



Conversation Topics & Activity Ideas for New Virtual Matches

- Talk about your favorite movies/celebrities/performers/historical figures/heroes/sports figures or teams, etc., why you like them and what you learn from them.
- Talk about a book you are reading and why you like it, or don't like it.
- Talk about your favorite foods to eat, and your favorite foods to cook (and how to cook them!). Try out each other's' recipes and discuss how they worked out.
- Share information and details of things that might be unique to your particular culture or geographic area (clothing, ceremonies, music, traditions, food, etc.).
- Share your favorite uses of the Internet, and the Web sites and online discussion groups you find most helpful or entertaining. Visit each other's favorite web sites and offer your own opinion about them.
- Talk about your favorite uses of computers and software (including games) you find the most helpful or entertaining. If you discover that you both play the same computer games, talk about which "levels" you've attained, tips/hints you've found helpful, etc.

- Seek out and share Web sites you think your mentor or mentee would enjoy, based on what you know about him or her.
- Talk about your pets. Talk about animals that particularly intrigue you and why.
- Share positive stories about your family.
- Share stories about family conflicts/difficulties and how they were resolved -- or how you wish they had been resolved.
- Both of you take a fun online personality "test" together, such as What Breed of Dog are You or How High Are Your Expectations? and talk about your results, if you were surprised by what your "test" results were, how they compare to each other, etc.
- Discuss your favorite and least favorite classes, teachers, etc. and why (mentee's -- current classes and teachers; mentors -- past classes and teachers)
- Talk about when you have volunteered to help another person or an organization (a church, a school, a cause you believe in, etc.). Why did you do it? How did the person or organization benefit from your service? How did YOU benefit from your service? What kinds of volunteering would you like to do?
- **Mentors:** talk about your job, how you trained for it, what you do at your job, if it is different than what you planned on doing when you were in grade school, other jobs you've had, including jobs you had as a teenager, and what you learned from them, etc.
- Discuss career options. You can both take "Career Pathways" Evaluation and the Survey by Online Psych, and talk about your results.
- **Mentees:** talk about homework you have recently been assigned or a school activity in which you are involved; **mentors,** help mentees find online resources that might help them with their homework or this activity.
- Discuss your favorite music and performers.
- Describe your dream home and the qualities it will have.
- Describe your dream car and the qualities it will have.

- Share genealogy information, and explore family trees together. Two good resources for this are: [The Genealogy Home Page](#) & [The Genealogy Links Page](#)
- Participate in one or two of the many online interactive, educational areas provided by nonprofit groups, and talk about your experiences in using them, what you learned, what you liked, what you didn't like, etc. An example: [World Wildlife Fund](#)
- **Mentors:** talk about difficulties you might have experienced as a teen and how you overcame them.
- **Mentees:** talk about difficulties you are facing and how you are dealing with them.
- Discuss fashion -- clothing and hair styles you like, that you don't like, what's in style now, what used to be in style, etc.
- Talk about college -- which college and universities you've heard of or are familiar with, why a young person should go to college, how to choose a college, how guidance counselors can be helpful in pursuing scholarships, and so forth. **Mentors**, if you attended a college or university, talk about how you chose which classes to take, if you ended up working in the profession you planned on in college, which classes you found particularly helpful, and so forth.
- Work on the mentee's resume.
- Talk about alternatives to college, training and vocational programs, working, traveling
- Discuss questions that get asked on college applications or in job interviews. **Mentors**, talk about what it was like for you when you were trying to get into college or to land your first job.
- Refer back to previous discussions, or events that your mentee mentioned. "How did that test go?" or "How was dinner at your aunt's house?" or "How is your baby sister?"
- Discuss how to be involved in the U.S. political process. Where would either of you go to register to vote in your area? What kind of local government does your area have? Have either of you ever met your mayor? A state elected official? A national official? What was that meeting or event like? If you could say anything to the President, what would you say?

