

SCHOOL VISITS WITH TRACEY CAMPBELL PEARSON

An author's visit should get children excited about books and reading. I have been visiting schools since the early 1980's. I love making books and I enjoy working with children. However, those are not the only reasons I visit schools. I also want to plant a seed that tells the students that they are all artists and writers. Below is a description of my program and details on how to arrange a visit. I limit the number of visits that I do in a year and my schedule fills up quickly. Please contact me at least 6 months ahead of time.

THE PROGRAM

My program has two parts. The first part is a 45-minute presentation suitable for small or large audiences, plus 10 minutes for questions. This is usually followed by a 30-40 minute workshop appropriate for smaller groups.

THE PRESENTATION

No matter what the size, I work to keep my presentation very hands on and interactive with the audience

I begin by drawing and storytelling about how and where I get my ideas.

I then take the students through the process of creating a book. I bring sketches, dummies, original art and proof sheets. Students in the audience help me hold the dummies that can stretch the length of ten children. The older the students, the more involved I get in the writing process of making picture books.

The final part of my presentation involves slides of my family, studio, home and town. Because the books that I write and illustrate are often based on my family and community, the students can see where these stories come from.

I end by answering questions from the students and teachers.

THE WORKSHOP

The presentation can be followed directly, or later that day or even the next day, by the workshop.

In the workshop I become the publisher and the students become the illustrators. Using a short simple poem, first we brainstorm ideas together and then the children draw their own illustrations. They each create their own dummy.

The workshop is a lot of fun for everyone. But it also pulls together everything that I have talked about in my presentation. The students see that even though they all have the same text, they are different artists. As long as they are true to the words, they can go crazy with their own illustrations. Like each child, each book is unique.

An important function of the workshop is that it is a time when the students can share with me what they can do. They can call me by name, pull on my skirt and see that I am a real person. I have found over the years that this approach to working with children is not only enjoyable for me, but also beneficial for the students. I am told there are children that have saved their dummies for years!

THE DUMMY

I have a sample dummy that I send to the teacher or librarian a month ahead of my visit. This has a poem divided up on pages in a booklet. The school copies one dummy for each student. The dummy is three 8 1/2 x 14 pages folded in half and is easily run off on a photocopier.

SUPPLIES

Besides a dummy, the students will need drawing materials such as pencils and/or colored pencils, crayons, markers. I have found the older students like the detail they can get using pencils and the younger ones love the strong colors from markers.

AUDIENCE

The presentation is best suited for grades K-4, although I have also worked with 5th and 6th graders. I adapt my presentation to the age of the audience. I have spoken to audiences that range from 2 months old to 80 years in the same group!

The workshops are most effective with grades 1-4, but kindergartners also enjoy the workshop and handle the process very well, as do older students.

I enjoy working with all ages!

GROUP SIZE

PRESENTATION- Small and large groups, 50-150 students

WORKSHOP- Small groups, up to 40 students

PROGRAM LENGTH

PRESENTATION- 45 minutes for presentation plus 10 minutes for questions-Less time for kindergarten and add 10 minutes for older students

WORKSHOP- 30-40 minutes

A TYPICAL DAY DEPENDS ON THE NEEDS OF THE SCHOOL

Possible schedules include:

2 large audience presentations followed by 2-3 workshops; or

1 large audience presentation followed by 4 workshops; or

3 small audience presentations and workshops; or

3 large audience presentations one day, 4-5 workshops the following day; or

3 presentations without workshops; or

Talk to me about what will work for your school.

FEE

E-mail (pearsnvt@sover.net) for a current fee schedule.

BOOK SIGNINGS AND PURCHASES

Many schools have found it to be very rewarding for the children to have the opportunity to own a book written, illustrated and autographed by the visiting author. Most publishers make books

available at a substantial discount for author appearance and signings. Some schools pass part or the entire “discount” on to families, which makes a paperback book quite affordable. Others use part or all of the proceeds for funding future author visits.

THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT ORDERING BOOKS WHO?...WHAT?...WHEN?...WHERE?

PURCHASING BOOKS ISN'T DIFFICULT!

The most important advice is to **PLAN AHEAD!**
Some schools have their parent group organize this part of an author appearance. Librarians and teachers have plenty to do to prepare for an author visit. This is something that can be delegated out. Also, from my observations, this is an event that parents enjoy being involved in!

