



STEMCAP PEN PALS:

- STEMCAP will provide access to materials (paper, envelopes, stamps).
 - We will be happy to provide any and all mailing costs, and/or to receive letters virtually to print out for you.
- STEMCAP will establish deadlines.
 - We are hoping for at least 3 months of correspondence, but more is always better! Every two weeks would be our preference for a full letter cycle.
- STEMCAP will deliver letters both ways to ensure consistency and security, and so that letters do not get lost.
 - Letters will be delivered and received as a unit - all at once.
 - Letters from YIC students will be anonymous (maybe first name, initials).

YOUR FIRST LETTER:

- We recommend that you start the same way you would approach any relationship! We encourage you to set boundaries that are meaningful and important to you and to share information as it feels appropriate.
- Think of your first letter the same way you might approach any get-to-know-you conversation. You might consider writing about:
 - Your favorite activities to do (work, hobbies, activities, etc.)
 - Your favorite things to consume and/or create (favorite books, food, art, etc.)
 - Your favorite people to be with (family, friends, etc.)
- Your first letter doesn't need to be long - we'd recommend around one page. You can also ask your pen pal questions about themselves and what they enjoy in order to open up a dialogue. You can also ask them logistical questions, what their facility's outdoor spaces are like, or what they are learning about in school. The only thing we request you do not ask about is their conviction history.
- We also recommend making a copy of the letter, just in case it doesn't get to them and you need to re-send it.



THINGS TO CONSIDER

- This project intends to create meaningful connections between YIC and scientists. However, we want to acknowledge that the students we work with have complex lives and experiences that are beyond the scope of STEMCAP's faculties and experiences. We hope to keep correspondence tied to a level of engagement that will help students express themselves and ask questions, but not use letters to divulge sensitive information that may be better attended to by school staff.
- Letters from YIC students will be anonymous (maybe first name, initials), and asking students for their last names or personal/identifiable information is prohibited.
 - IMPORTANT: Our ability to facilitate correspondence will be tethered to the students' duration at the center. We cannot facilitate correspondence afterward, as we are not permitted to have students' personal information - including any "outside" contact information.
- Please do not ask about conviction history.
- Please be aware of the scarcity of resources for your pen pal - and the power differential that creates — do not make commitments or promises that you cannot keep.
- Please keep in mind the mixed literacy levels among incarcerated people and try to respond appropriately — ask questions to help assess what is the most accessible way for them to receive support.
- Remember that letters will be opened by STEMCAP or by facility staff — ask students to let you know what they are comfortable sharing and discussing by mail.

This project first and foremost facilitates the connection of YIC to scientists.