

WORLD CLASS

User guide



BBC WORLD SERVICE LEARNING ENGLISH



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BBC WORLD CLASS USERS' GUIDE

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"Put your school on the map"

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever wondered how you can help your students to gain a better understanding of other cultures? Television, films and newspapers can introduce young people to different countries – but think how effective learning could be if they could communicate directly with people of their own age from those countries.

The BBC's **World Class** project has been set up to help schools develop links across countries and continents. This web-based project helps schools to find international partners (or 'twins') and provides guidance on making the most of those partnerships. As well as giving information on setting up projects, **World Class** also provides access to resources and a forum for teachers to exchange ideas, so that twinning projects can move from strength to strength.

The **World Class Users' Guide** is designed to help you make the most of the things which **World Class** has to offer. The aim of the guide is to help you identify how your school and your students can benefit from twinning with an international partner, and to provide guidance on how to set up a successful twinning project. It also explains how your school and students can become involved in twinning if you don't have access to the internet.

We hope that the '**World Class**' **Users' Guide** will inspire your school – and other schools in your area – to become involved in the **World Class** twinning project, and help your students realise how much can be achieved through international partnerships.

The '**World Class**' **Users' Guide** gives you advice and guidance about:

- what twinning is – and what it isn't
- using the **World Class** website to support your twinning project
- setting up and running a twinning project if you don't have access to the internet
- choosing your twin
- establishing a sustainable project
- perfecting your communication skills to keep your projects on track
- encouraging maximum involvement from your students
- establishing your 'twinning contract'
- additional resources to support your twinning project

TIP: You may already be running an effective twinning project. If so, why not use this booklet to encourage other schools to get involved? By telling them about your own school's project, you can help them to see the benefits of twinning. By giving them a copy of this booklet, you can help them see how they, too, can set up their own twinning project.

WHAT EXACTLY IS TWINNING – AND WHY DO IT?

The idea of school twinning isn't new. For many years, individual schools have made contacts with schools abroad, to set up penpal or other links and to facilitate exchange visits. However, with increasing globalisation, there is a growing need for young people to understand other cultures and the value of diversity. Now, the BBC – with its partner organisations – have joined forces to help put schools in different countries in touch with each other, and to develop international partnerships.

Here are just some of the things which twinning could do for your school:

For your students:

- By having a named partner school in another country, there is a focal point for many of the students in curriculum areas which otherwise might not interest them. For example, learning from students in your twinned school about the language, geography and history of their country can help bring mainstream curriculum subjects to life.
- Having the chance to find out about the everyday lives of students in their twinned school can help your students develop a deeper understanding of different cultures – and to identify what they have in common.

For you and your colleagues:

- School twinning provides a great opportunity for professional development, for yourself and your colleagues. Working together on projects enables all the teachers involved to share ideas, experiences and resources to enhance their own classroom practice.
- A range of organisations can help to arrange teacher exchanges which allow you to get hands-on experience of working in your twinned school's environment – helping you to bring back learning into your own workplace.
- Puts international current affairs into a concrete context – makes the news 'real'.

For your school and your community:

- Twinning needn't remain a classroom-based project. By encouraging all levels and groups within the school to become involved – from the students and teachers to the administrators and Head Teacher – a twinning project can help the school develop its identity as a global partner.
- The wider community can also become involved. Seeking out opportunities to let your local community know what your students are doing – via local events and newspapers – can encourage other local organisations to create links in your twinned schools region. As a result, school twinning can help develop wider international links between communities.

A word of caution....

Twinning is an excellent development tool for teachers and students alike. It can also bring together schools which have very different levels of resources. There may be a temptation to see twinning as a way of better-resourced schools supplying materials to those with fewer resources. However, looking at twinning simply as an exchange of resources can seriously undermine the potential long-term benefits to your school.

Remember - the key aim of twinning is to create a partnership of equals, working collaboratively on projects, with each contributing their knowledge and understanding to help the other develop. When planning your projects, try to recognise the resource restraints which exist and plan accordingly.

What World Class can do for you.....

The BBC's **World Class** project offers an easy-to-use system for setting up international twinning projects. With links to a wide range of partner schemes, it provides the opportunity for schools, wherever they are, to find a partner in the region of the world which interests them most. And with links to a wide range of resources to support international projects, **World Class** can help make twinning an integral part of your school's curriculum – and your students' lives.

