

Author Visits from A to Z

Kate Messner – NYLASSL Conference - May 17, 2024

www.katemessner.com

Planning an Author Visit

6-12 months before the visit

- Meet with your team to discuss audience, goals, timeline, and budget.
- Choose an author/illustrator to invite. (Have a plan B in case they're booked!)
- Email the author/illustrator or their booking agent.
- Sign a contract that includes the date, honorarium, travel arrangements, and number of sessions per day.
- Order additional copies of the author's books for the school library and classroom libraries.
- Will your author visit be tied to a One School, One Book, One School, One Author program, or Community-wide read? If so, now is the time to secure funding and order copies.



3-4 months before the author visit

- Reach out to the presenter (or their representative) to confirm the visit.
- Request any necessary paperwork such as w9, etc.
- Begin to prepare students for the author visit by reading and discussing books, visiting the author's website, watching book trailers, and making posters/art.
- Make arrangements with a local bookstore, or with your presenter's bookstore/publisher, for book sales and create an order form to send home to families.
- Meet with your author visit team to assign jobs. These may include picking up the author from their hotel, driving them to/from school, picking up lunch, organizing books for signing, etc.

1 month before the author visit

- Email the presenter (or their representative) to confirm details of the visit, including:
 - The daily schedule of presentations, including grade levels for each.
 - Your presenter's arrival time on the day of the visit.
 - An overview of which books each group will have read in advance.
 - Technology needs (ask if your author will need a projector, screen, mic, etc.).
 - Lunch plans - ask the presenter about any dietary needs. You may also want to send a link to the restaurant from which you'll be ordering and ask them to make a selection in advance.
 - Water availability - ask if the author prefers to bring their own refillable water bottle or have bottled water provided.
 - Directions to school and instructions for parking - reserve a spot if parking can be at all difficult at your school in the mornings.
- Continue to prepare readers by sharing the author's books and doing related projects.
- Promote the author visit in school and to families.
- Send home order form for signed books. (Be sure to check with your bookstore to see when they need forms and payment turned in to have books available on the day of the author visit, so you can communicate that deadline to families!)
- Brainstorm ways to involve kids in the author visit. You may want to have them write the author's introduction and practice introducing them at the assembly, or plan an author greeting committee for their arrival. Some schools challenge students to read as many of the author's books as possible, with enthusiastic readers chosen for the greeting committee or to meet the author for a little extra Q&A after the assembly.

The week before the author visit

- Test your audio/video/technology setup to make sure everything is working, and have extra batteries on hand for mics, remotes, etc.
- Review assembly etiquette with students, encouraging active listening.
- Make sure teachers will be present for the event.
- If you'd like, work with students to make posters and/or art projects to decorate the school for the author visit. This helps to build excitement!
- Finalize book orders and make a plan for author to sign books. (Many schools organize books ahead of time, with the student's first name on a Post-It note opposite the book's title page, where the author will sign.)
- Send a final confirmation email with the following information:
 - A reminder of the daily schedule
 - Directions to school and parking arrangements OR information about who will be picking up the author & transporting them to school and when
 - Confirmation of technology needs
 - Book signing arrangements
 - Lunch arrangements, if the author will be at school through lunchtime

On the day of the author visit:

- Make sure the room is set up before the author arrives, with technology set up and functioning.
- Display the author's books in the presentation space, if possible.
- Organize books ordered by families in a place where the author can sign them.
- Reserve a parking spot.
- Make sure the honorarium check is ready.
- Have water available – either bottled water or show the author where they can refill a reusable water bottle.
- Plan for someone to meet the author when they arrive and/or be sure the office staff are prepared to welcome them.
- Be sure to stay in the room while the author is presenting – any disciplinary issues should be dealt with by school staff.
- Enjoy the visit with your students!
- Be ready for enthusiastic book requests after the assembly – you may need to set up waitlists for some titles.
- Be flexible with the rest of the day – students often leave an author-visit assembly excited to work on their own writing, and flexibility helps teachers to take advantage of that positive writing energy!



Sign up for Kate's newsletter for author visit opportunities throughout the school year!

<https://katemessner.us20.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=3e33c84ab9caaea7a47354891&id=800b97442c>

Additional Resources:

Authors & illustrators who Offer School & Library Visits

Kate Messner - <https://katemessner.com/skype-author-visits/>
Loree Griffin Burns - <https://loreeburns.com/schoollibrary-presentation/>
Lesa Cline-Ransome - <https://www.lesaclineransome.com/visits>
Sarah Albee - <https://sarahalbeebooks.com/author-visits/>
Nancy Castaldo - <https://nancycastaldo.com/speaking/>
Joanna Ho - <https://www.joannahowrites.com/visits>
Saadia Faruqi - <https://saadiafaruqi.com/school-visits/>
Janae Marks - <https://www.janaemarks.com/school-visits.html>
Grace Lin - <https://gracelin.com/school-visits/>
Jason Chin - <https://theauthorvillage.com/presenters/jason-chin/>
Mike Curato - <https://www.mikecurato.com/events>
Amy Guglielmo - <http://www.amyguglielmo.com/school-visits.html>
Debbi Michiko Florence – <https://debbimichikoflorence.com/author-visits/>
Kyle Lukoff – <https://theauthorvillage.com/presenters/kyle-lukoff/>
Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich - <https://www.olugbemisolabooks.com/visits-and-more>
Tracey Baptiste - <https://www.traceybaptiste.com/request-a-school-visit>
Laurel Snyder – <https://theauthorvillage.com/presenters/laurel-snyder/>

Author Village is a booking agency that represents many authors – it’s a great place to “shop” if you’re not sure who you’d like to invite!

<https://theauthorvillage.com/>

Maine educator Melissa Guerrette, an enthusiastic organizer of all-school and community-wide reads, has written extensively about her school’s planning of these events. Here’s her detailed series of posts about planning and executing a One School, One Author event, with reflections on the impact on student reading and writing.

<https://melissaguerrette.blogspot.com/2015/01/oes-reads-building-excitement-for-whole.html>

<https://melissaguerrette.blogspot.com/2015/01/oes-reads-big-reveal.html>

<https://melissaguerrette.blogspot.com/2015/01/oes-reads-week-1.html>

<https://melissaguerrette.blogspot.com/2015/01/oes-reads-week-2.html>

<https://melissaguerrette.blogspot.com/2015/02/oes-reads-family-literacy-night.html>

<https://melissaguerrette.blogspot.com/2015/02/oes-reads-week-4.html>

<https://melissaguerrette.blogspot.com/2015/02/oes-reads-final-chapter.html>

<https://melissaguerrette.blogspot.com/2015/05/oes-reads-epilogue.html>