- You can even help your mentee write a letter to a local representative about an issue they are concerned with.
- Both of you take a fun test on Online Psych, such as the Personality Colors Test, and discuss your results.
- Talk about what you do outside of work/school (hobbies, things you collect, how you spent your weekend, etc.)
- Talk about the song, book character or movie character that you most identify with. For instance, what song sums up what your life is like right now, or how you feel right now? Have you read a book recently that hit close to home, that featured people and situations that were similar to those in your own life? Is there a movie that portrays circumstances you are very familiar with?
- Share your own original short stories, poetry, song lyrics, artwork or other original materials that are easy to send and receive via e-mail (within the body of an e-mail or as an attachment).
- Take a virtual tour of a particular city, outer space -- even a roller coaster! -- and talk about your experiences via e-mail.
- Describe your dream job, however far-fetched it might be, and the qualities it would have. Are there ways to pursue real jobs that would have some of those qualities, or activities outside of the work place that would have those qualities?
- Read a book at the same time, or watch the same TV program, and discuss what you saw, what you learned, what you enjoyed, and what you didn't.
- Celebrate a National holiday together online -- Veteran's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, President's Day, Memorial Day, etc. Research together how this holiday came into being, how or if your family or you, personally, observe this holiday, why you both think this holiday is important or meaningful, etc.
- Talk about why a healthy environment and wildlife are important no matter where one lives. Share information about your geographic area and environmental problems it might be facing (trash, air pollution, water pollution, deer over population, etc.), how it affects you and your family, and ways you might be able to help improve the environment in your area. Some web sites that can help you both explore

environmental issues: Audubon Society Education Pages / San Diego Zoo/ World Wildlife Fund Kids Section

- Talk about how to balance work and life / school and life.
- Talk about an adult who has (or had) a positive influence on you, and why.
- Talk about peer pressure (mentors, remember that adults experience peer pressure too!!).
- Talk about the future. What are you most hopeful about for the future? What are you most scared of? What can you do to make a better future for yourself?
- Come up with new activities for this list! Review the list together and talk about other suggestions, based on your experiences together. Then share them to us at BBBSFC!



Suggested Advanced Activities

These are activities to try after you've gotten to know each other a little better, using the aforementioned, more simple activities. These are also great learning experiences for both mentor and mentee for one to teach the other, or to learn together.

- Exchange pictures of each other, of your families and friends, and of places you've been and your pets and fun projects you've created.
- Create a web site together. It can be something related to school work or to the mentor's professional work, a guide to an issue or subject both mentor and mentee share an interest in (the environment, a particular sports team, etc.), or a web site for a nonprofit or community group you both care about. It could include links to your

favorite web sites on this subject, and artwork, essays and poetry you create yourselves, or solicit from others.

- Write a song together. One or both of you could work on the lyrics, another could work on the music and make a recording of the resulting product via computer recording software and send it to the other (yes, that means either the mentor or the mentee is going to have to sing, unless either of you is savvy enough to have a computer-generated voice sing it for you!).
- Joint doodling and artwork creation. Many programs can read .gif, .jpeg or .pict files, it doesn't matter what kind of computers mentors and mentees are using.
- Have the mentee give a "virtual tour" of his or her community -- provide URLs for the school he or she attends (if available), the local paper, community groups the mentee is interested in or considers particularly active, etc. The mentor can then comment about what he or she learned about the area, and then do the same for his or her own area -- either where he or she lives now, or where he or she grew up.
- Create an online movie together, such as with Flash or Shockwave technology. Apple Computers has Flash movie files ready to download, and Web Teacher has lots of "how to" information and many helpful hints for creating online movies using various different formats. (For an example of how Flash and Shockwave technology can be used, visit Poems that Go. The site offers new sets of poems each quarter, all of which use Flash or Shockwave in their presentation. This site also provides links to essays about the aesthetics of new media and poetry and to related projects.)
- Keep a journal on a regular basis (perhaps weekly) in which you discuss what you've done and your feelings about what's happened at school, at your job, as part of a recreational activity, etc. Send the journals to one another and talk about the events and feelings expressed in each.
- "Go together" to an online webcast concert, class, press conference or interview on a chatroom that features a special guest (such as a sports figure or celebrity or politician). Talk about the online event afterwards together via e-mail.
- Play an online game together. For instance, Yahoo has clubs that allow free multi-user gaming, including simple games like checkers. You can even work on a crossword puzzle together online -- some are downloadable JavaScript files that you can pass back and forth. pogo.com has many free online games that users play using a web browser, like backgammon, chess, card games (hearts, spades, euchre, etc.) and more.

- Write a story together. Examples of how this is done include noiralley.com and the Neverending Tale (the latter site is focused on grades 4 through 8).
- Using online travel and tourist sites for country and cultural information, create a "dream" itinerary for a trip around the world, a trip across country, etc. Discuss where you would go and what you would do on such a trip, what kinds of foods you would eat, what new customs you might encounter, the languages you would hear, dress styles you might discover, etc.

For even more ideas and resources for your match, please visit:

<https://bbbs-fc.org/resources/>