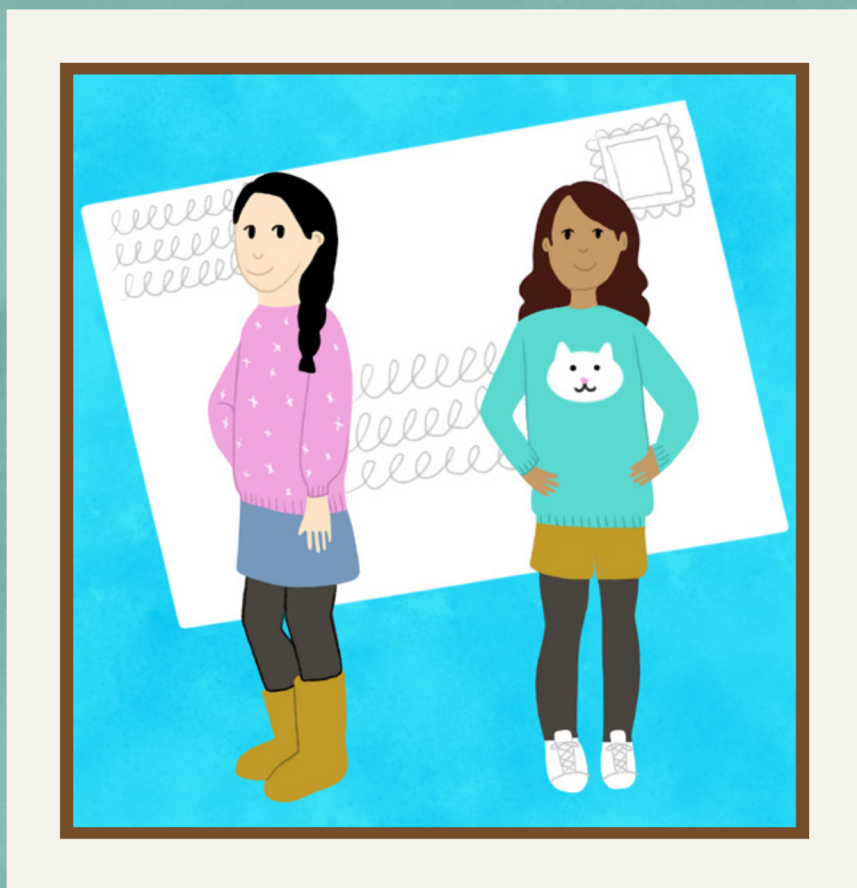
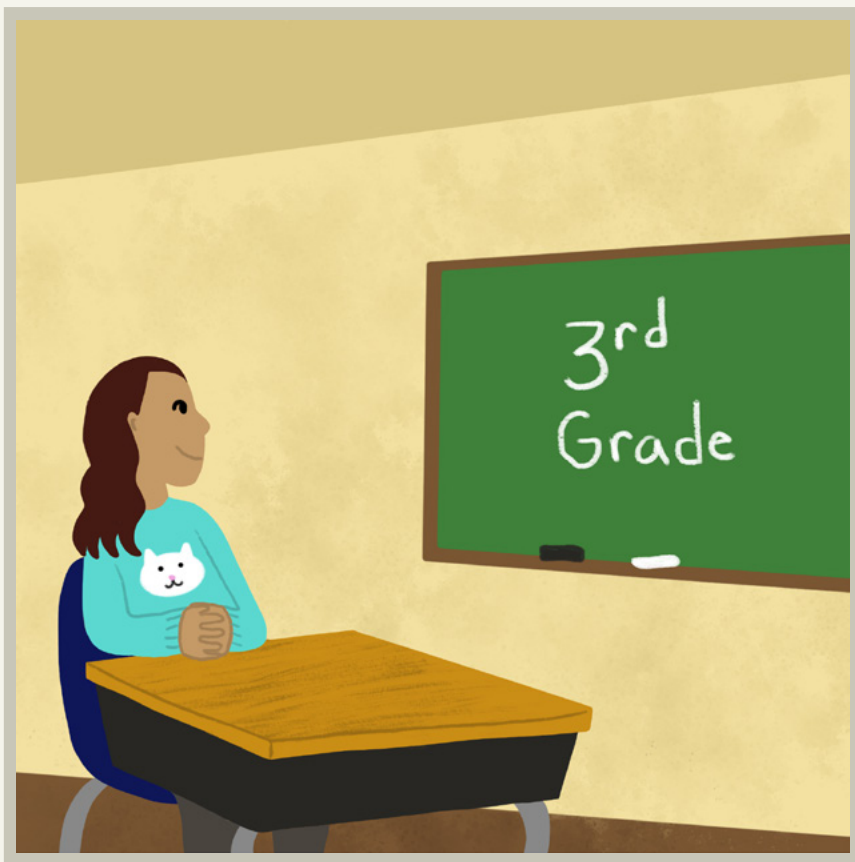


