Why Little Bridge?

The best way of learning a language is to spend time in a country where they speak it. But of course this is not possible for most students. Entering imaginatively into a world where they get to know the people and become part of the community is the next best thing. The stories, poems and dialogues in Little Bridge are a much loved, pedagogically-proven foundation for learning English.

Little Bridge includes a huge variety of interactive games as well as fun-to-watch videos, which engage students and motivate them to learn, covering the 4 key skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The program is carefully structured to provide effective learning and prepares students from over 60 countries worldwide for internationally recognised tests in English (Cambridge Young Learners Tests).

It not only makes learning in class more enjoyable; for students who can get online at home, it also allows them to continue their learning outside school. And it’s not all just about practising the huge number of activities. In the safe, online community called ‘DigiPals’, they can actually use their English to communicate with other students around the world.

Students really succeed in English using Little Bridge!

How to log on:

To access the student view of Little Bridge, simply go to www.littlebridge.com, click on the ‘Log in’ button on the homepage (top right) and enter your unique DigiPal name (your user ID) and password.

Discovering Little Bridge:

You will see the 2 principal navigation bars on either side of your screen. These represent the 2 sections of Little Bridge:

The left hand toolbar takes you to the structured activities in the Little Bridge school and the support tools (Dictionary, Grammar Factory).

The right hand toolbar takes you to the virtual world (where your students can explore and experience this English-speaking community), the social network and ‘DigiPals’ community.

School

This is where the main learning takes place. There are six different levels. Each level contains 8 units. There is a drawer for each unit, and each drawer contains 8 activities. They should be done in sequence.

As well as the main activities in the drawers, there are Songs, Word Games and Speaking practice too. You’ll find all of these in the schoolroom, when you have selected the level you want.

Tools

The Grammar Factory is designed to demystify the topic of grammar and to show in a very visual way how English works.

The Dictionary offers a translation of every word that appears in the program. If you click on a word, you can also hear how it is pronounced.

Scores

By selecting Scores on the left, then Scoreboard, students can see their progress at any time. While they are doing an activity, their score is shown on screen as stars, and when they get full marks they’ll win a rosette. They can win cups and trophies too, by doing well in all the activities. These are displayed in the Trophy Cabinet.

The other tabs on the left are:

Games

These are a reward for good work. Students have to get three stars in every activity to open the game that goes with every two units.

Domino

This virtual pet is meant mainly for fun. Students can look after Domino the dog and teach him tricks – but even here they’ll have to use English!
Practical information for teachers

Learning Management System (LMS)

To access the Learning Management System, enter your unique username and password at the following address: www.littlebridge.com/lms

How to use the LMS:

The Learning Management System gives you the teacher not only an overview of each student's progress but also the ability to see in detail what they got right and wrong in hundreds of activities.

It also allows you to message your classes, to control which levels, units and activities they have access to, and to set tests when you are ready.

It is easy to use and you will soon begin to see what a valuable tool it can be, not least since your students' scores, as they progress through the activities, are the equivalent of the marks you would record from their workbooks. You are certainly going to save 'marking' time. And with this digital 'workbook' and 'real-time' marking system, you will see just where your students are doing well and where they need more help.

You will get a clear overview of each student's achievements as well as the progress of the whole class. One Chilean teacher told us that, in 2013, she published a 'leader board' of Little Bridge scores in her classroom. This really motivated her students to succeed!

There are short videos in the LMS itself, giving you step by step instructions on how to make use of all the different features in the LMS. Make sure you select your language at the top, then click on the Help tab on the right and you’ll see the range of videos that are available.

Information about the ‘DigiPals’ online community for students:

In the program (www.littlebridge.com), ‘My page’ is where you first arrive when you log on. It’s where you will return to if you click the ‘My page’ button (top right of your screen).

My page

‘My page’ is each student's own, personal starting point in Little Bridge, where they can personalise their avatar and their room, and display their interests and tastes. It is also what any other Little Bridge user around the world will see if they choose to visit another student in the ‘DigiPal’ online community.

A student can either talk to their DigiPals – the people they have already made friends with – or they can go to the World of DigiPals (bottom right of the screen) and connect with someone new, by simply tapping on the avatar icon. This takes the student to another student's page. Students can invite someone to be their DigiPal by selecting the + sign at the top of the page they are visiting.

Alternatively, from the World of DigiPals page they can jump into a conversation by tapping on one of the speech bubbles going past at the bottom of the screen.

Use the DigiPals community in the classroom!

Suggest topics for conversations that your students might initiate or join. Provide them with and practise some key words and phrases that they can use when ‘talking’ to other DigiPals. Your students will almost certainly want to carry on communicating with friends when they are at home.

You might want to point out to your students that if they message someone on the other side of the world, they may not get a reply immediately.

And in the same way that this DigiPals community offers the opportunity to introduce the concept of international time zones, Little Bridge includes many links to other subject areas, from maths and history, to the environment.

For students just getting started there is also the opportunity to build confidence in communicating in English by messaging Rose, one of the characters from Little Bridge. (See ‘Rose’s Postbox’ on the right-hand toolbar on your screen).

Using the DigiPal community gives your students the opportunity to practise communicating in English. It provides a real purpose for learning, and opens a window onto the world from your computer screens.

Since the community launched, experience has demonstrated that students from around the globe, both in the classroom and at home, truly enjoy and gain real benefit from meeting each other - in this unique, safe, fully-moderated, online community of young learners of English.