USING THE *WORLD CLASS* WEBSITE

The **World Class** website (www.bbc.co.uk/worldclass) helps make light work of setting up a twinning project. It not only helps you to find a partner, but it introduces you to a wide range of support and resources to make sure your twinning venture is a success. And, perhaps most importantly, it involves you in a 'twinning community' – enabling you to share ideas and experiences with other schools which have twinning projects.

Getting started

enables you to contact the BBC's range of partners who can help you establish international links with other schools. For schools outside the UK, the main facilitators are the British Council via the **Global Gateway**, which gives access to a global twinning service online. Their websites enable you to identify suitable schools for twinning, or to register your school as one which is seeking a partner. Get Started also lets you know more about twinning and what it can do for your school and students, and introduces some of the organisations which support twinning schools.

Twinning Map

If your school is twinned, put it on the map



Twinning


introduces you to twinned **schools in the UK**. Use this database to find out which schools in the various regions are participating in the **World Class** project.

Schools twinned

let's you know what everyone's talking about and gives you a place to share your experiences. Read expert interviews and send in your questions.

Staff Room

Talk Twinning -
all new Q&A -
share your story



Staff room

let's you know what everyone's talking about. In the Staff Room, you can link through to all the news and interviews featured on the **World Class** website.

Teach and Learn

ideas and resources drawn from twinning schools around the world. Use it to find ideas for your own school – or to contribute ideas which others can use.

Class activities

is a database of ideas drawn from twinning projects around the world. Use it to find ideas for your own school – or to contribute ideas which others can use.

Showcase

puts the spotlight on new projects and initiatives designed to strengthen and extend the international partnerships which are at the heart o

TWINNING WITHOUT THE INTERNET

The **World Class** project is designed to develop links between schools and communities wherever they are via the **World n**

2. You would like to twin with a school which doesn't have internet access – but you do have access....

Getting started:

- A number of the BBC's partner agencies are charities working in developing countries and can help put your school in touch with potential partners. Visit the **Getting started** area of the **World Class** website to find out more about these partners.
- Consider the impact on your students. Being used to web-based technology, they may expect an immediate response, and delays can lead to them losing interest. Try out tasks which get them to consider the range of methods of communication which people can use – and to experiment, for example, with writing and posting letters.
- When you find a partner school, make sure you send them 2 copies of this booklet and its companion, the **World Class Twinning Project Guide**. This will help them to encourage other schools in their area to get involved – and the extra copy of each makes them easier to share.

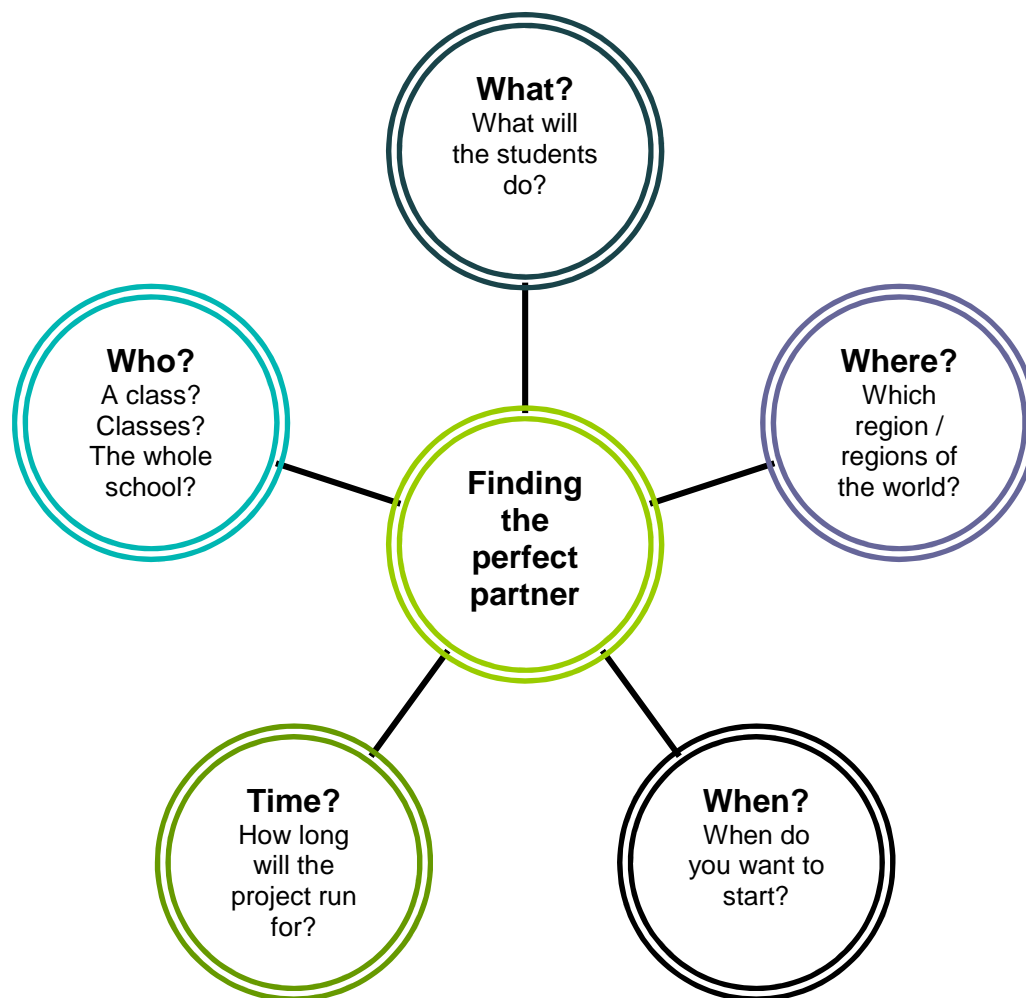
Keeping going.....