Exploring Your World

My British Penpal





I am here to announce that I love 3rd grade! The teachers are nice, and I'm finally not considered a "little kid" anymore. I also love 3rd grade because this is the year I met Kensington Kate, my penpal from London. We started to write to each other in October. Writing letters to Kensington Kate is my favorite part of being a 3rd grader. It is also very exciting when I get a letter in return.



Back in January, I was anxiously awaiting my next letter from Kate. Our letters normally arrive sometime around the second week of each month, but on the second Thursday, they still hadn't come. So, I was excited when I walked into class that Friday morning to see my teacher, Mr. Calvert, holding a stack of letters.

“Becky, I have a letter for you today.”

I raced to put my backpack away and skipped to the front of the room to get my letter. Back in my seat, I tore open the envelope and read my letter.

1 January

Dear Becky,

How are you? It is very cold and rainy here in London today, so I had to wear my wellies to school. My little sister likes to wear her wellies to jump in puddles, but I don't want to get mine muddy. Plus, if I get my jumper dirty, Mum will be cross.

I went to the cinema last night and saw a new movie. It was about a dog that can talk. Can you imagine such a thing? The movie was really funny. Have you seen any new movies lately?

My parents are planning to take us on a holiday to the beach next month. Mum wants a break from the cold. I am excited to swim in the ocean. Have you ever visited the beach before? Well, I'd better go. Writing time is almost over.

Your friend,
Kensington Kate



I smiled as I put Kensington Kate's letter in my desk. When we started writing to one another, I thought her words sounded so funny. Words like jumper and holiday didn't make sense to me at first. But Mr. Calvert taught us a lesson about how some words have different meanings in other countries and that if we don't know what a word means, all we have to do is look it up online.

During writing class, Mr. Calvert gave us time to write a letter to our penpals and I couldn't wait to begin.

January 12

Dear Kensington Kate,

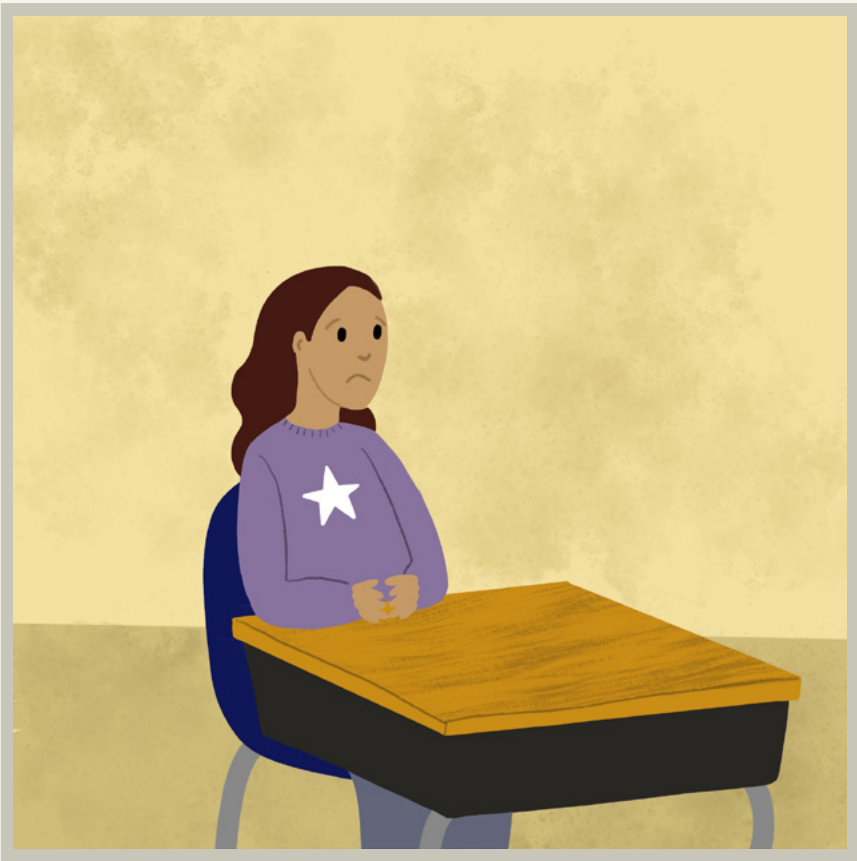
How are you? It is fun that you got to wear your wellies to school. I would probably be just like your sister and jump in the puddles. We call wellies rain boots here in America. I don't have a pair, but hearing about yours makes me want to buy some.

