

# 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 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.*



### 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 classes 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 using the TWICE Matching Event Registration & Verification System. 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.



## Commitment

When you register, you and your colleagues are committing to a day and time and type of connection. Matches are based on that commitment. 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 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!



## 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.

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/](http://www.twice.cc/read/) web site. It is essential that you check when the connections are happening so that your teachers don't schedule their RAP events at the same time.

## 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.att.com/wired/vidconf/ed1vidconf.html](http://www.kn.att.com/wired/vidconf/ed1vidconf.html)) or the TWICE listserv ([www.twice.cc/listserve.html](http://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.



## Registration Tasks: December through January

When registration opens, sign up for all of your teachers. You will find it easier to make sure everything is correct if you sign up for them. As soon as you receive an email confirming registration, check the date, time, and connection information to make sure it is correct. Checking this beforehand will make the event smoother for everyone!

If you are coordinating for multiple buildings and have just one videoconference room/mobile cart, check for overlaps in registrations to make sure you don't have multiple teachers signed up for RAP during the same time slot.

**If you have to cancel** for some reason, please cancel as soon as possible. Matches are done 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 match at the time and date you or your teachers requested. While over 600 classes participate in this event annually, it still 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.



## Communicating With Your Assigned Partner: 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(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.
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 and online at [www.twice.cc/read/](http://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 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.
- If I have multiple connections from my building, I've started an Event Chart to track all the connections and prevent double-booking.
- I have registered my teachers online (or assisted them in registering).
- All registration confirmation emails have 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 – 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.
- 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) arrangements have been made with the regional office.
- We've completed test calls and reported unsuccessful tests to the RAP coordinators.

## 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

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