PUBLISHERS

You can order books directly from the publisher or from your local bookstore. If you are working through a literary event coordinator, they can take care of ordering books for your school and answer any questions.

*Most publishers offer substantial discounts from the list price on books for author visits.

*The school pays only for the books they sell plus shipping.

*Unsold books can be returned to the publisher.

*The invoice is usually paid after the author visit.

***PUBLISHERS NEED 6-8 WEEKS** to process your order!

*The publisher should have a contact person that will help you with book orders for author appearances.

See contact info below for ordering books

BOOKSTORES

Some schools may prefer to order books through their local bookstore. Most bookstores are experienced with author appearances. Many stores also offer a discount, although usually less than the publisher discount, but the bookstore will take care of the ordering, shipping and returns. It makes it all easier for the school and it is also an opportunity to support your local independent bookstore!

BOOKSTORES NEED PLENTY OF TIME TO PROCESS YOUR ORDER!

Contact your bookstore as soon as you have a date confirmed for the signing and find out how much time they will need.

ORDER FORMS

Schools have found that sending an order form home with the students before an author visit helps with the organization and success of a book sale. This is also an opportunity for the family to decide whom they want their books autographed to, I find myself signing many books for birthdays and holidays for the organized parents who plan ahead.

[Sample ORDER FORM](#)

AUTOGRAPHING

I am happy to autograph all books...old and new...with a signature and a drawing. **TIME NEEDS TO BE SET ASIDE** to do this, when it will not take away from my presentation or workshops. This can be done early or late in the day. The student should have the first name of the person for whom the book will be autographed written clearly on a piece of paper. When time is an issue, it is more efficient to have me sign the books quietly at a time set aside, without having the children waiting in line.

I BRING AUTOGRAPHED BOOKMARKS FOR ALL OF THE STUDENTS, so that everyone who is at my presentation gets an autograph!

BEFORE A VISIT

LETTER OF CONFIRMATION

Send one to me as soon as possible! Please include dates, number of presentations, estimated group size, grade levels, fee...and **CONTACT PERSON**, including name, address, phone number and e-mail

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

I will make my own transportation arrangements.

If agreed, the school should make any overnight accommodations. I prefer to stay in a hotel/motel or bed-and-breakfast. **NON-SMOKING**, please.

When I have friends or family in the area, I try to stay with them.

When possible, I will drive to the school.

The school covers the cost of hotel and transportation, or mileage, [when I drive outside a 50 mile radius of my home]

[Places where I have room and board available:](#)

WHERE TO PUT ME...WHAT I NEED...

A SPACE TO PRESENT THAT CAN BE DARKENED FOR SLIDES.

I bring a lot of "stuff," especially when I drive! It is easiest to have me set up in **ONE SPACE FOR THE PRESENTATIONS** and have the children come to me. I realize this is not always possible. Learning centers and libraries work well for my visits with smaller groups and workshops. Students sitting on the floor for the presentation, then moving to tables or spreading out on their bellies on the floor for the workshop, works well. After having visited many schools over the years, and living in a rural state where you can have a small school with a K-12 audience, I can adapt! I am almost always given a chair, but have yet to sit in one! But a glass of water is never refused.

15 MINUTE BREAK BETWEEN PRESENTATIONS to set up and regroup

A **TABLE** to spread out books and dummies

A WORKING CAROUSEL SLIDE PROJECTOR; [I can bring one if necessary and I am driving.] Does it need a new bulb?

A HEAVY-DUTY EXTENSION CORD; the most common and challenging “glitch” is not being able to plug the projector in!

Can the ROOM BE DARKENED? Light will affect the quality of the slide presentation. It is better to do the presentation without slides, than try to show slides in a bright room.

FOR LARGE AUDIENCES

A PORTABLE BLACKBOARD [a large table turned on end or a wall also works];
LARGE PAPER [a roll of white paper works well, cut into sheets about 4 to 5 feet long, or the length of the portable board]. SCISSORS, TAPE, THICK BLACK MARKER

Do I need a MICROPHONE for the space? I try not to use them, but sometimes they are necessary. I move around a lot!

FOR SMALL AUDIENCES

An EASEL and LARGE PAD of paper will work

PREPARING FOR AN AUTHOR’S VISIT

This section should help you prepare for any author’s visit!

