

Friday 8th March

Dear Afolabi,

I hope it doesn't take too long for my letter to reach you – I have never had a pen pal before so I'm not sure how long it will take!

Let me introduce myself: my name is Charlotte and I'm 11 years old. I have curly, brown hair and blue eyes and I am quite tall. I'm in year six (that's the last year at primary school) at St Cuthbert's. I'll be sad when it comes time to leave St Cuthbert's because I love my journey to school; Colin is my taxi driver and he picks me up just after 7.30 a.m. I have to get a taxi to school because it's tricky to get there in my wheelchair and Nan doesn't drive. I think I would prefer travelling with Colin anyway – he's so much fun. I get to plug in my MP3 player and listen to my favourite music all the way to school. What sort of music do you like? I hope Colin can still be my driver when I move to secondary school. What school do you go to?

As I kind of said, I live with my nan. We live in a flat on the eighth floor of a huge tower block in Manchester (England). The view from the flat is amazing: I can see the park, the supermarket and the canal if the weather isn't too bad (let's face it – the weather is always bad!). We're lucky to have a lift in the building though – can you imagine getting up to the eighth floor in my chair? Nevertheless, I love our flat. Nan cooks the most delicious food – we eat together every night when she comes home from work. Her chicken stew tastes amazing! I have my own bedroom in the flat, too! Nan has set it up like a games room. I love technology – especially video games. Do you like to play games?

When I'm older, I want to work for NASA. Our flat has a little balcony and I love to try to watch the stars at night (they can be hard to see because of the city lights). For my birthday, Nan has hinted that she might get me a telescope – I can't wait. When's your birthday? Mine is on 27th June.

Please write back soon! I can't wait to hear more about you.

From Charlotte.

Wednesday 1st May

Hello, Charlotte!

It is so lovely to have a pen pal; I have never had one before either. I am the first person in my village (Ogbia) to ever write to someone who lives in a different country – this is amazing!

As you know, I am Afolabi. I'm 10 years old but I'll be 11 on 14th May (not long now!). I live with my mother, father and four sisters in a small village. My father is a farmer who raises goats and chickens and my mother stays at home to look after my youngest sister, who is almost one. Just like you, we all have curly, brown hair but our eyes are brown. What colour eyes does your nan have?

It is strange to me that you live on the eighth floor: we do not have any houses that have more than one floor in my village. Are you not scared to be so high up? I would love to have my own room, just like you. I share my room with my sister and she always takes my blankets!

We don't have a separate primary school and secondary school in my village. At my school, we all learn together in one big classroom. Your journey to school sounds really fun – how long does it take you? It takes me 45 minutes to get to school. I walk with two of my sisters, Abebi and Adaku. It is fun because we play and laugh along the way. Sometimes, I race with my sisters (I let them win). When I am not at school, I like to spend time outside with my father, helping him with the animals. I love animals – I want to be a vet when I'm older so I will need to keep going to school for many more years.

Your nan's chicken stew sounds delicious. My mum makes a delicious stew too – it has lots of vegetables and ground-up melon seeds (egusi) in it. We all eat together after school and we read stories before bed. What is your favourite story?

The weather in Nigeria is much different to Manchester – it is often hot and sunny. At night, the sky is pitch-black and free from clouds: the stars twinkle so brightly. You would love it here.

I can't wait to learn more about you soon. I hope your next letter comes quickly!

From Afolabi.