- Try to think about ways of using different methods of communication. For example, if you have access to telephone conferencing equipment, you may be able to arrange a phone call to a teacher or some students in your partner school – and let your students participate too.
- Celebrate communication! Think of ways of making the arrival of information from your partner school really special. For example, in a primary class, looking at the stamps on a letter and opening the envelope together can help make the message inside one to remember.
- Try to find out about organisations which can help improve your communication links. For example, the organisations Computeraid (www.computeraid.org) and Digital Links (www.digital-links.org/can) help schools in Africa obtain a computer so that they can communicate by email. Try to find more information for your twin school so that they can upgrade their communication links.

CHOOSING THE PERFECT PARTNER...

School twinning can provide a wealth of opportunities to help young people understand the world around them, and the interests and concerns of cultures other than their own. However, how can you be sure that your chosen partnership will develop in the way you want it to?

Before looking for a partner, here is an easy-to-use 5-point guide to choosing the perfect partner.....



What?

Think about what you would like your students to achieve by twinning with a partner school. You may have very clear aims in embarking on a twinning project. For example, if you teach a foreign language, you might be interested in making links with a school in a country where that language is spoken. Alternatively, you may be looking for a more wide-ranging project and have ideas how a twinning project could be used to link across a variety of curriculum subjects. Try to set aims which you are fairly sure can be realised.

Where?

Which region or regions of the world would you like to make links with? In some cases – such as the language-learning example- your choice will be determined by the language your students are learning. However, a whole range of other considerations might present themselves. For example, would you like to be able to organise exchange visits for your students? If so, travel time and costs need to be considered at this stage.

Who?

Who should be involved? Do you want this project to be restricted to one class, one year, or one department – or should it involve the whole school? As a general rule, make sure there are two of you who want the project to work, and think about starting small and then grow as the partnership develops. There are two groups of people who need to be involved from the early stages, however. One is Head Teachers – growing a project needs support from the top of the school. The second group is your students. The twinning project won't work without them. If they are involved from the early stages, there is a greater chance of retaining involvement later on.

When?

When would you like your twinning project to start? You need to remember that the school year starts and ends at different times in different regions, so you need to bear this in mind when selecting identifying where your perfect partner is located. Also, remember to allow time for setting up contacts and planning with your partner how your project is going to work.

How long?

You may wish to set up a time-limited twinning project, working with one school or one class for a limited period – or you may be seeking to set up a long-term partnership which will grow with the school's generations. And you may find that one leads to the other. It is important to be clear at the beginning, however, about your expectations and to ensure that you and your prospective partner have the same view of the project.

