



Dear School Principal, Media Specialist, Teacher, PTO, and/or Parents:

Wondering what to expect from my author visit? Here's a quick glimpse:

It's a Fun Day

Prepare students by having them read at least one of my books by themselves or aloud in the classroom. It's the single most important thing to best prepare for the day. But anything beyond that will build excitement and enthusiasm for the actual author visit. Once I arrive, it's my job to reach students in a memorable way through active, entertaining, inspiring programs.

From the moment I step in the doors of a school, I can tell when teachers and students have been busy preparing for the big day. Hallways brim with book-related art and activities. Students whisper, "That's her! She's here! The author's here!"

It's an Educational Day

After I present, teachers often tell me that when they return to their classrooms their students are eager to write their own stories and/or dive into one of my books. That's the goal: to give them helpful writing tips and to inspire them to become stronger writers and stronger readers.

I vary my many programs according to age groups, featuring picture books for the youngest groups and Young Adult novels for older students. Fortunately, with a wide variety of titles, I have books for every age group and can tailor a presentation for K-1 or K-3, Grades 2-3 or 5-6, and so on. Cluster students by grade/age and I'll adapt by tailoring content with examples from books targeted for each audience. The themes I'll cover include:

- Where do Ideas come from? (turning experiences and curiosity into stories)
- What is writer's block? (fear stops us from being our best; writing takes courage!)
- The five main writing tools (the five senses and how to use them)
- Research (library, internet, interviews, and hopping on planes!)
- Revising leads to good writing (for authors, too!)
- Becoming better readers & writers opens up the world of opportunities!
- Plus Q. & A (my favorite) and more . . .

It's a Motivational Day

I share my journey of becoming an author. I wasn't the top student at my school; instead, I was a struggling reader and an active, outdoorsy, can't-sit-still kind of a kid. I remember how it felt not to finish books. And I remember how excited I was to discover can't-put-down titles.

As one in a family of ten children, I grew up in a bustling, camp-like atmosphere. It wasn't quiet and I didn't feel heard. Writing, I discovered, was a way to have a voice. Though I faced hundreds of rejection letters and was tempted many times to quit, I didn't. I found my voice as a writer, and I've been using it ever since, communicating--one writer, one reader at a time.

It's a chance to get personalized, signed books by an author.

Getting a personally signed and inscribed book by an author is a big deal to many young readers. With that in mind, I will take pre-orders before my visit and ship signed books before I arrive; I will sign on the day of my visit; and I will offer a post-order opportunity for signed books. Prices are discounted to include tax and shipping.

—Mary Casanova