



Tips for School Visits and Appearances

A great way to encourage continuing sales of your title is to schedule in-person or virtual school and library visits. Here are some tips to help you create your own author visit program.

1. **Tell your local school librarians that you are available for readings and school visits.** If you're an author, offer to read and discuss with the children how and why you became a writer and what inspired you, or describe the process of changing an unedited manuscript into a bound book. If you're an illustrator or photographer, offer to read and discuss your process from thumbnail sketches and photo ideas to the bound book. Also consider an interactive exercise you can do with the children. Perhaps you can write a story together or show how you create your artwork.
 - a. Additionally, consider submitting to school visit organizations such as An Open Book, Bookmarks, or Behind the Book.
2. **Research what other authors and illustrators do for school visits.** Here are some posts with advice from the experts:
 - a. [Publisher's Weekly: The Virtual School Visit Evolves](#)
 - b. [Kate Messner's "Reinventing the Author Visit: How to Create Virtual Visits" Workshop \(FEE BASED\)](#)
 - c. [How to Locate Speaking Engagements- Free and Paid](#)
 - d. [School Library Journal: Awesome Author Visits](#)
3. **Add your name to virtual visit websites and lists.**
 - a. For authors and illustrators of color: <https://www.nikkigrimes.com/educators.html>
 - b. For all authors and illustrators open to giving free virtual visits: <http://www.katemessner.com/authors-who-skype-with-classes-book-clubs-for-free/>
 - c. For authors based in Minnesota: <https://mnwritersdirectory.org/>
4. **Make a page on your website with school visit and appearance information.**
 - a. Create a title, recommended audience, and overview of any presentations that you plan to offer.
 - b. Make sure to include your contact information and whether or not you are open to virtual visits.
 - c. Inform our publicity team (mciskowski@lernerbooks.com) that you are willing to make in-person and virtual visits so we can add this information to your author page on Lerner's website.
 - d. Some Lerner authors who have detailed school visit and appearance information on their websites include:
 - [Carole Boston Weatherford](#)
 - [Chris Barton](#)
 - [Elana K Arnold](#)
 - [John Coy](#)
 - [Kate Messner](#)
 - [Miranda Paul](#)
 - [Patricia Newman](#)

- [Traci Sorell](#)
5. **Don't forget virtual visits!** Offer virtual visits through your website. Find more information in this [School Library Journal article](#) or take [Kate Messner's "Reinventing the Author Visit: How to Create Virtual Visits" Workshop \(FEE BASED\)](#)
 - a. Keep in mind that some schools would prefer to use Zoom, Google Meet, FaceTime, or other video chat services. Work with the teacher or librarian to ensure that you're using the platform that works best, and schedule a quick test run a week before the event to troubleshoot any problems.
 - b. If you'd like more practice, ask a friend or family member to help you test your platform and presentation.
 6. **Ask questions** about the nature of the visit. Have the students read the book? How long is a class period? What grades are the students who will be in the room? What technology will be available to use for your presentation?
 7. **Always bring backup.** Make sure to have your slides available in more than one form (i.e. USB drive and Google Docs), and check how the teacher or librarian would prefer to set up your presentation before the day of your visit.
 8. **Consider creating marketing materials** to take to visits or to offer as downloads for virtual visits. Ideas include event posters, stickers, bookplates, activity materials, bookmarks, and educational materials.
 - a. If you do create marketing materials, send files to Megan Ciskowski (mciskowski@lernerbooks.com) for Lerner marketing approval before printing and distributing.
 9. **Sell books.** To sell books at your school visits, first check with the school. Some schools work with local booksellers to bring books to sell during author visits. If the school does not have a standard way to sell books, many authors buy books at their discounted price (listed in your contract) through [Lerner customer service](#) and sell them at the event.
 - a. To get an accurate idea of how many books to buy ahead of time, many authors create an order form to distribute to teachers 4 to 6 weeks ahead of school visits. See [Miranda Paul's visit form](#) for an example or use a [Lerner book order form](#).
 - b. You can also create an online storefront using Ingram's Aerio. [Click here](#) for more details.

For more general tips for school visits, read this IBPA article: <http://articles.ibpa-online.org/article/checklist-selling-schools/>