

# Getting Your Class Connected

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## Words of Encouragement

- I hope to encourage other teachers to enhance their usage of email and to discover how easy it can be to not only master and teach their students sufficient html to set up a website, but also to come online for free.  
This is a beginning swimmer who's only just taken the plunge calling out to those still on the shore, "Don't be afraid to jump in!"
- Don't be afraid of making mistakes.  
Mistakes are your friends that will help you improve.
- Things proceed at blinding speed after setting up your own class website.  
You'll grow quickly under the stimulation of all the new human connections.
- We online teachers bear the awesome and joyful responsibility of turning our students on to the infinitely expandable resources of the WWW with its awesome potential for good or evil uses.  
Are we mentally, morally and spiritually equipped to perform this task? Probably not yet, but we're becoming so even in the process of doing it.
- The extreme interactivity online requires the flexibility to reformulate your philosophy of teaching.  
A personal ethics developed for classroom teaching is likely to be found wanting in Internet instruction.
- In order to empower your students, it may be necessary to go a bit beyond teaching English and assist them in becoming webmasters.  
It's not the meek but the computer literate who will inherit the virtual Earth of our future.

## Email Penpals

- The easy way is to subscribe to a mailing list for teachers seeking classes for email exchange: [iecc-request@stolaf.edu](mailto:iecc-request@stolaf.edu)  
After opening this link, only write, "subscribe IECC (Your Name)" as your message.
- As class to class exchanges are a bit limited considering that you'll be connected to the entire planet, how about subscribing to a mailing list for penpals? [listserv@unccvm.uncc.edu](mailto:listserv@unccvm.uncc.edu)  
After opening this link only write, "subscribe Penpal-L (Your Name)" as your message.
- What I learned by the following method of seeking penpals is: By asking individually you'll get a much more diverse and responsive group of penpals for your students. You'll probably also find as I did that some penpals will continue correspondences with you, providing you with valuable information and support.  
Penpal-L is a large group of energetic correspondents enjoying personal messages posted to the whole list. I read many letters to identify a variety of writers from different backgrounds, who I believed might be stimulating, contacted them individually and made sure they were eager to correspond with us. After printing up info sheets with each penpal's address and some background information (as well as pictures of those I'd been able to download off the [Penpal-L Homepage](#), I let my students choose their personal penpal. This resulted in quite good rates of reply and continuing correspondence.  
As I solicited prospective penpals and wrote thank-you notes to volunteers, I got my first inkling of the interactive growth to come. Some volunteers didn't simply wait quietly for the project to get underway. They continued emailing me questions, advice and support. Some proved awesome correspondents beyond my wildest dreams of excellence, who are still aiding and inspiring me today.
- Next time, however, I might use a search engine like Alta Vista to find penpals.  
Alta Vista finds pages with lists of penpals when doing a Web search for [<penpal\\*>](#).  
Alta Vista also finds messages to newsgroups about penpals (even if your server doesn't provide access to newsgroups)

when doing a Usenet search for [<penpal\\* -Re>](#). (Use < -Re> to eliminate a long list of replies to messages.)

Using Alta Vista might prove easier than reading through the over 200 daily messages that Penpal-L can generate.

## Elementary HTML

- Failing to find a simple tutorial, I learned by playing with HTML a bit in chat groups in exactly the same way we experiment with variations on sentence patterns to learn a foreign language.

I saved a chat page in source code and found out how easy it is to speak with html in this environment by writing something like,

```
"<center><font size=5><font color=red>Hello</font></center>"
```

which puts a large, red, Hello in the center of the screen like this:

**Hello**

(Politely returning the environment to default settings, something chatters often neglect to do.) This, of course, only works with browsers supporting such code.

To play with HTML while chatting try Talker <http://www2.infi.net:80/talker/> or Broadcast

<http://ss002.infi.net/login@broadchat> or for a more stable environment Cafe de Paris <http://paris-anglo.com/cafe/chat.html>.

- Soon I had learned enough to write an Internet game which I've posted online to generate lists of more email penpals for my students.

Other teachers can visit my website <http://members.tripod.com/~DWilkinson>, view and copy the source code, then rewrite it a bit with a theme to attract suitable penpals for their students - no doubt improving my game in the process.

- I believe that the basic idea has dynamite potential, but the game's mailing lists are inefficient without editing.

Try to find another guestbook server than the one I'm using at <http://www.Lpage.com> where they've been unable to get their act together as yet.

- I've made HTML accessible to my students in a very elementary lesson that I hope will help other interested teachers and students master the rudiments of html.

For easy mastery of html please visit [http://members.tripod.com/~DWilkinson/Grammar Lesson](http://members.tripod.com/~DWilkinson/Grammar_Lesson).

## Here are some useful URLs for continuing growth:

- [Post Pages Free!](#)
- [Homepage Online Now, HTML Later!](#)
- [My Favorite Free Server](#)
- [Next Easiest Tutorial After Mine](#)
- [My Students' Homepages](#)
- [Bare Bones Guide to HTML](#)
- [Einstein's Penpals](#)
- [New HTML Primer](#)
- [World's Best Penpal](#)
- [Top Ten Mistakes in Web Design](#)
- [Link to the Line Around The World.](#)
- [Game of Keeping Your Reader's Attention](#)

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The Internet TESL Journal, Vol. II, No. 9, September 1996

<http://iteslj.org/>

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<http://iteslj.org/Wilkinson-Connected.html>