

PALEY needs your help!

\$50

\$100

\$250

\$500

\$1,000

Other

The Paley Center is the nation's premier nonprofit dedicated to the importance of media. Never before has media been more vital.

Please consider [making a donation](#) for this work to continue in these challenging times.



THE PALEY CENTER FOR MEDIA

PALEYEDUCATION @Home
presented by **citi**

What We're Watching

What We're Watching



Greetings from The Paley Center for Media's Education Department!

Welcome to the latest installment of “What We’re Watching,” a weekly Paley Education@Home guide. During this unprecedented time, we thought we would reach out to our community with some tips and ideas for consuming media with your kids! We know that screen time has increased so we’re here to help! Each week we are highlighting a different theme that connects to two selected programs, one for younger kids and one for older students, each with related activities.

Consuming media with your kids is a perfect jumping-off point to making media literacy a part of your everyday lives. Familiarizing yourself with the basics is a great first step. In case you missed it, you can view [our first edition about media literacy best practices](#). We also recommend the [National Association for Media Literacy Education's Parents Guide](#)—it's a terrific introduction!

Weekly Zoom Meet-ups Thursdays, 3:00 to 3:30 pm ET

You can join us at our weekly Zoom Meet-up, **Thursdays from 3:00 to 3:30 pm ET**, to chat about the episodes we are watching this week or whatever else

is on your mind regarding media literacy and at-home learning.

For connection details, please RSVP to eduny@paleycenter.org.

What We're Watching: Documentaries

For this week's recommendations, we're dipping our toes into the world of documentaries! Oftentimes the documentary form is considered a genre solely for adults but we think there is plenty of room for younger audiences too! One thing that documentaries accomplish particularly well is acting as a window into experiences or cultures that may be unfamiliar. Both of our picks this week encourage global citizenship and understanding by highlighting everyday life around the world. Consider these words from renowned documentarian Albert Maysles: "When you see somebody on the screen in a documentary, you're really engaged with a person going through real-life experiences. So for that period of time, as you watch the film, you are, in effect, in the shoes of another individual. What a privilege to have that experience." We hope you agree!

This Week's Recommendation for Younger Kids: Pen Pals

Pen Pals (1988)

Recommended for Grades 3+

Available to stream on HBO NOW / HBO GO

Pen Pals is a short documentary film that features an intimate look at the lives of children in different places across the globe, including Chile, Hong Kong, and Finland. Its content complements the third and fifth grade Social Studies curriculum particularly well, which are both concerned with communities and nations around the world, but the storytelling is compelling enough for standalone viewing. By focusing on the daily experiences of children such as meals, school, hobbies, transportation, and responsibilities, the film offers viewers a chance to spot commonalities and understand differences on a global scale.

Viewing Questions

- Notice everything you can about the houses people live in.
- Notice everything you can about the schools that children attend.
- Notice everything you can about the food that people eat.

- Notice everything you can about how people shop.
- Notice everything you can about the forms of transportation people use.
- Notice everything you can about the hobbies and games that people have.
- Notice everything you can about the clothing that people wear.
- What do you have in common with the children you meet in this program? What do these similarities show you?
- What is different about your life from the children you meet in this program? What is the cause of these differences? Geography? Culture? Politics? Resources?

Extension Activity: Move Your Body!

In *Pen Pals*, we see a traditional Tibetan dance on display. Using other Tibetan dance performances on YouTube as tutorials, learn some new steps and move your body. Even though many of us are stuck at home these days, we still need exercise and movement to stay active and healthy!

[Tibetan dance video 1](#)

[Tibetan dance video 2](#)

[Tibetan dance video 3](#)

Extension Activity: Get Your Own Pen Pal!

We're all missing our friends and extended family as we practice social distancing. To stay in touch and keep writing skills sharp, kids can start their own pen pal relationship! Try writing a letter to a friend or family member, using one of these prompts:

- Tell your pen pal about your favorite meal.
- Tell your pen pal about your favorite book.
- Tell your pen pal about something funny that happened recently.
- Tell your pen pal about what you want to be when you grow up.
- Tell your pen pal about your favorite superhero.





This Week's Recommendation for Older Students: Kedi

Kedi (2016)

Recommended for Grades 6+

Available on YouTube Premium & Amazon Prime Video (99¢ rental)

Kedi is a deeply immersive documentary about the large population of street cats that call Istanbul home. Through gorgeous cinematography and earnest interviews, the film manages to pay equal respect to both the grandeur of the city and the humble lives of the cats. The viewing experience is nothing short of magical. Like *Pen Pals*, *Kedi* allows viewers an opportunity for cross-cultural understanding and appreciation, while also leaving room for a subtle but important conversation about globalization and what can be lost as we all race toward “the future.”

Viewing Questions

- Notice everything you can about the city of Istanbul. Look for as many details as possible! (Think about the people, buildings, food, landscape, commerce, etc.)
- Based on what you see and hear, what do you find out about Istanbul’s history, geography, society, and culture? What do you want to know more about?
- What role do cats play in the life of the city?
- How is the city changing? Why is the change taking place? What impact will it have?
- Why do animals inspire so much passion and love in people?
- What storytelling techniques does this documentary use? Are they compelling? Why?
- Why are documentaries an effective medium for encouraging cross-cultural understanding?

Extension Activity: Learn More about Docs!

Take a deep dive into the documentary form with [this “brief history” from Transom](#) and brainstorm ways to start telling your own nonfiction stories!

Speaking of which, Maysles Documentary Center has [great education programs for teens!](#)

Additional Resources

[In Istanbul, Cats Are Sacred](#)

[WNYC: Bodega Cats In Their Own Words](#)

Paley Online Classes

Explore these rich, full online classes, with complete thematic descriptions, clips from the Paley Archive, pre- and post-viewing questions, associated vocabulary, further online resources, and more.

[Tooned In to Animation](#)

[The Fine Art of Persuasion: Television and Advertising](#)

[The Thirty-Second Candidate: Political Advertising on Television](#)

[Red Scare: The Cold War & Television](#)

As always, if you have any questions, thoughts, or ideas, don't hesitate to reach out to us at eduny@paleycenter.org.

Happy viewing,

Rebekah Fisk, Director of Education

Caroline Quigley, Senior Manager of School & Family Programs

Support the Paley Center

We hope this inspires you to watch and learn together in a new way at home! The Paley Center is here for you and, now more than ever before, we would deeply appreciate your support.

SUPPORT US

