

# Invite the Author!

## How to Book an Author Appearance for Your School or Library



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A visit with the right author or illustrator can make all the difference to foster a love for books and reading in children and young adults. But the success of such an event depends on effective planning. Team up with fellow educators, parents, students, and administrators, and follow this guide below to make sure your visit is a hit!



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BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS

## 8-12 MONTHS BEFORE THE APPEARANCE



### **Step 1: *Select An Author or Illustrator***

Consider the following:

- **Audience**

Who will be attending? What are the ages? How many children will be there? You'll want to find someone whose books match the students' interests, ages, and reading levels.

- **Type of Event**

Do you want the author or illustrator to do a workshop, lecture or lunch with students? How many presentations would you like them to do? Plan as specifically as possible what you'd like the author or illustrator to do.

- **Budget**

Authors and illustrators charge different fees, or honoraria, for their appearances. On [LittleBrownLibrary.com](https://www.littlebrownlibrary.com), you will find a list of authors and illustrators who are available for visits, their fees, and the number of presentations they are willing to do in one day. Honoraria range from \$200 to \$5000. We endeavor to keep the list current, but be aware that some fee requirements may change without notice. In addition to the honorarium, your institution is also responsible for other expense such as travel (round-trip air/train fare, ground transportation, mileage reimbursement), hotel, and meals.



### **Step 2: *Invite the Author***

Once you've identified audience, type of the event, and budget, select three choices in order of preference. Your first choice may not always be available, so it's a good idea to have a backup.

Email your invitation to [author.appearances@hbgusa.com](mailto:author.appearances@hbgusa.com), making sure to include:

- **The names of the 3 authors/illustrators in order of preference you wish to invite**
- **Preferred date of the event**
- **Audience size and age**
- **Number of presentations desired**
- **Type of presentation desired**
- **Complete contact information**

Please allow 2 – 3 weeks for your request to be answered. When an appearance has been set, LBYS's author appearance coordinator will send you a confirmation letter spelling out the terms of your agreement. The author or illustrator's contact information will be included in this letter so that you may contact him or her directly from that point on.



## 4-6 MONTHS BEFORE THE APPEARANCE



### **Step 3: *Arrange for travel, ground transportation, and lodging for your guest***

As the host, you are responsible for your guest's travel, ground transportation, and lodging. Often an author or illustrator will opt to make his or her own travel reservations, in order to choose flight times, airports and other arrangements that are most conducive to his or her schedule. In the case where an author or illustrator asks you to make travel arrangements, please note that while the need for low airfare is understood, the number of connecting flights should be limited. A jet-lagged, travel-weary guest is not nearly as enjoyable as one who has traveled comfortably.

Be sure to keep in mind the timing of the appearance versus your guest's arrival and departure times. If the author or illustrator is to spend the entire day doing presentations, he or she may want to arrive the evening before and/or spend the night after. Although it may be easier on your budget to invite a speaker to stay in a private home rather than a hotel or B&B, this is not advisable. Visiting speakers need breathing room for a good performance and freedom with their spare time.

And remember to coordinate ground transportation either by taxi or car service for your guest to and from the airport, hotel, and event venue.



### **Step 4: *Inquiry about the author's or illustrator's preferences and create a schedule***

Authors and illustrators vary in presentation style and preference. Some require a microphone, laptop, and projector for PowerPoint presentations in front of a large auditorium, while others prefer an easel with a large paper pad and markers in a small, informal setting. It's best to ask the author or illustrator well in advance how he or she would like the day's events to be organized.

Check to see if your guest has any special dietary needs and discuss mealtime plans prior to the visit. Please discuss in advance if you hope to have the author or illustrator at a lunch or dinner.

Once you've figured out all the details, provide your guest with a clearly written itinerary of how his or her time will be spent, including scheduled appearances, breaks, meals, and other commitments. Along with the itinerary, a list of contact names and phone numbers is essential. On [LittleBrownLibrary.com](https://www.littlebrownlibrary.com), you will find a sample schedule to use as a guide in your planning.



### **Step 5: *Request a W-9 from the author or illustrator***

The honorarium is due on the day of the appearance. Ask your guest to provide you with a copy of his or her W-9 form. Leave enough time in advance of the appearance to request and process an honorarium check from your school or library.



## 4 MONTHS BEFORE THE APPEARANCE



### Step 6: *Publicize the Event*

Start telling your audience about the visit at least four months in advance. LBYR has headshots and short bios available for our authors and illustrators for this purpose.

- Announce it in your e-newsletter, on your website, and through your social media platforms, like Facebook and Twitter.
- Set up a display of the author's or illustrator's titles at your school or library.
- Post signs and flyers around the school or library to spread the word about the visit and create take home flyers.
- Involve parents and your local PTA/PTO in the experience by inviting them to the visit or to lunch with your guest.
- Send a press release or letter to your local media.

The most effective way to publicize the event is to make sure the audience has read the books! Appearances work best when the crowd is already familiar with the author's or illustrator's work. At your library, form a book group and read a single title by your guest, or choose several titles that smaller groups can concentrate on. Or at your school, ask teachers to plan book talks, classroom activities or lessons, and art projects based on the book(s). Doing this will keep the visit on your audience's radar and will get them ready to ask great questions during the event.



### Step 7: *Order Books*

Always order the author's/illustrator's most recent title, since this is the book that will most likely be discussed. You can purchase books through your local bookstore, preferred vendor, or directly from Little, Brown Books for Young Readers. If you choose to order directly from LBYR, visit [LittleBrownLibrary.com](http://LittleBrownLibrary.com) for ordering and discount information.

## THE DAY OF THE APPEARANCE

- Make sure requested equipment (microphone, projector, etc.) is set up and working prior to the first presentation. Have a glass of fresh water and a box of tissues handy.
- Do all you can to make your guest feel at home. Assign someone from your faculty or staff to handle any requests and to accompany the author or illustrator throughout the day.
- During the book signing, have a Post-It note in each book with the name of the person to whom the autograph will be addressed. Have a volunteer open books to the correct signing page for the author or illustrator. This will ensure correct spelling and expedite the line.
- Have the honorarium payment in hand.
- And most importantly, have fun!

We look forward to helping you plan an exciting and inspiring author or illustrator appearance for your school or library! Thank you for working with Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.

