/vidconf/ed1vidconf.html) or the TWICE listserv (www.twice.cc/listserve.html) to find a partner class on your own. Be sure to give as many details as possible: when you would like to connect, what type of audience you want, what you hope the audience will share with you. You can also try local connections or connections within your state for specific requests.

Communicating With Your Assigned Partner Building: February & March

Early in February you will receive an email notifying you of your partner information. Copy all the important information into your scheduling chart. Immediately begin communicating with the partner coordinator to schedule your teachers' sessions and set up a test call. Contact the partner coordinator via email and/or phone to discuss and arrange the details of the meeting.

We recommended each traditional classroom-to-classroom connection be 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. However, as you participate in this building match, you can negotiate these details with your partner school.

(This is rearranged) Before you meet with your partner coordinator, do the following.

1. Check your school's standardized testing, vacation, and event calendars. Find out which days beyond the official RAP days your classes would be willing to connect. Remember March is Reading Month!
2. Check that you have technical support available for the times you wish to schedule.
3. Check that the videoconference equipment is reserved for the days of the Read Around the Planet event.
4. Collect your school schedule, specials schedule (art, music, etc.) and preferred times and days from your teachers.

During the meeting with your partner building coordinator, work to schedule your teachers' sessions. It's quite likely that your building match won't be an exact teacher number match. So consider how to address an uneven number. Here are some suggestions.

- Determine if any of your teachers are willing to present more than once.
- Have teachers double up and have two classes connect to one class.

Use the sample chart included in this packet to assist you in scheduling your RAP sessions.

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 your test call and scheduling meeting 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 you scheduled, please work with your partner coordinator 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.

3. Email the TWICE RAP coordinators with all your available dates & times (through March). It is possible that another leftover class could be matched with yours. Try locally first. If you try #3, be as flexible and patient as possible!

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. This packet is available 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!

HANDY 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.
- A representative from our building (or district) has signed up for the equipment verification process (November) and a verification test has been scheduled.
- We have verified our equipment and have been issued a registration PIN number.

Phase II - Registration

- I have scheduled tech support for the times we want to connect.
- I have checked our school's standardized testing, vacation, and event calendars to make sure there are no conflicts.
- I've started an Event Chart or Scheduling Template to track all the connections and prevent double-booking.
- I have registered my building for the Building Match.
- The registration confirmation email has been reviewed and verified that the information is correct. Corrections have been emailed to the Read Around the Planet coordinators.
- (if applicable) My regional office has been contacted about use of the videoconference system and/or equipment during March.

Phase III – Building Match Partner Teacher Scheduling

- I'm using the Event Chart to track multiple connections.
- I've checked with my tech contact to schedule the necessary test call and matching meeting with my partner building coordinator.
- The videoconferencing camera(s) and microphone(s) are in good working order.
- (if applicable) Connection date(s) and time(s) arrangements have been made with the regional office.
- We've completed test calls and scheduled sessions for our teachers.

Phase III – Presentation Preparation

- I've discussed presentation plans with my teachers and assisted them with the preparation for their students' presentations.

Phase IV – Activity Day

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

Sample Event Chart Template

Partner Coordinator: Email: Phone:
 Partner Tech Contact: Email: Phone:
 Partner Trouble Number: Partner ISDN/IP number:

<u>Summary</u> Date: Time: Who Dials: Trouble Phone #: Notes:	<u>My Teacher Info</u> Name: Building: Grade: Notes:	<u>Partner Info</u> Teacher: Email: Phone: Grade Level:
<u>Summary</u> Date: Time: Who Dials: Trouble Phone #: Notes:	<u>My Teacher Info</u> Name: Building: Grade: Notes:	<u>Partner Info</u> Teacher: Email: Phone: Grade Level:
<u>Summary</u> Date: Time: Who Dials: Trouble Phone #: Notes:	<u>My Teacher Info</u> Name: Building: Grade: Notes:	<u>Partner Info</u> Teacher: Email: Phone: Grade Level:
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<u>Summary</u> Date: Time: Who Dials: Trouble Phone #: Notes:	<u>My Teacher Info</u> Name: Building: Grade: Notes:	<u>Partner Info</u> Teacher: Email: Phone: Grade Level:
<u>Summary</u> Date: Time: Who Dials: Trouble Phone #: Notes:	<u>My Teacher Info</u> Name: Building: Grade: Notes:	<u>Partner Info</u> Teacher: Email: Phone: Grade Level:
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<u>Summary</u> Date: Time: Who Dials: Trouble Phone #: Notes:	<u>My Teacher Info</u> Name: Building: Grade: Notes:	<u>Partner Info</u> Teacher: Email: Phone: Grade Level:

Sample Scheduling Template

Sample Times	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
9:00-9:45	My Teacher: Grade:	My Teacher: Grade:	My Teacher: Grade:
10:00-10:45	My Teacher: Grade:	My Teacher: Grade:	My Teacher: Grade:
11:00-11:45	My Teacher: Grade:	My Teacher: Grade:	My Teacher: Grade:
Lunch			
12:45-1:15	My Teacher: Grade:	My Teacher: Grade:	My Teacher: Grade:
1:15-1:45	My Teacher: Grade:	My Teacher: Grade:	My Teacher: Grade:
1:45-2:15	My Teacher: Grade:	My Teacher: Grade:	My Teacher: Grade: