

Too Few Computers and Too Many Kids

What Can I Do?

Part 2

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Subject: Teacher resources,
language arts, social studies

Grade Level: K-12 (Ages 5-18)

Technology: Internet/Web, word
processing software, database soft-
ware, spreadsheets, word-find or
crossword puzzle software, e-mail,
desktop publishing software,
graphics software

Standards: *NETS•S* 3-6. (Read
more about the NETS Project at
www.iste.org—select Standards
Projects.) *NCTE/IRA* 3, 4, 5, 6, & 8.
(Find out about the language arts
standards at www.ncte.org.) *NCSS*
1, 2, 3, 6, & 10. (Read the social
studies standards at [www.ncss.org/
standards/teachers/standards.html](http://www.ncss.org/standards/teachers/standards.html).)

Online Supplement: attached

**In this second installment
of a four-part series, the
authors provide 30 more
activities for teachers and
suggest meaningful ways
to use technology when
means are limited.**

Many teachers search continuously for creative ideas to add to their instructional repertoire. Although many techniques are passed along by fellow teachers or found in the printed literature, the Internet is a rich source for ideas, many of which require technology for implementation and others that recommend resources and supplies that teachers have used for many years. A number of professional organizations, such as the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), sponsor Web sites that feature teaching ideas, suggestions, and techniques that can be adapted for individual classroom instruction (www.ncte.org). Government and academic institutions are additional sources for lesson planning ideas and suggestions for classroom activities. Commercial organizations, such as Merriam-Webster, provide access to some of their products without charge, including an online dictionary and thesaurus (www.m-w.com). These sites and many others are described in the online supplement (www.iste.org/L&L) and include a variety of subjects to help teachers develop curricula that use Internet resources.

In individual subject disciplines, grouping students for tasks or individualizing instruction are techniques for dealing with scarce resources in language arts and social studies. Many of the ideas presented in these areas assign students to task groups so that while one student or team is using the computer, other group members are involved in meaningful activities to accomplish the group's goals.

Language arts and social studies are disciplines that readily lend themselves to using technology, whether through word processing programs to create and edit compositions, database programs to organize and categorize information, spreadsheets to tabulate data, or Internet searches to collect information. Although ideas are categorized under vocabulary, writing, grammar, and

reading/literature in the list of suggestions for language arts, the creative teacher will adapt the ideas to encompass multiple skills. Internet sites relating to many of these suggestions are also provided in the online supplement at www.iste.org/L&L. Although this activity list is far from exhaustive, individual sites provide hundreds of related links that both teachers and students will find useful for expanding the activity. Preview specific links before recommending them for students to use so that you are prepared for questions or content that arise.

Language Arts Vocabulary

1. Use an online thesaurus and a print thesaurus to search for alternatives to words on a vocabulary list. Compare the findings.
2. Create a vocabulary list of foreign words and phrases by accessing international sites. At the week's end, write a story or essay containing these words.
3. Assign students to create word-find or crossword puzzles related to the current lesson in either language arts or another subject.

Writing

4. Use a variation of gossip or telephone games. Write stories individually or in a group on the computer. Have different students add paragraphs to the existing story.
5. Share round-robin stories by e-mail with students in other classrooms or schools.
6. Write stories interactively with a remote partner. Ask the partner pairs to develop guidelines for editing the stories.
7. Read part of a story to the class and assign an individual or a student group to use a word processing program to finish writing the story, while other students work on an alternate assignment. Rotate the "computer writers" during subsequent writing assignments.

8. Give students two topics for a brief essay. Write one version using paper and pencil and a second version using a word processing program. Compare the ease of creating and revising the work.
9. Use the computer to develop collaborative writing. Working in a student group, encourage groups to organize so that one student types while other group members make suggestions for the writing. Use this technique both for creative and for expository writing.
10. Establish student e-mail accounts and use them to practice composition skills while communicating with classmates, friends, or family.
11. Set up a key pal program with a class from another school. Encourage students to exchange messages about their schools, their town's history, or other events related to current units of study.
12. Establish a key pal program with students in another country to encourage clarity in writing while communicating and increasing knowledge about other places and cultures.

A note of caution about establishing key pals through the Internet. Key pals who are listed at a site may not be telling the truth about themselves. When you register, you will be providing information that can be viewed by anyone. Be cautious about the information you provide.

13. Create a classroom newsletter or newspaper to encourage writing, peer review, editing, layout, and publishing skills. Then share the publication with other classes and parents.

Grammar

14. Provide students with a brief story or essay that needs proofreading. Compare the results of correcting or proofreading errors on hard (paper) and soft (electronic) copy

by having some students work with an electronic version and other students work with a handwritten one.

15. Assign individuals or groups to use a word processing program to edit stories written by other students. Add graphics from clip art collections or have students create, scan, and place their own art.

Reading/Literature

16. Create a list of authors, and assign student groups to search the Internet for sites relating to the author chosen or assigned. Compile a compendium of Web sites about the author. Site listings could include brief descriptions and critiques.
17. Use the current reading or literature theme and assign students to search the Internet and print sources to find poems related to the theme. Use a graphics program to create a display or a bulletin board of the images and information found.
18. Use the Internet to create a reading list on a particular topic or in a special format.

