

Connecting Students to Authors

Creative activities to help make the most of an author Visit

- Students can make posters advertising the author visit and display them around the school. Ask students to vote for which poster is their favourite. Count up the number of votes. Draw a graph, showing the results.
- Small groups can brainstorm how to make the author feel welcome. Write a list. Then get together as a whole class and compare notes. Decide who will do which task.
- Choose a student to introduce the speaker, and another student to thank the speaker at the end of the presentation.
- Look at the author's website (you will usually find the author's profile, plus FAQs).
- Search for additional material, eg reviews, interviews or photos on the internet or library reference materials.
- Write a review of the author's website.
- Does the author have a blog that is suitable for reading or discussion among students? (Links usually on the author's website.)
- Prepare thoughtful questions (rather than the usual 'How old are you?').
- Write what you predict the author will be like? Then, after the visit write what the author is *really* like and compare the lists.
- Choose a book the author has written. Ask each student to imagine they are the publicist. What clever ways could the book be promoted and marketed? (A publicist plays an important role in the life of a book. Check out the short interview with Kate Mayes, the Marketing Manager at Little Hare Books, to read about what she does. <http://audrey-of-the-outback.blogspot.com/2008/04/psst-want-to-read-good-book.html>)
- Write a review of one of the author's books.
- Read either a novel or short story by the author, then tell the story as a picture book, with artwork.
- Make placemats by drawing a picture from one of the author's books and laminating them.

- Students in the audience can take notes then write up a short article about the author visit and submit it to the school magazine or website.
- Present a report about the author talk or workshop as a TV news report.
- Write a list of interesting points from the talk or workshop and say how you will apply them in your own writing.
- Sketch the author.
- Write down the elements that make up an interesting book cover (including front *and* back covers). Design a new cover for one of the author's books or a cover for a short story, using your list as a prompt. Either draw on paper or create a cover online. 'Read Write Think' website has an interactive option.
<http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/bookcover/>
- After you have designed your cover, use the following online chart to assess how well you did with your cover. Is there anything you would change?
http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson972/BookCoverRubric.pdf
- Work in pairs and interview your partner about their impressions of the author visit. Write down your partner's views or give an oral report to the class.
- Write – If you were the author's life coach, how would you encourage him or her to keep writing?
- Discuss the meaning of 'ergonomics'? Then consider what things would be important if a writer were to sit for long periods of time?
- Students could write to either the school principal or librarian, explaining why author visits are a good idea.
- Write to thank the author.