



ABA EDUCATION

Education for Authors: How to Work with Independent Bookstores When Doing School Events

The American Booksellers Association — the trade association representing independent bookstores nationwide — works closely with its member stores and with authors to help book buyers find their next great read. A big part of that includes author events in indie bookstores and while visiting schools. The following best practices were formulated by booksellers to help authors better prepare for a successful event.

THINGS TO DO

Before your event:

- Plan to arrive early enough to sign pre-purchased books and stock for the store. For many school events, a majority of the sales come as follow-through after students go home, excitedly talk about the event, and come into the bookshop later to purchase books.
- Have your presentation on a thumb drive and consider emailing a link to the bookshop representative or the school contact as a backup.

During your event:

- Use visuals - PowerPoint, large posters, drawing demonstration, etc.
- Make your presentation interactive - PowerPoints with "choose one" options, group questions, or some other method to engage the group.
- Discuss the writing process. Kids want to know where you get your ideas.
- Share your failures. Budding writers need to know the book they have in your hand was not your first draft.
- Mention the host bookshop at least 4 times during your presentation and give a shout-out to any afternoon event at the host bookshop.

(OVER)

THINGS NOT TO DO

- Don't offer an unconventional event without involving the teachers and/or staff as much as the children. One author we hosted wanted to have a burping contest. Students went nuts, teachers were offended and no one paid any attention to the book.
- Do not use curse words as a "cool factor." Teachers (elementary and middle school) are turned off and are less likely to host future authors.
- Do not use the word "AMAZON" in your presentation.
- Do not trash a school, bookshop, or young reader on social media following a presentation. Even a simple comment can cause real damage.