Geography and Social Studies

Much criticism of social studies stems from textbook treatments of issues that typically tend to be brief at best, and often superficial. The Internet provides ways to access documents that permit students to become actively engaged learners. Sites provide both historical materials, such as the minutes and other legal records of assemblies and conferences, as well as current data, such as the census.

19. Find and print a "today in history" Internet site each day. Post it on a bulletin board or read it during the daily announcements.
20. Pick a city or country that interests students and search the Internet for useful information about that

city—subway routes, museums, sports teams, cultural events, famous residents, or highlights in the city's history.

21. Take an Internet tour of great estates, such as the White House, Monticello, the Kremlin, and Buckingham Palace to show the students a piece of history that many may never visit.
22. Use the Internet to research a controversial issue, such as managed health care. Compare Internet information with traditional print sources.
23. Compare regions or countries of the world by accessing Internet sites.
24. Take a virtual tour of a governmental unit. Analyze its organization, budget, and functions.
25. Develop a collaborative unit relating to a current school or community issue, such as teens and smoking. Assign student groups to various tasks: use the Internet to research information about the issue, use a word processing program to produce questionnaires about student attitudes and practices, use a spreadsheet program to compile questionnaire results, and use a graphics program to publicize conclusions drawn by the class.
26. Challenge students to determine where the independent states of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics are located. Compare Internet sites that are current with printed maps that feature the USSR.
27. Encourage students to search the Internet for eyewitness accounts of important events, while others use traditional resources that could include written or oral accounts of the events.
28. Compare the data and features that are found at a site operated by a government with data and

features that are found in other sources. Look for information that might be critical or biased, and consider the different perspectives.

29. Challenge students to find how different groups view controversial issues by visiting newspapers, journals, and other periodicals published in different parts of the world. Electronic libraries permit students to access these and other materials.
30. Read online newspapers from around the world so students study different editorial views and compare treatment by domestic papers with international publishers. The majority of online newspapers are free.



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Online Supplement



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What Can I Do? Part II

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Web Resources

As of the posting date, these URLs were active. We have no control over these sites, though, and the Web is very volatile. Please let the [L&L Webmaster](#) know if you find a broken link, and we'll do our best to update it.

Many of these sites include links to other material, and the user is cautioned to evaluate these resources for appropriateness in the local school setting before allowing students access to them.

K–12 teachers will find lesson plans and ideas in Lesson Plan Sites. For the most part, these sites are organized both by topic and grade level and include many links to related sites. Although many of the Internet sites identified for language arts and social studies are most appropriate for middle and high school activities, the creative teacher will modify the sites to meet the needs and levels of his or her students. For example, when working with keypals, the teacher might do the keyboarding for elementary students, but as students mature and learn keyboarding skills, they would become responsible for their own word processing and keypal correspondence.

Lesson Plan Sites

Lesson Stop

(www.lessonstop.org)

Find suggestions for lesson plans in language arts, math, science, social studies, technology and more, currently with links to 500 sites organized by topic and grade level.

Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators

(<http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide>)

This is a categorized list of Internet sites that teachers have found useful for organizing and enhancing the curriculum. Includes hundreds of useful links to subject disciplines and links to sites that will help organize and manage classroom activities, such as bulletin board ideas, evaluation tools, and calendars.

Ask ERIC Lesson Plans

(<http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Lessons/>)

This site contains more than 1,000 lesson plans written by teachers throughout the United States. Plans are categorized by subject, with a section on interdisciplinary plans.

Houghton Mifflin Education Place

(www.eduplace.com)

Houghton Mifflin's Education Place offers links to activities and lesson plans for Grades K–8.

EMT Curriculum Resources—Lesson Plans

(<http://itdc.sbcss.k12.ca.us/curriculum/lessonplan.html>)

These lesson plans and unit suggestions in language arts, social studies, math, science, and art are grouped by elementary and secondary levels.

Language Arts

NCTE Teaching Ideas

(www.ncte.org/teach)

The National Council of Teachers of English site offers practical teaching ideas in journalism, literature, reading, writing, and vocabulary.

Creative Writing for Kids

(<http://kidswriting.about.com/kidsteens/ktarts/kidswriting>)

This site, for kids from K–12, has links to sites for word games and activities as well as guidelines for writing and editing poetry, prose, and essays.

CyberGuides: Teacher Guides & Student Activities

(www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/score/cyberguide.html)

Find lesson plans in language arts arranged by grade level.

Reference, Grammar, and Writing

Guide to Grammar and Writing

(<http://webster.comnet.edu/HP/pages/darling/grammar.htm>)

This site offers exercises, quizzes, composition hints and guidelines, and an e-mail link to “Ask Grammar” for answers to questions about grammar and writing, and links to “A Guide for Writing Research Papers.”

Merriam Webster Online

(www.m-w.com)

Merriam Webster's online dictionary and thesaurus site includes the word of the day, a word game, a monthly list of “cool words,” and “The Lighter Side of Language.”

