

Read Around the Planet



Packet for Tech Contacts



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 provides **support documents**. Participating classrooms are responsible for their own video connection 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.*



First Things First

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). That equipment must be able to do **H.323** (IP) or **H.320** (ISDN) videoconference connections outside your school or district.

Tech Contacts set up and oversee the video connection and are KEY to making this event a success.

Please work with your teacher so the students have a great experience.

It is essential that you know the technical capabilities of your equipment.

If you're not familiar with your equipment, or with H.323 or H.320 videoconferencing, provide an alternate tech contact person who knows your system.

Are you easily accessible?

Email is the main form of communication for this event. If you don't regularly answer your email (within **36 hours**), please provide us with alternate contact information. If it's better to reach you by phone, make sure that your phone number is correct on the confirmation emails we send you. It is essential that you be reachable to work out any technical issues prior or during the connection.



Next Steps

Equipment verification

Your building or district videoconference equipment must be verified with TWICE or a Read Around the Planet (RAP) regional verification partner **before** 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, you need to **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.

Scheduling for the connection(s)

You will receive two emails for each registration from your school or district: ① the registration confirmation (in December-January) and, ② the partner information (in early February). The partner information email will have date and time of actual connection and tech contact information.

Most connections are scheduled for the first week of March, and each is scheduled for one hour: 15 minutes for testing cameras and microphones and introductions, and introductions; 30 minutes for the reading activities (15 minutes per class); 15 minutes for exchanging information about respective schools and communities.

If you are responsible for several connections, we recommend that you make a chart to prevent scheduling conflicts. For your convenience, a **sample** Event Chart is included in this packet, and is also available at the www.twice.cc/read website.

Testing, one, two, three

You are responsible for coordinating **test call(s) with the partner class** tech contact. This is different from the verification procedure described above. Schedule a test call soon after you receive the partner information email in early February. Testing early gives you time to work out any technical problems that arise. If your school will be on winter break in February, let your partner contact know immediately when you will be unavailable. Try to do test calls before your winter break.

Important: Always do an **authentic** test! Test with the same equipment, the same system, and the same location you'll be using the day of the event. If your setup changes after a successful test call, test again before the actual connection.

If you've tested successfully, but have problems the day of the actual event, please do NOT call the TWICE Read Around the Planet program coordinators. The TWICE coordinators cannot make any changes at that point. If the connection can't be worked out, ask the teachers to reschedule their event.



If test calls are unsuccessful

If you've made several unsuccessful attempts to test with the partner location, there may be equipment compatibility problems. The students and teachers are planning on this activity, so try to arrange an alternate way to connect (ex. through a bridging service). If you have unsolvable test call problems, notify the TWICE RAP program coordinators immediately. TWICE may be able to suggest alternative ways for you to complete the connection.

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 1-24), and a verification test has been scheduled.
- Our videoconference equipment has been verified.
- I have advertised the event and registration website to my local staff.

Phase II – Registration

- 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 that system and/or equipment during March 1-3.

Phase III – Partner Assignment

- All partner assignment emails have been reviewed and verified that our site's information is correct.
- (if applicable) The Event Chart has been started to track multiple connections.
- Partner Techs have been contacted and test calls scheduled.
- (if applicable) The regional office has been contacted, and connection arrangements made for the dates and times we need.
- The videoconferencing camera(s) and microphone(s) are in good working order.
- Test calls have been completed. Unsuccessful tests have been reported to the Read Around the Planet coordinators.

Phase III – Activity Day

- Essential phone numbers are accessible - room phone, tech contact, troubleshooting.
- I'm reachable during the connection(s) to troubleshoot connection problems.

Sample Event Chart Template

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