It's exciting that you get to go on holiday to the beach. We call it a vacation, and my family goes every year. I love playing in the waves and building sandcastles. One time, a sand crab climbed right out of the castle I was building. My mom laughed and said he looked like a knight who was protecting the queen in the castle.

Your movie sounds so funny. I can't imagine a dog that talks! Did I tell you that my family has a dog? Her name is Jazzy. She is a brown dog. This winter we had a snowstorm, and she played for so long that she looked like a white dog when she came inside!

Well, writing time is over, so I have to get ready for math. I hope to hear from you soon.

Your friend,
Becky



It was over a month before I got another letter from Kensington Kate. I started to get worried because her letter wasn't in the batch of letters that came to the rest of the class in February. As it turned out, she was sick and missed school on letter-writing day. She wasn't able to get back to me until her class wrote letters the next month. When I opened her March letter, I almost burst with excitement.

1 March

Dear Becky,

I am so sorry that I missed writing to you last month. I caught a dreadful cold and was in bed for almost a week. My mum gave me a warm cuppa tea each morning to help me get my voice back. I am feeling much better now.

While I was sick, Mum had a brilliant idea. She said we should plan to do an online meeting on the computer one day. My mum can email yours, and they can set it up. We can finally see what each other looks like! What do you think?

I have to make this short today because I have loads of work to do. I am including a note from my mum to yours, so they can get in touch with one another.

Your friend,
Kensington Kate



A virtual meeting with Kensington Kate! I couldn't wait to get home to share the news with my parents.

"Mom," I called out when I got home. "Look at this! Look at this!" I said as I waved the letter in front of her.

"Goodness, Becky," Mom laughed. "Something sure has you excited."

Mom read the letter out loud.

"Can you email her right now?" I asked.

"I will email her right after dinner. I promise," Mom replied with a smile.



After a couple of emails between our moms, Kensington Kate and I got a virtual meeting set up for the following Saturday! Mom suggested that I make a list of all the things I wanted to tell and show Kate, just in case I got nervous.

“Mom, Kensington Kate always talks about wearing a jumper. Do I have anything that looks like that?” I asked.

Mom laughed. “A jumper is a sweater, and I think you have plenty of those.”

On Friday night, I laid everything out perfectly. Since there is a time difference between West Virginia and London, I was meeting with Kensington Kate at 10:00 AM.



Saturday morning, I woke up with a huge smile. I quickly got dressed, ate breakfast, and got everything ready in front of the computer. I was excited for Kensington Kate to meet Jazzy, but she wouldn't sit still in front of the computer. Mom logged on to the computer, and after a loud beep, Kensington Kate's face popped up on the screen.

"Hi Becky," she squealed. "I am so excited to finally see you! I love your jumper!"

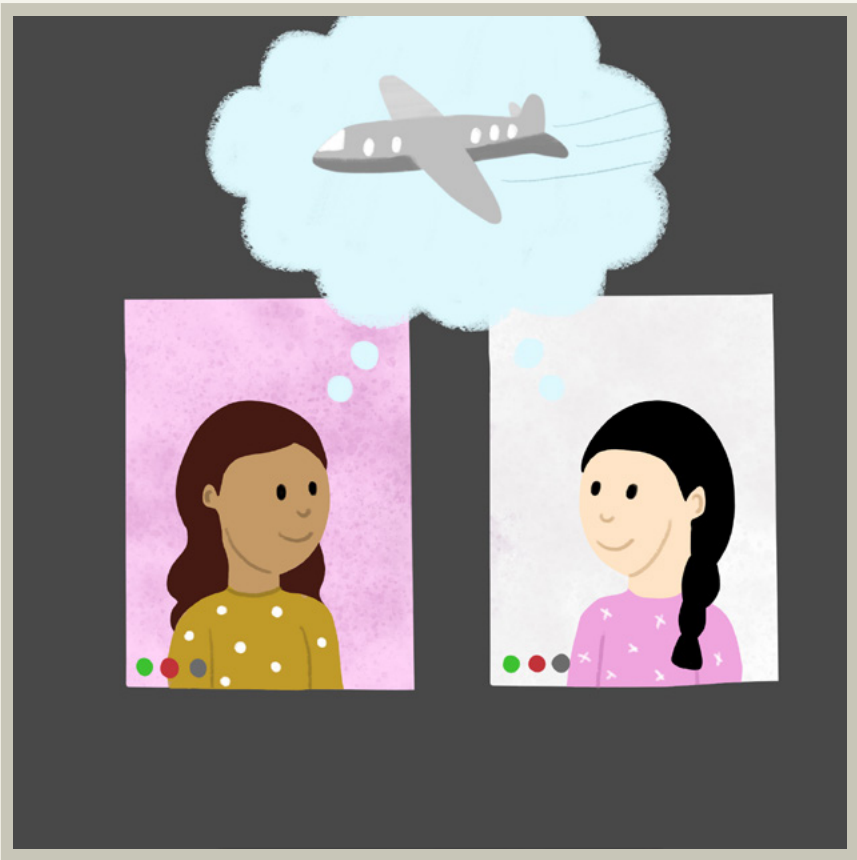
"It's nice to see you," I replied excitedly. "I like your jumper, too!" I said. "Before she tries to get away, let me introduce you to Jazzy."