Wacky Web Tales

(www.eduplace.com/tales/index.html)

Houghton Mifflin's writing site has a quick exercise in story writing similar to “Mad Libs.”

Guide to Grammar and Style

(<http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Writing/>)

Find assorted grammatical rules and explanations with resource links to various other style guides and grammars, written at levels ranging from elementary to college.

Pen Pal Sites

(www.pen-pals.net and www.interpals.net)

Examples of sites that can be used to arrange for international and domestic pen pals. Some sites offer programs for teachers and youth leaders.

Reading and Literature

Bartleby Library to Great Books Online

(www.bartleby.com/index.html)

Find Great Books, including Bartlett's Familiar Quotations, online with full text of prose and poetry. Users can search by subject.

LSU Libraries Webliography

(www.lib.lsu.edu/hum/authors.html)

This index of author guides and documents relating to individual works also includes an extensive index of Web sites for specific authors.

Shakespeare Sites

(www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shakespeare, www.shakespeare-oxford.com, and www.shakespeare.com)

These three sites are examples of those related to an individual author. One is related to a public television broadcast, another is sponsored by a literary society, and the third is an interactive site created by students.

The Children's Literature Web Guide

(www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/)

Find Internet resources related to books for children and young adults with quick reference links to award-winning books, authors, and stories on the Web, and links to resources for teachers, parents, and authors.

Aesop's Fables Online

(www.pacificnet.net/~johnr/aesop)

This online collection offers more than 600 fables and suggested morals accompanied by lesson plans.

The Encyclopedia Mythica

(www.pantheon.org/mythica)

This online encyclopedia of mythology, folklore, and legends is searchable.

Bibliomania

(www.bibliomania.com)

This site is a network library with links to the full text of numerous works of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and reference, including the complete works of Shakespeare.

Database of Award-Winning Children's Literature

(www2.wcoil.com/~ellerbee/cgi-bin/childlit.html)

This database creates a reading list according to criteria identified, such as age of the reader, type of literature, topic, and awards.

The Children's Literature Web Guide

(www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/index.html)

Find Internet resources related to books for children and young adults with links to children's book awards, authors, stories, and children's literature Web sites.

Children's Book Council

(www.cbcbooks.org)

The site of the sponsoring agency for Children's Book Week contains links to authors, illustrators, and suggested books for specific ages.

Social Studies

Michigan Electronic Library

(<http://mel.lib.mi.us>)

Use this site to survey 201,000 journals, magazines, and newspapers found in Michigan libraries. Many include full text.

E&P Online Media Directory

(<http://emedial.mediainfo.com>)

Publications from Africa, Asia, Oceania, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, Canada, and the United States are accessible by region, media category, and state/city.

The Jerusalem Post Online

(www.jpost.com)

The Jerusalem Post is Israel's leading English language newspaper. Use this site and the two following to compare treatment of Middle East and International issues.

The Daily Star Online—Your Lebanese Newspaper

(www.dailystar.com.lb)

Does the Lebanese *Daily Star* view the events of the Middle East in a different perspective?

Khaleej Times Online

(www.khaleejtimes.com)

See how the day's news appears in the *Khaleej Times* in the United Arab Emirates.

The Surgeon General's Report for Kids about Smoking

(www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/osh/sgr4kids/sgrmenu.htm)

This online magazine sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control includes information about smoking and young people.

Eyewitness History—Through the Eyes of Those Who Lived It

(www.ibiscom.com)

Eyewitness history material permits learners to study major historical events through personal letters and essays of participants, as well as audio accounts. Included are topics from the eruption at Pompeii to recent history.

Social Studies Around the Web—The World

(www.li.net/~ndonohue/ss.html)

Social Studies Around the World links to many helpful sites about continents, geography, biomes, Antarctica, and the Arctic.

Forum Romanum

(www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/6946/rome.html)

This site offers a virtual tour of Rome when it was the center of the western world.

USGS National Mapping Information

(<http://mapping.usgs.gov>)

This page is a great starting point for reviewing various software and sites that are available for mapping.

Historical Map Web Sites: The Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection

(www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map_collection/map_sites/hist_sites.html)

Scores of sites that include maps for many countries as well as specialty topics are linked from this site. Maps of cities, states, and countries are available.

A Beginner's Guide to the U.S. Federal Censuses

(www.tngenweb.org/cntylinks/tutorial.html)

Data available in the Census about Americans and American lifestyles are introduced at this site.

U.S. Census Project: State Census Status

(www.usgenweb.org/census/states.htm)

This site provides census data state-by-state

American Memory: Historical Collections for the National Digital Library

(<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ammemhome.html>)

Digital images of historical papers and activities are accessible here as are some audio and video clips.

Monticello: The Home of Thomas Jefferson

(www.monticello.org)

This site gives information about the life and times of President Thomas Jefferson and the home he built.

Welcome to the White House

(www.whitehouse.gov)

Find information about the White House and presidents with links to federal services.

The People's Republic of China

(www.china-embassy.org)

This site provides information about China, U.S.–China Relations, and links to related sites.



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