TIP: The **Global Gateway** site allows you to enter all of this information to help you find the perfect partner. The other **World Class** partner agencies will also expect you to have considered these questions before you apply to them to participate in a twinning project.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN...

Successful twinning doesn't simply depend on finding the right school to twin with. You need to consider your own school environment very carefully. Will *you* be a good twin? Here are 5 areas to think about before you begin your search for a twin.

1. Level of commitment

You may want your twinning project to run for only one short project, or you may want to establish a long term partnership with a school abroad. Whatever type of twinning project you are looking for, it is important to realise that successful twinning depends on the commitment of both partners to complete the projects they set. Projects can take time to set up and organise, and many teachers may not be able to give up this extra time. If you are twinning for the first time, it might be a good idea to set up a short project first in order to get a taste of what twinning can bring to your school – and the level of commitment required by staff in both schools.

2. Staff involvement

Starting with a small project can also help staff to work out if they would like to be involved in twinning. In-class project work takes time to plan. Teachers need to plan new lessons, find materials and work with students to create a 'product' for the twin. If you begin with a small project, lasting only a few weeks, other teachers can begin to understand what is involved and decide if they, too, would like to be involved.

3. Resources

Project work often requires resources which you don't need for day-to-day lessons in class. This can range from art supplies and additional paper through to additional technology. When making arrangements for twinning, it is important to give your twin school very clear information about the resources which you have access to, as this will guide the types of projects you can do. Before discussing resources with your potential twin, take time to identify all of the types of resources you can access. Even though your school doesn't have access to computers, for example, you might be able to use a friend's email address to communicate with your contact in the twin school.

4. Communication & planning

When working with a partner in another country, it is important that you have a shared plan to work with and that you communicate regularly to make sure that things are going to plan. Try to identify the different ways you can use to communicate with your twin, and give your twin the contact details they need to communicate with you.

And once you find your first twin.....

5. Realistic expectations

When you find a twin, don't forget that all of the issues which you face in your own school are probably also issues in your partner school. Teachers may not have a great deal of time to devote to a twinning project, and may not have the resources to set up a complex project. Remember, however, that good communication and planning can help prevent disappointment. If one project doesn't go as well as you had hoped, you can always try again.

SETTING UP A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT

Once you have found your twin, what is the next stage? Here is the story of how two teachers in twin schools set up their first project.

Julia, who works in England, and **Anna**, who teaches 11 year-olds in Zambia, decided to work together on a magazine project, based around the topics of science and technology. The aim of the project was for their classes to create their own wall magazines, containing articles and pictures by the children showing how they do everyday tasks – and what kind of technology they use to do them.

Julia had access to a computer at home and at school. Anna, however, didn't – but she had a friend who had access to email and who was willing to help her.

STAGE 1: Establish contact with the 'project manager' in your twin school to set up your project plan.

- Anna wrote to her twin school with the suggestion for the project, asking if a class there would like to work on it.
- Julia phoned Anna to discuss the project, and to set a target date for its completion. She then sent an email confirming what they had discussed. This message contained the following information:
 - the topics which Anna would like Julia's class to write about, and the topics which Anna's class could write about
 - how Anna and Julia would communicate during the project
 - how to present the project to the children in both classes. (Anna and Julia decided that their classes would send a letter to each other, asking questions about their daily lives).
 - what the final project would contain, and how it would be sent to the twin school
 - the deadline for completion of the project.

By sharing these details in writing, Anna and Julia could check that each class was working towards a shared goal.

STAGE 2: Involve your head teacher and get access to resources

- Both Anna and Julia spoke with the head teacher in their school to tell them about the project. This made sure that they had the support of their school, and that any restrictions which there might be on the project were made clear. It also helped them identify any help or resources they might need, such as money to cover postage costs.
- Anna's friend emailed Julia to let her know that the project in could go ahead in Zambia. Julia replied, saying her school was also happy with the project.

STAGE 3: Prepare your students for the project

- Both Anna and Julia spent time in class, asking the pupils to imagine everyday life in their twin's country, and how they imagined everyday tasks to be completed. The children's ideas were then put into a letter which was posted to the twin school. (Anna and Julia each kept a copy of their letter in case of postal problems).
- Anna and Julia agreed a date by which the project should start in class. If their letters didn't arrive they would either fax or email them to each other.
- While waiting for the letters to arrive, Anna and Julia introduced other aspects of the project: the features of a good magazine; how technology impacts on the lives of their students; how they think technology will develop in the near future.

