

So You Want to Bring an Author/Illustrator to your School? Here's how to do it right!



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① The Decision

Talk with the teachers, principal, PTA, and generate enthusiasm about arranging a visit. Discuss curriculum connections to decide which author would be the best fit. Discuss scheduling and tying in with Family Reading Night, book fairs, etc. Begin to discuss funding.

② Finding an Author/Illustrator

Check out the SCBWI Speaker's Bureau (www.scbwi.org/speakers-bureau) and search. This directory allows you to search by name, region, target age of author's books, and more. Think about the types of presentations you want (some authors do assemblies, some prefer small groups, some do SKYPE, many have set presentations). Look at other author listings and publisher websites (see resource list).

③ Make Contact

In an initial e-mail or call, include: who you are, your school's name, grade levels of the students, location, the type of visit you hope to schedule (assemblies, workshops, etc), and a time frame if you have one. This is when you can ask how much the author charges and what their availability is. Thank the author for their response and let them know you'll get back with them.

④ Funding- Go for it!

Look at PTA, school resources, district resources. There are many grants available (see resource list).

⑤ Set up the Visit

By e-mail or phone, work together to set a date, number of sessions, length of sessions and schedule (don't forget breaks between sessions). Discuss and set the content of sessions. Let author know about the number and age of kids in each session, location of the sessions (gym, library, etc), availability of media (projector, screen, sound equipment, etc)

⑥ Make a Written Contract/Agreement

Include organization's name, address, representative's name and contact info, presentation date, number of presentations and schedule, presentation location, other agreed upon terms such as equipment, fee, travel expenses. Many authors have their own contracts -don't be afraid to ask.

⑦ Think about Book Sales

Arrange to sell the author's books if you like. You can ask the author how they handle book sales. Many prefer you order through the publisher – if so, do this well in advance. Send a book order form home with students. Schedule a time for the author to sign books for students on the day of the visit.

⑧ Preparing the Students

Good preparation can make the visit SO much more worthwhile. Have classes read the author's books. Do related projects, make curriculum connections (geography, history, science, poetry, six traits). Build up excitement! Request check to pay author, make any travel and hotel arrangements.

⑨ Day of Visit

Provide a host to accompany the author. Prepare good introductions for the presentations. Allow author set up time and down time between sessions, and A/V support. Make a nice plan for lunch. Give students name tags. Teachers, stay with students and provide support. Show off school projects – take the author on a tour. Pay the author on the day of the visit if possible.

⑩ Follow Up

Authors love thank you notes!

Courtesy of SCBWI-Illinois (illinois.scbwi.org)