



Lori Mortensen

children's book author

Tips for a Successful Author Visit

Author visits change lives. When children meet authors, they're encouraged to read, write, and imagine the books that they might write one day. However, successful author visits begin months in advance. Below are some tips that will help make visits successful, meaningful, and memorable:

3-4 Months Ahead

You've Booked the Date, Now What?

Presentation Plans

- How many presentations would you like to schedule?
- What grade levels would you like to group together for my presentation?
- Where will the presentation take place? In the library? In the gymnasium?
- Is A-V equipment available? I will need an LCD projector for my PowerPoint presentation, a screen, a table, and a microphone.
- Will there be a lunch break? Please make lunch arrangements and let me know whether I'll be eating with staff or students.
- When would you like me to autograph books? Before or after presentations?
- Propose a schedule that includes the number of presentations, book signings, and lunch. When approved, send a contract for signature.

Finance Questions

- How will you fund the visit? Possible options include, school district budget, PTA, fundraisers, Adopt-a-School Sponsors, Title 1, Title VII, School Improvement Plan (SIP) and grants from local nonprofits or local reading associations.
- Many schools work with booksellers such as Barnes & Noble through their Book Fair program. Contact your local Barnes & Noble Community Relations Manager for school discounts. If B&N is not available, contact local booksellers.
- Please have my honorarium prepared in advance. Will I need to submit a W-9 or complete other district paperwork?

2 Months Ahead

Who Am I?

- Presentations are more meaningful when children know who I am before I arrive.
- Promote the event online at the school's website, event calendar, and the school newspaper.
- Display my books in the office lobby or display cases.

Book Orders

- Order books.
- Start the process as soon as possible.
- Distribute book order forms, collect payments, and order books. I have parent letters and book order forms for this purpose.
- Plan to send order forms multiple times.

1 Month Ahead

Reading Fun

- Encourage teachers to read my books to their students.
- Invite teachers to use the classroom activities that accompany many of my titles. Visit my website (www.lorimortensen.com) to access the pdf files.

1 or 2 Weeks Ahead

Posters, Bookmarks, and Banners, Oh, My!

- Plan innovative activities prior to my visit, such as:
 - Creating posters and banners
 - Bookmark-making contests
 - Dressing up as characters from the books.
 - Video readings or reviews of my books to be played on classroom TVs.
- Follow up with additional announcements and posts on school websites, blogs, and newsletters.

Day of the Event . . . and Beyond!

Welcome!

- Celebrate Author Day with a welcome banner and posters.
- Set up the AV equipment and test it ahead of time.
- When books arrive, make sure they're tagged and ready to sign.
- Take pictures of the event and share them with the author and the school.
- If you enjoyed the presentation, let the author know in an email or online. Quotable quotes are always appreciated.
- Invite the students to send thank-you notes, cards or drawings.