STAGE 4: Set tasks for the project

- When the letters arrived, they were read to the class. The aim here was to show the children how others viewed them, and to give a focus for their writing.
- The pupils in each class were grouped to work on different aspects of their daily lives, using the letter from their twin to show what areas they needed to describe in detail. The tasks included:
 - writing descriptions of everyday tasks, including descriptions of any tools, utensils or other technology which they used
 - collecting or drawing pictures of the tasks they described
- When all of the writing and drawing was complete, each class decided on the layout of their magazine.

STAGE 5: Send your project to your twin

- Before the magazines were sent to the twin school, they were displayed in the home school to show others how the twinning project works.
- Julia phoned Anna to make final arrangements for sending their work to each other. This included making sure they had the most secure delivery address for the work, and making sure there was a 'back-up' plan in case something went missing. In Anna's case, her class had made two copies of the magazine. Julia's class had stored everything on computer so they could email a copy if necessary.
- Both classes were informed when the magazines were posted. This, perhaps, was the most difficult part as they had to wait patiently to receive their twin's work.

STAGE 6: Make the most of your twin's project

- When their twin's project arrived, each class read the magazine to find out if the questions in their initial letter had been answered. Anna and Julia also asked them to identify anything they thought was new or strange, and to talk about what they had learned about the children in their twin school.
- Two members of each class were asked to talk at their school assembly about their project, and what they had learned about their twin school. The magazines were displayed in an area in the school devoted to information about twinning.

5 top tips for successful projects:

- Make sure you discuss and plan your project with your contact in your twin school.
- Write down and share your plan so that you both know how the project should progress – and when it should be completed.
- Stage your project with a series of different tasks to get your students involved and keep them interested.
- Keep in touch with your twin, particularly when one stage ends and another begins.
- Use the information which your twin sends to help your students learn more. And help them share their learning with other students in the school.

PERFECTING YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

As Anna and Julia's project demonstrates, one of the most important elements in a successful project is ongoing communication between the partners. They used all of the methods of communication available to them: phone, fax, letter and email. And they kept in touch regularly, so there was never any doubt about what was to happen next.

One of the greatest benefits of international twinning between schools is that it can help students and teachers develop their communication skills. This is especially true if you are using projects to help develop your students' skills in English. So how can you perfect your – and their – communication skills? Here are a few guidelines to help:

DO:

- Practise letter-writing with your students. Communicating directly with students (and teachers) in another country is one of the most motivating factors in a twinning project, and it's important that everyone feels confident about contributing. Practising letter-writing in class can help build this confidence.
- Help your students become editors. Everyone wants to make sure that what they write is as accurate as they can make it, so helping your students develop skills in spelling, punctuation and proof-reading will help them become more independent writers.
- Make sure you and your students reply promptly to any letters, call or emails. One of the greatest problems which twins can face is lack of communication while their partner is trying to make letters or messages look perfect. Remember – trying to be perfect can stop you being excellent! **Don't spend too much time perfecting your communication – your partner needs your information!**
- Make the most of any method of communication which you can find. If your school doesn't have access to email but a friend of yours does, ask if you can send a message from their computer. Before you send the message, ask your students to work on it with you – what do they think you should say?

DON'T

- Don't stop communicating because you haven't got very formal materials. Some schools have said they are worried because they don't have headed paper, with the name and address of their school on it, or an official stamp. But this really isn't a problem. If you are twinning with a school in Europe, you will probably find that they don't need such formal materials. Remember – it's what you say that counts, not the form in which the letter comes.
- Don't be timid about suggesting different ways of communicating. If you are communicating by letter, you may find that the post is very slow but that a fax can work more quickly. Try out different ways of communicating for different types of messages.

- Don't give up if at first you don't succeed. Although careful planning can help prevent problems arising, some projects may not be as successful as you had hoped. If you find your twin isn't communicating as well as you have planned, ask them if there is a problem. If you lose contact, try contacting a new twin. Remember, twinning is meant to be a living, evolving partnership – this includes making contacts with new partners.

