

Kerpoof Scholastics News

February 2008



Welcome to the fourth Kerpoof Scholastics Newsletter.

Our goal is to provide information about Kerpoof's [free resources for educators](#). If you have colleagues who you think would be interested in receiving this newsletter, please feel free to forward it to them. If you have received a forwarded copy, you can sign up for your own free subscription.

We want Kerpoof Scholastics to be a great resource for you. Please feel free to contact me with comments or suggestions. You can call me at 720-220-7824 or e-mail me at caryn.jones@kerpoof.com.

Sincerely,
Caryn Jones
Director of Education Services
Kerpoof

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Visit Kerpoof at education conferences

Kerpoof is looking forward to getting out and meeting you! This week we are attending the the Texas Computer Education Association (TCEA) conference in Austin, booth #2520, and we'll be at the Northwest Council for Computer Education (NCCE) conference in Seattle, booth #301, at the end of February. Come see us if you'll be attending as well.

KERPOOF IS OUT & ABOUT!



Want to see us at a conference you're attending? Let us know where you'll be by e-mailing Caryn Jones at caryn.jones@kerpoof.com. We will keep publishing our scheduled appearances in this newsletter and on Kerpoof Scholastics. Just click on the book marked "Meet Kerpoof" any time after February 12.

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Subscriptions at Kerpoof? What's next?

Several bloggers have said that it's wonderful that Kerpoof is FREE, but they wonder how long that will last. Other bloggers have picked up on the fact that we will soon have a subscription service. So what's the deal? We want to set the record straight.

First of all, we plan to keep all of the current Kerpoof activities and content free. We also are committed to keeping Kerpoof free of paid advertising. Over the next year, we will be rolling out additional features, some of which will also be free, but others will require a paid subscription to access. Everything you have already been using on Kerpoof will remain FREE. There will still be a way to register for free. You will still be able to use the Art Studio, Publishing Studio and Animation Studio at no charge. The free services on Kerpoof will continue to expand, not contract.

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New lesson plans available at Kerpoof

There are two new lesson plans available at Kerpoof Scholastics. Take a look and be sure to check back each month for new lesson plans.

Historical Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Culture

Study the historical culture of the tribes of the Haudenosaunee Nation with grades 2-4 through this authentic role-playing task.

The Surrealist Art of Salvador Dali and Friends

Work with students in grades 4-6 to recognize the art of Salvador Dali then play a version of a famous surrealist artist's party game culminating in a quick and creative writing assignment.

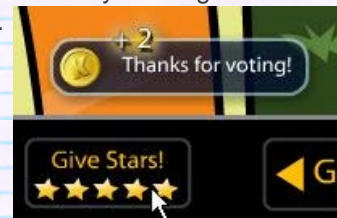
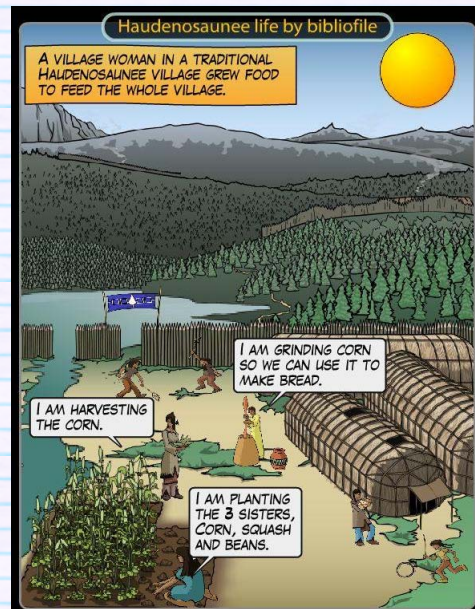
Lesson plans coming in March

Haiku (plan ahead for National Poetry Month!)
Celebrate the Seasons

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New features at Kerpoof

- Now it's easy to share your scene with friends and family who aren't on Kerpoof. When you save a scene a dialogue box appears with the URL that goes directly to your scene.
- You can now vote on your favorite shared scenes. You can "give" 1-5 stars to any shared scene. The stars accumulate - they don't average - so giving one star is a good thing; giving five stars is a really good thing! Most Web sites that have voting report average scores. In the end that means you can effectively vote against people. That isn't the environment we want at Kerpoof.
- Mysterious coins ("koins") have started appearing in your bank account (on your My Stuff page) when you perform certain actions. What are they for? Wait and see. The ability to bank and use koins will be tied to some new Kerpoof features (both free and subscription). You'll need to be logged in to save your koins from session to session though.
- Can you pick out the three new scenes in the Art Studio (Make a Picture)? We've got a surrealistic scene inspired by Salvador Dali and two new alien landscape scenes peopled with really fun, new characters. There're also two new scenes available in the Pets Land storyline of the Animation Studio (Make a Movie), a park and a living room. Have fun exploring these new landscapes!



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Tips and Tricks

Getting everyone on the same page

We know that there isn't a good way to get all your students to the right Kerpoof scene to get started on an activity. We're working on making that as simple as possible. In the meantime, you can use the new URL feature to get everyone there. Simply save the blank scene to your gallery. You'll get a dialogue box that gives you a URL to go directly to your saved scene. You're your students go to that URL and they'll all start off in the right place.

Look for the simplified way to get to individual scenes sometime in February. You'll be able to type in an address like www.kerpoof.com/create?s=vangogh to get to the Van Gogh Starry, Starry Night scene. Each scene will have a name to put in after the equals sign. We'll publish a list of scene names on Kerpoof Scholastics under a new heading of "Find a Scene" by Feb. 12 so check back for that!

Avoid expensive Valentine's Day cards

Instead of having your students buy commercial Valentine's Day cards for each other why not have them create their own?

[Kerpoof's Valentine scene](#) allows for creativity and personalization of Valentine's. Practice rhyming in the classroom by writing verses before going to the computer lab to make your cards. You can also check out our brand new Card Creator!



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Idea Center

Writing starters for ESL students

One common writing starter is to have students cut a picture from a magazine and write a story about it. That works well for students whose native language is English, but can be tough for ESL learners. What if their vocabulary doesn't include some key objects in the picture?

Instead, have students create and print a Kerpoof scene knowing that they're going to write a story based on their scene. By using familiar objects, ESL learners can feel confident in their vocabulary and focus on their writing. You can turn the lesson into a vocabulary builder, however, by asking students to use an object or two that they can't name. They'll have to research to find out the name of the object and work it into their story as well.

Learn by teaching

It's commonly held that the best way to learn something is to teach it to someone else. With that in mind, pair up your second or third graders with your kindergarteners. Have the older kids use the Kerpoof Publishing Studio (Make a Story) to create a math storybook. They can focus on counting, addition or subtraction. When they're done they can print their book and read it to their younger partner. In the end, kindergartener gets a new "book" to take home and the older student has a sense of accomplishment.

You could do the same activity with your fifth graders and third graders, but have their books illustrate multiplication and division. Their books could be more of a "workbook" that they work through together. Have the older students "research" what makes a good mathematics book by looking at some examples in the library before they begin. These activities could make a great refresher at the beginning of the school year or after a break.

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