

# Bring the Peace Corps Experience Into Your Classroom With **Speakers Match**



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**Handbook for Educators**

AMY AND GREG CLARK, RETURNED VOLUNTEERS FROM NEPAL

# Welcome to Speakers Match ---

On behalf of Coverdell World Wise Schools and our participating Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs), thank you for deciding to use this wonderful opportunity to bring the experience of a Peace Corps Volunteer into your classroom. We hope it will be a fascinating way for your students to learn about another culture and hear an inspiring story of service.

The purpose of this handbook is to help make your Speakers Match experience as enjoyable and useful for your students as possible. It includes tips for communicating with the speaker prior to his or her visit, suggestions for pre- and post-visit activities, and a template to help structure the classroom visit. We recommend that you work closely with the speaker to arrange the logistical details, communicate your goals for the presentation, and discuss how best to prepare your students for the visit.

We hope these resources will be helpful in making the most out of your Speakers Match experience, and that your participation in Speakers Match will provide an enjoyable and rewarding way for your students to learn about the world. If you have further questions about Speakers Match, please contact Coverdell World Wise Schools at [wwsinfo@peacecorps.gov](mailto:wwsinfo@peacecorps.gov).



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# Preparing for Your Speaker's Visit

## *Communicating with the Speaker*

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Your classroom visit will be most successful if you and the speaker both have clear goals and expectations and communicate to develop a plan for the visit. The speaker might not be familiar with the curriculum you teach, and might have questions about the interests and abilities of the students in your class. Help the speaker prepare for your particular classroom setting.

Here are some issues you and the speaker should discuss in advance:

Goals/Objectives:

- What are your goals for the presentation? If the presentation is meant to tie-in to a particular unit of study, share the objectives of that unit so that the speaker can tailor his or her presentation to those goals.
- What is students' prior knowledge about the Peace Corps and the host country?

About your Class:

- What is the age/grade level of the students?
- How many students are there?
- Are there any special needs the speaker should keep in mind?

Logistics:

- How much time is available for the presentation, including questions and answers?
- What technology is available? Does the speaker need a projector, screen, etc?
- Will the speaker be sharing music, photos, clothing, food, or other items from his or her country of service?

An easy way to plan the objectives of your event and to exchange pertinent information with your invited speaker is to use the **Educator Planning Form**, and to ask the speaker to fill out the **Volunteer Planning Form**.

## ***Preparing Your Students***

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Think about what students will need to know to be prepared for the speaker's visit. What skills or knowledge are the students learning that will be enhanced by the speaker? What should students know about the speaker's host country and the Peace Corps in general, before the speaker visits?

### **Activity Suggestions**

We have suggested some activities that may help prepare your students for the speaking event. Feel free to use one of these activities or develop a pre-visit activity of your own.

- **Guide to prepare for your speaker**

### **Additional Resources for Information about the Peace Corps and Peace Corps Countries of Service**

Teach your students more about the Peace Corps:

Resources on the Peace Corps:

- [General Peace Corps information](#)
- [Fact sheet and PowerPoint presentation about the Peace Corps](#)

Resources specific to Peace Corps countries of service:

- [General information about the Peace Corps by country, including an interactive map](#)
- [Search for Peace Corps stories and lesson plans about Peace Corps countries of service](#)

### **Prepare your students for cross-cultural awareness and exchange**

- Use the lessons in [Building Bridges](#) to build cross-cultural awareness and respect.
- Remind students not to focus only on the details they find strange or “weird.” Encourage them to find similarities as well as differences.

# Suggested Activities

## to Prepare for Your Speaker

### General

**Conduct small group research** on topics such as the government, economy, climate, religions, arts, and cultural groups within the speaker's country of service. Have students' share their learning through a jigsaw activity or creative presentations.

### Language Arts

**Write letters** to the speaker prior to his or her visit. In the letters, students can ask questions about the speaker, his or her country of service, and the experience of serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

**Read a book** set in the speaker's country of service. Discuss the kinds of details that the story reveals about the country, its history, and its culture.

**Listen to folk tales** that come from the speaker's country of service. Search the [World Wise Schools](#) website for examples. Discuss the characters and themes in the story, and the hints they give about the culture in which the folk tale is set.

### Social Studies/Geography

**Study a map or globe** with students. Find the United States and the speaker's country of service. The Peace Corps' *Where Do Volunteers Go?* webpage may be a useful resource. Research the climate and geography of the country, and compare these with your own geographic area.

**Find online news sources** from the speaker's country of service. Read about current events in the country, and find information related to your speaker's service sector (e.g., environment, education, health).

### Science

**Research plant and animal life** within your speaker's country of service. Learn about the ecosystems present in the country and the adaptations that allow local plants and animals to live there.

**Find articles about environmental or health issues** facing the speaker's country of service. Discuss how these problems compare to issues in the United States or in your local community.

**Math** 

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**Analyze data** relevant to the speaker's country of service (e.g., data on population in urban and rural areas; data related to public health; data on economics and income).

**Media/Technology** 

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**View video clips** about the speaker's country of service. The [World Wise Schools](#) website and [Peace Corps YouTube Channel](#) house videos from many Peace Corps countries.

**Listen to podcasts** by Peace Corps Volunteers who served in the speaker's country of service. Search the World Wise Schools website for examples.

**Watch narrated slide shows** created by Returned Peace Corps Volunteers for World Wise Schools. Hear personal accounts of their service projects and international experiences.