GETTING YOUR STUDENTS INVOLVED – AND KEEPING THEM INTERESTED

Project work completed in class or in school can have many benefits, both for individual students



Delegate responsibility

Remember that, in most projects, the students will be making a product for their twin school: this could be a magazine, a video, an audio cassette or even a webpage. Try to ensure that the finished product really is their work by delegating responsibility for different aspects of the process to the students. For example, decisions about content, layout and editing all work much better if they are a result of the students' work. Try to avoid doing this work yourself. Instead, remember that undertaking these tasks can be a real learning experience for your students.



Celebrate success!

Success can be extremely motivating. Try to find places in your project to celebrate your students' success. In Anna and Julia's case, this included sharing the finished magazines with other classes in their school before they were sent to the twin, and asking the students to tell others what they had learnt about their twin. Remember – your project needs an audience at home as well as in your twin's school!

MAKING A TWINNING CONTRACT

If your class is going to work with a class in your twin school, it can be useful to ask the students in both classes to create a 'contract' for the project. This 'contract' will show what the class agrees to do – and what they would like their twin to do. The ***Twinning Contract*** helps the students to think about what is needed to make twinning work – and to help them identify their own responsibilities in the project.

You can create a twinning contract for your own project, or for a long-term partnership. You can do it for one class or for a whole school.

To make a 'contract' between classes

- Plan with your contact in your twin school to create a 'project contract'.
- Introduce the idea of 'contract' to the class – the idea that this shows things which they are obliged to do, and things they would like their twin to do in the partnership.
- Divide the class into groups and ask them to think about the 5 things they need to do to make sure a friendship or a project works.
- Ask the different groups to contribute all of their ideas and, together as a class, identify the 5 most important 'obligations'. When you are helping them to identify the top five, make sure that you highlight those which might be hard to maintain (e.g. write to your twin every day). Remember that the aim of the contract is to identify responsibilities which the class can carry out.
- Now ask the groups to identify the 5 things a friend or twin should do to make sure that the partnership works. Again, try to guide the students away from unrealistic expectations.
- When you have the top 5 responsibilities and top 5 expectations, ask the students to create a 'contract' which can be displayed in the classroom, and one which can be sent to the twin.
- When you receive your twin's 'contract', ask the class to compare it with their own. If there are any major differences, ask them to work out how these might be resolved.

Sample contract

CLASS 7 A

MAGAZINE PROJECT CONTRACT

We should:

- think carefully about what our twin wants to know
- choose topics that will be interesting for our twin
- make sure that the work is correct and interesting
- make sure we complete work for the project on time
- make sure that the project looks nice so it can be displayed in our twin's school

Our twin should:

- tell us interesting things about their country
- include lots of pictures so we can see what their country looks like
- finish their project on time
- answer any questions we have after we've read their magazine
- make their magazine look nice so we can display it

GETTING RESOURCES FOR YOUR PROJECT

Twining information

Looking for help with twinning? The **BBC World Class website** (www.bbc.co.uk/worldclass) has links to a wide range of sites where you can register your interest, and get support as well as a Staff Room to for teachers to share experiences, the Teach and Learn section where you can exchange ideas with other teachers, and a regular monthly Newsletter.

- **The Global Gateway**, for schools around the world: www.globalgateway.org
- **LINK Community Development** promoting links between schools in the UK and those in Ghana, South Africa and Uganda: www.lcd.org.uk
- **Gemin-I org**, organising short-term projects, linking schools via computer: www.abcgemini.org
- **Youth Sports trust**, twinning schools through sport: www.youthsporttrust.org
- **The Golden Tapestry**, an international artwork project linking schools across the Commonwealth: www.goldentapestry.com

Learning and teaching

The **BBC Learning English** website (www.bbclearningenglish.com) provides a wide range of materials for students of all ages. Visit to the site to find:

- 10 different **Study Guide** booklets, providing materials and guidance to help you develop a wide range of language and study skills.
- **puzzles and quizzes** which you can do in class – and which can give you ideas for more materials
- access to a regularly updated range of BBC programmes on a wide variety of topics

The BBC/British Council **Teaching English** website (www.teachingenglish.org.uk) has lots of material and information for teachers. The site has three sections:

- **Think**, with articles and advice for teachers
- **Try**, with lesson plans and materials for a wide range of different lessons
- **Talk**, where you can communicate with teachers from around the world.

Remember, if you don't have access to the internet, ask your twin to search these sites for you and to send you copies of any material which is relevant to your project!