I pointed the camera at Jazzy as she was running away toward the kitchen. “Well, at least you can see that she really is brown,” I said through my laughter.

“I want you to meet someone, too,” Kensington Kate said. “This is my little sister, Amelia Brooke. She can be shy at first, but once she knows you, she talks nonstop!”

Kensington Kate and I talked for almost an hour. I learned about her favorite foods and things she likes to do for fun. I found out we both play soccer, but since she calls it football, I didn’t realize we play the same sport!



We were both sad when we realized it was almost time to hang up. Before we said goodbye, I had an idea.

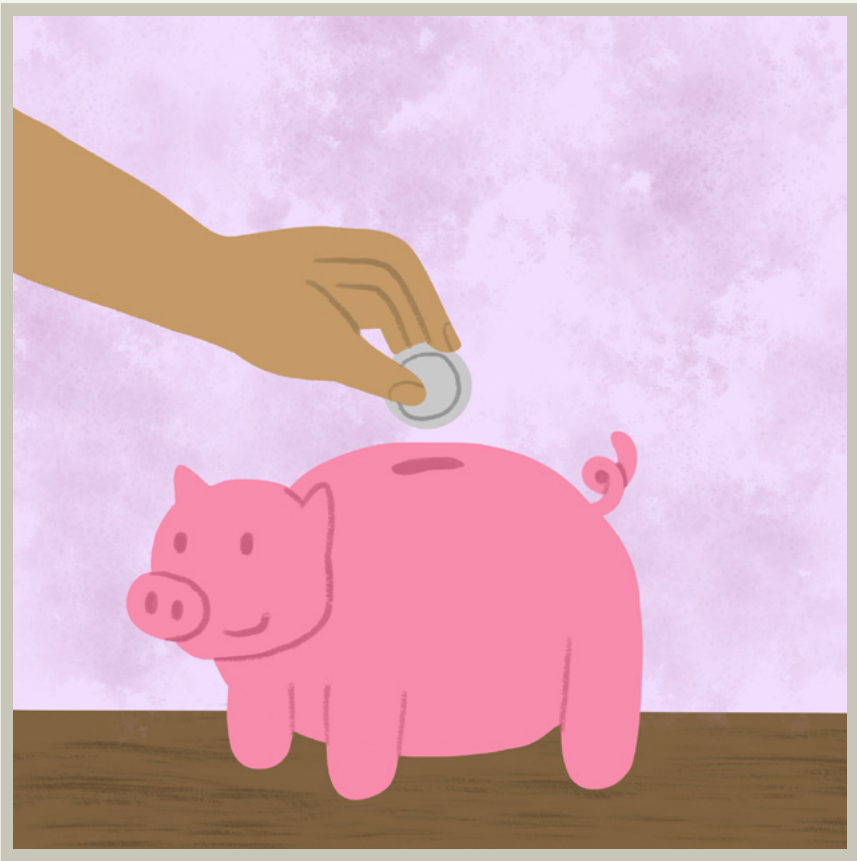
“Kensington Kate, do you have school in the summer?”

“No,” she replied. “Why do you ask?”

“Now that we convinced our moms to let us meet virtually, maybe it’s time that we look up airplane flights from America to London!” I said with excitement. “It might take me awhile, but I’m willing to save up until I earn enough money!”

“Becky,” she replied. “I like the way you think.”


We talked about our plans for a few minutes and agreed to chat again the first Saturday of April.




Kensington Kate and I have chatted online twice now. We talk about everything from school to TV shows to our favorite books. I've been doing loads of extra chores around the house to save money, so I can hopefully holiday in London next summer. Until then, I'll keep learning more new words from Kensington Kate.

Bb

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