**Art** 

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**View photographs** online from the speaker's country of service, including images of landscapes, people, homes, food, urban and rural life, plants and animals. Imagine the feelings, sights, sounds, smells, and tastes you might experience there. Discuss the sensory responses the images evoke.

**Music** 

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**Listen to songs** that are popular in the speaker's country of service. If the song has lyrics in another language, learn how to sing the lyrics or find a translation of the song.

**World Languages** 

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**Research languages** spoken in the speaker's country of service. If there are multiple languages spoken in the country, find out where they are spoken and who speaks them.

**Learn phrases or greetings** in a language spoken in the speaker's country of service using the [World Wise Schools Language Lessons](#) page or other language resources.



# Suggested Activities

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## for College Classrooms

Inviting a returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV) to your classroom or lecture series is a wonderful way to internationalize your curriculum. RPCV speakers offer authentic first-person accounts of cross-cultural immersion; experiences collaborating with communities around critical global issues; and insights on grass-roots, sustainable development.

Your students will have the opportunity to:

- Better understand global interconnectedness
- Learn about the challenges and benefits of cross-cultural experiences
- Discover the excitement of becoming part of a community through another language
- Reflect on their own commitment to service and volunteerism

There are really no limits to the ways in which returned Peace Corps Volunteer speakers could be used in a college setting; the most important thing to remember is to communicate your goals and expectations with the RPCV in advance to ensure the best results.

If you have any questions or are looking for suggestions on how a returned Peace Corps Volunteer speaker can contribute to your course objectives, please contact World Wise Schools at [wwsinfo@peacecorps.gov](mailto:wwsinfo@peacecorps.gov).





# Extending Students' Learning

Think about how to follow up the speaker's visit with activities that will maximize your students' learning. Students could learn more about the host country or other countries in the region, explore cross-cultural awareness, or develop a service learning project. What about the presentation sparked students' interest? How can you continue to connect ideas from the speaker's visit with the curriculum you are teaching?

## Guide to post-visit teaching suggestions

### World Wise Schools Resources

- *Building Bridges* lesson plans can enrich students cross-cultural awareness and communication skills.
- The *Service Learning* module provides ideas, lesson plans, and stories to help you and your students develop a service learning experience.
- *Multimedia presentations*, including slide shows, videos, and podcasts, of Peace Corps Volunteers' stories can be used to extend learning about the speaker's country, or compare the speaker's experience with other PCV experiences.



# Celebrating Your Success

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Please tell World Wise Schools about your Speakers Match experience!

Email [wwsinfo@peacecorps.gov](mailto:wwsinfo@peacecorps.gov) to tell us all about the visit. We use this feedback to develop suggestions for other educators and RPCVs, and create useful materials to support the Speakers Match program.

We may also spotlight your experience in an upcoming issue of our electronic newsletter, the *World Wise Window*.

Please feel free to share the following information:

- How many students participated? What grade?
- What did students learn from the presentation?
- What pre- and post-activities did you use?
- How easy was it to find a speaker?
- Do you have any recommendations for other educators who are using Speakers Match? Or for the World Wise Schools' Speakers Match program?



# Post-visit Teaching Suggestions

## General

**Conduct independent research** based on questions that students generate during or after the speaker's visit. Use three reliable online sources to find information relevant to the questions.

## Art

**Create an art piece** in a style popular in the speaker's country of service. Research the cultural importance of this type of art and find examples created by native artists.

## Language Arts

**Write thank you letters** to the speaker. In the letters, students could write about the most interesting things they learned, or new questions they would like to investigate based on something the speaker shared.

**Read a book** set in the speaker's country of service. Discuss the ways the story portrays the country of service in comparison to the ways the speaker portrayed the country.

## Write personal essays or

creative writing

in response to the speaker's visit. For example, students could write about an experience in an unfamiliar culture or settings, or could write about what they imagine life would be like in the speaker's overseas community.

## Service Learning

**Organize a service learning activity** in your community or for the benefit of a community in the RPCV's country of service. For suggestions and tips, you can visit the World Wise Schools [Service Learning](#) webpage.

## Media/Technology

**View video clips** about the speaker's country of service. The [World Wise Schools](#) website and [Peace Corps YouTube Channel](#) house videos from many Peace Corps countries. Or, view videos that tell the stories of other Peace Corps Volunteers.

**Listen to podcasts** by Peace Corps Volunteers about their service experiences. Search the World Wise Schools website for examples. Discuss the ways that another Peace Corps Volunteer’s experience compared with your speaker’s experience.

**Watch narrated slide shows** created by Returned Peace Corps Volunteers for World Wise Schools. Hear personal accounts of their service projects and international experiences.

### Social Studies/Geography

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**Find online news sources** from the speaker’s country of service. Read about current events in the country, and find information related to your speaker’s service sector (e.g., environment, education, health).

### Math

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**Analyze data** relevant to the speaker’s country of service (e.g., data on population in urban and rural areas; data related to public health; data on economics and

income). Look for data specific to the area of the country where the speaker served, and discuss how data from this area compare to the country as a whole.

### Science

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**Find articles about environmental issues** facing the speaker’s country of service. Discuss how these problems compare to environmental issues in the United States or in your local community.

**Research public health issues** facing the speaker’s country of service. Discuss the major health concerns facing communities there, and how these compare to health issues in the U.S.

**Generate and research questions** related to natural resources, health, or conservation issues in the speaker’s country of service.

### World Languages

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**Learn phrases or greetings** in a language spoken in the speaker’s country of service using the World Wise Schools [Language Lessons](#) page or other language resources.





# Bringing the World Home



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