

- AUTHOR VISITS -

Tips for Hosting a Fab Author Visit

1. **Prepare your kids.** If you whip up excitement in advance of the author coming, they will pay more attention and get **much more** out of the visit, rather than wondering who this random person is! You could set projects based on the author's work, maybe make an inspiration board or make a feature wall. Can the children do some research of their own? or draw their own version of one of the author's characters?
2. **Discuss event format.** I am happy to visit each class individually. We can negotiate what kind of sessions you have in mind and what works best in terms of your space and timetable.
3. **Discuss book sales in advance.** Book sales are important: if children get enthusiastic about an author and a particular book, it's great to put that book into their hands right away so they can read it. A signed book is often a treasure that children savour for their whole lives and it will remind them of that day at school. Of course, it also helps the author to carry on doing their job.
4. **Come up with a good system for book purchases.** Don't expect children to remember to bring money on the day, have a good pre-order system in place, or a school payment plan. Your kids WILL want books after a good author visit, and it's a shame to let them down. At the book signing, if there is a large queue, have some post-it sticky notes on standby ask each child who they want the book dedicated to. Write the name down on the post-it and stick it to the front of the book. That way, the author doesn't get the spelling wrong and can spend more time chatting about whatever the child wants to talk about.
5. **Photography.** It's great to have photos of your children and the author, perhaps they could be showing the work they've done in the workshop. It's useful to have for your newsletter and website and if your school policy allows, share it with the author so they can use it on their website too.
6. **Do you want to alert the local media?** It's good publicity for the school and the author.
7. **Provisions on the day.** Discuss beforehand what sort of supplies the author needs.
8. **Teachers - take part too.** Kids take their cue from their teachers: when they see their teachers taking part, they take the activity much more seriously.

The worst thing teachers can do is chat in the back, or ignore the author and mark papers.

9. **Crowd control:** It may sound obvious, but authors aren't teachers. It's helpful if teachers and staff can help control the energy of the room and take your cue from the author. You and your teaching assistants need to keep a close eye on the kids at all times, particularly the ones you know have additional needs.

10. **Expect to pay an author.** Earning money by selling books is rarely going to pay all the bills (unless you are famous) so this sort of work is vital to enable the author to keep writing books.

11. **Finally...have fun.**