The most important advice is to PREPARE YOUR STUDENTS AND YOUR TEACHERS! The excitement about books should begin before the visit and continue long after the author is gone! Author visits should not just be “filler” for a day.

READ...DISCUSS...CREATE PROJECTS...PREPARE QUESTIONS

READ...READ...READ...

It is important that the students and teachers read as many of my books as possible. A complete list of titles is available on my web site. There should be a selection of some of these titles in your school or public library. You can also check your local bookstore for the more current titles. The more the students are prepared, the more they will get out of an author’s visit.

VISIT THE AUTHOR’S WEB SITE!

www.TraceyCampbellPearson.com includes information and fun activities for both students and teachers. It is also a great way to get parents involved. Have the students visit the author site with their parents on their computer at home or public library. [I am amazed how many busy parents don’t have time to visit their public library; give them a reason to go!]

PREPARE QUESTIONS AHEAD OF TIME

This is an opportunity for the students to come up with thoughtful questions with the help of their teachers and classmates. It also adds to the variety of the questions asked. When they come with something written down, it gives the students confidence. They can ask questions without worrying about forgetting what they were going to ask!

CREATE PROJECTS AND HAVE FUN WITH THE STUDENTS!

I am always impressed by the creativity and imagination of the students and teachers at schools that I have visited! Some ideas have been incredibly simple, with teachers and students dressed in purple [for my book “The Purple Hat”]; and some have been very involved with puppet shows and plays. What I remember most about these schools is that the children were absolutely glowing when I arrived. They were so excited to share with me what they had created. I felt my visit was a success, before I even started!

Visit FUN STUFF on my web site for projects and activities that I have seen in my travels.

CHECKLIST FOR A T.C. PEARSON VISIT

RIGHT AWAY

1. CONFIRMATION LETTER SENT
INCLUDING: name, address, phone, e-mail of CONTACT PERSON for school and
DATE, NUMBER OF PRESENTATIONS & WORKSHOPS, GRADES AND GROUP SIZES
2. READ...READ...READ!
3. START INTRODUCING AUTHOR’S BOOKS TO STUDENTS AND FACULTY! Have them check out my web site www.TraceyCampbellPearson.com.
See PREPARING FOR AN AUTHOR’S VISIT on this site

TWO MONTHS BEFORE VISIT

1. PLACE BOOK ORDERS, if having author signing. See BOOKSIGNING AND PURCHASES on my web site
2. Make HOTEL reservations, if necessary, Non-smoking
3. READ...READ...READ...
4. CREATE PROJECTS with the students, see FUN STUFF on my web site for ideas

ONE MONTH BEFORE VISIT

1. I SEND YOU
Look for a package containing the DUMMY SAMPLE for the workshop
2. YOU SEND ME by mail or e-mail
WRITTEN DAILY SCHEDULE for my visit
Include: Presentation and Workshop times
Group Size and Grade Levels
Written directions to School
[And to Hotel and from Hotel to School when applicable]
3. Have teachers and students visit my web site if they have not already done so!
KEEP READING!...DISCUSSING!...CREATE PROJECTS!...PREPARE QUESTIONS!
4. Check WHERE TO PUT ME WHAT I NEED on my web site
5. Check on book order [if applicable]

ONE WEEK BEFORE VISIT

1. Contact me. Let’s talk to make sure everything is in place!

2. Re-visit WHERE TO PUT ME WHAT I NEED
 - Working projector [try it!]
 - Heavy-duty extension cord
 - Room can be darkened
 - Screen or wall available
 - Table
 - Portable chalkboard or easel
 - Paper, scissors, tape, thick black marker
 - Working Microphone available if necessary [try it!]
3. You should have
 - Books in hand if you are having a book sale
 - Autograph forms filled out and placed in books
 - Dummies made, one per student, if I am doing Workshops
4. I should have
 - A written schedule in hand
 - Directions to school and hotel
5. The students and teachers should be reading, discussing the books, preparing questions and having fun!

CONTACT ME

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CONTACT MY PUBLISHER

FOR SCHOOLVISITS:

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ORDERING BOOKS FOR AUTHOR APPEARANCES

For Farrar, Straus & Giroux Books
CALL: Holtzbrinck Sales Division
1-800-221-7945 Ext: 573

For Viking Books or any Penguin Putnam book
CALL 1-800-526-0275 ext: 309 or 255