

IDEA STARTERS 2008-2009

International Literacy Day Suggested Activities and Events- Work independently or with your local Rotary club to create/join literacy projects such as these. Send new ideas to mbell@reading.org

NEW! Reading Across Continents ([embed link to www.readingacrosscontinents.com](http://www.readingacrosscontinents.com))

Contact IRA's Sakil Malik, smalik@reading.org—Connecting Students and Teachers around the World via Technology and Literature.

IRA's Washington D.C.'s ILD event on 9/8/08 launched this project. Beginning in January 2009, *Reading Across Continents* (RAC) links Washington, D.C.'s School Without Walls High School (SWW) students with their counterparts in secondary schools in Abuja, Nigeria and Accra, Ghana. Via live feeds, author visits, international student/teacher exchanges, blogs, email, writing, reading, and the study of history, geography, and economy of the countries involved, the students and teachers in both countries reflect on their lives and connect with the overseas classes. US, Nigerian, and Ghanaian students experience the cultures described in the novels *Copper Sun* by US author Sharon Draper, *Things Fall Apart* by Nigerian author Chinua Achebe, and *The Girl Who Can* by Ghanaian author Ama Ata Aidoo. Draper will meet with SWW students and Abuja and Accra students. (The US Department of State has contributed to this initial project to facilitate the cultural exchanges of students, teachers, and authors.)

IRA and ROTARY literacy ideas

See **Rotary/IRA Brochure** and **Rotary/IRA Booklet** ([embed link to both](#))

Every School a Star

International Reading Association (IRA) and Rotary International (RI) developed the **"Every School a Star" literacy toolkit** (http://www.rotary.org/RI/documents/en_pdf/literacy_every_school_a_star.pdf) a Web-based resource to help Rotary clubs and IRA reading councils cooperate on literacy projects. Every School a Star includes examples of successful club and district literacy projects, needs assessment questionnaires, and a teachers' wish list. There are links to contact information, resources, and service opportunities, as well as guidelines for working with local Rotary clubs and reading councils. These attractive projects are affordable, attainable, and successful. The projects are divided into four categories: donations/funding, education/awareness, literacy events/celebrations, and volunteers/mentors. One section explains how to incorporate literacy elements into other types of service projects.

IRA and Rotary Partnership (IRARI) page ([embed link: http://www.reading.org/association/about/sigs_irari.html](http://www.reading.org/association/about/sigs_irari.html))

Members of this special interest group work to promote literacy awareness and development projects between International Reading Association councils, national affiliates, and international development committees, and Rotary Clubs and District and Zone Literacy Resource Groups by providing a network for members to generate ideas for, and exchange information about, IRARI activities in local, district, national, and international communities; to conduct a symposium at the annual IRA convention and the biennial World Congress, and to organize SIG-sponsored sessions on IRA/Rotary International Partnerships at IRA council/national affiliate and Rotary International meetings of different kinds.

MORE IDEAS

- Celebrate with a book fair.
- Stage a Fun Run for Literacy and provide donated books to participants.
- Use newspapers to go global — conduct a scavenger hunt for country names or compare how stories are covered by newspapers from different parts of the world.

- The [ReadWriteThink.org website \(www.readwritethink.org\)](http://www.readwritethink.org), developed by the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English with support from the Verizon Foundation, provides lesson plans and activities for reading that incorporate technology and the Internet.
 - Access ReadWriteThink SEARCH (at top right corner of homepage) to find a variety of innovative lesson plans for your grade level and topic.
 - Use the interactive Student Materials (by clicking on the purple STUDENT MATERIALS tab) to have students create alphabet books, comic strips, flip books, and newspapers. Other online activities are available in this section.
 - Check the ReadWriteThink Calendar (by clicking on CALENDAR from the homepage) to find literacy activities that relate to events throughout the year. For each event, there is a related Classroom Activity, in addition to lesson plans, Web links, and texts.
- Match different alphabets (Chinese, Cyrillic, Arabic, Hindi, etc.) to countries.
- Read and compare folk tales from different countries.
- Invite students, parents, or guests who have lived in other parts of the world to read a story or to talk about classrooms in other countries.
- Hold a cultural fair with information displays about children's native or ancestral countries. Read stories, share songs, and have people dress in ethnic costumes.
- Students select countries, research essays on similarities/differences of literacy issues internationally.
- Event with a reading theme, such as Read Across Asia or Reading Takes Me Places. Be part of read-in chain that celebrates books written by authors of certain ethnic or cultural groups, like the Hispanic American Read-In Chain.
- Form links with a school or educational group in another country and have letter-writing campaigns, book collections, and other activities that generate media and public interest in your school or group and literacy issues in other parts of the world.
- Think globally, act locally. The Internet is a great resource for communicating throughout the world. Tap into its potential as a tool for making global contacts.
- Ask an adult learner involved in a literacy program to give a testimonial.
- Tap your students' creativity for ideas about how to make the community more aware of literacy issues.
- Establish one-day hotline that community members call with questions about reading, learning disabilities, literacy programs, and resources. Staff hotline with reading professionals/volunteers from literacy organizations.
- Have older students make books to share with younger students or to donate to childcare centers.
- Conduct a read-a-thon to raise money for community literacy programs.
- Create a partnership with a television/radio station, magazine/newspaper to support literacy projects.
- Ask a local business to help heighten awareness about a reading or literacy topic. A supermarket chain may agree to print a literacy message on its shopping bags. A local dairy might carry tips for parents on its packaging. Many utility suppliers feature community issues in newsletters sent with monthly bills.
- Invite a publisher to your classroom or school to discuss how books are developed.
- Ask a local bookstore to donate books to disadvantaged children or for reading contest prizes.
- Initiate an annual contest or award. Hold a writing contest for students or senior citizens, or a film contest for the best home video about reading.
- Organize local businesses to raise money to purchase magazines and books for area schools.
- Recruit sponsors/mentors who will ensure that children have school supplies and an adult to read with.
- Hold a press conference to publicize literacy issues in the community.