

ASHLEY HOPE PÉREZ: AUTHOR VISIT GUIDE

The Presentation

My most commonly requested presentation focuses on the two questions I most often hear from students. “How did you become a writer?” and “Where do you get your ideas?” I share with my audiences how my students and I learned together to establish big goals we could work toward every day. Students see images from my writer’s notebook and hear about my eavesdropping in the halls of high schools as well as other ways I research my novels. Using examples from all three of my novels—or focusing on one that students have read—I show how everything around us (and in us) can be material for writing. During the course of the presentation, they can try out some of my strategies.

Students leave the session with a new vision of what it means to write, a sharpened appetite for reading, and a heightened awareness of their own creative potential.

Feel free to tell me about interests or curricular needs that are particular to the teens you serve. For example, if your campus focuses on writing across the curriculum, I can highlight strategies for transferring writing or creative skills to history, science, and other fields. With advance planning, I am happy to collaborate with librarians, teachers, and students to tailor a presentation to the needs of the school.

Logistics

The sweet spot for large-group presentations is about 50 minutes from the time students land in their seats to the end of the session. That said, I am always willing to modify the session to suit the school’s schedule.

A session that combines three or four classes of students (even better if they are from the same grade) works well; larger groups are fine, although they are inevitably a bit more chaotic.

Large presentations are exhausting, so I limit them to **three sessions** per

school day. That allows me to maintain energy for one-on-one interaction. Campuses often schedule the big presentations in the morning so that I can spend several periods in the afternoon making informal classroom visits or meeting with smaller groups of students and teachers. I'm happy to look at what students are writing and to answer questions about my writing (and anything else). The reading and writing lives of students are important to me; I've worked with groups of teen moms, kids from alternative schools, language learners, Upward Bound mentees, and Spanish-language poetry groups. Please consider where you think my time will have the greatest impact.

I enjoy having a meal or a snack with students and/or teachers. (If I need to bring my own lunch, please let me know.) Many schools schedule a time when students can meet me and have books (or bookmarks and notebooks) signed.

Before the Visit

Schedule. Please send me a draft of the day's schedule in advance of the visit. It's okay if things change a little, but it's important for me to know approximate group sizes and times. As a former teacher, I know how complex and unpredictable school scheduling can be. That said, be mindful of my human limits (I do have to take restroom breaks, eat, and drink) so that we can have a fabulous visit.

Paperwork. If there paperwork for me to complete, it's best to send it in advance so that it doesn't eat into time with students on the day of the visit.

Preparing the School Community. My visits are most successful when the school community is aware of and well prepared for the visit. It's best if students have read one of my books (or at least an excerpt). Reading guides and many other resources to support standards-based use of the books are available on my website, www.ashleyperez.com. It also helps if students have engaged with the books in some sustained way. This can be as simple as having a few questions to ask, but I've also seen creative projects, from playlists for my books to posters, trailers, and alternative book covers.

Essentials for the Presentations

- ✓ A microphone
- ✓ An LCD projector and a large screen or wall
- ✓ Your wonderful students, with something to write with and something to write on (and have spares that can be passed out to unprepared attendees). (NOTE: If you feel that the situation in your school or in a particular presentation setting makes an interactive session impractical, I can do a standard presentation without having the students participate in the writing portion.)

While I encourage you to take photos, please do not record my presentation. You *can* record me (video or audio) during the casual interactions with students in other portions of the visit.

Travel

I'm happy to make day trips to schools and events within a two-hour radius of Columbus, Ohio. For drivable locations farther away, overnight accommodations are necessary, and \$250/day for travel expenses is required (rate may be higher for high-cost areas).

For locations beyond a four-hour drive, in addition to the travel allowance of \$250, the cost of the visit will be increased to cover airfare from the Columbus airport (a rental car isn't necessary if you have arranged for someone to pick me up and get me to school visits). I'm happy to feed myself outside of visit hours, but I also love having dinner with students, librarians, teachers, or community members.

Rates

My current fee is \$1200/day. Payment is due the week of the visit. A 15% discount is available for multiple days of school visits in the same area; contact me for details. Daily travel allowances still apply.

Getting Books

I love to sign books for students (and anyone else) during my visit. This isn't required, nor does it have to be formal. To get my books, you can place an order through your local bookstore, Amazon, or Lerner, the parent company of my publisher (1-800-328-4929 or

www.lernerbooks.com). If you order from Lerner, any unsold books can be returned, and there is a significant school discount.

Please feel free to check with me before ordering if you have any questions about the age range or content of my books.

Scheduling

Thank you for considering me for an author visit. Please contact me with your desired dates at novels@ashleyperez.com. If you prefer to communicate by voice rather than email, let me know.

About the Author

Ashley Hope Pérez is the author of three award-winning novels for young adults, *Out of Darkness*, *The Knife and the Butterfly*, and *What Can't Wait*. Her latest, *Out of Darkness*, received a Printz Honor for Literary Excellence in Young Adult Literature, the Tomás Rivera book award, and the Américas book award. *Out of Darkness* transports readers to 1937 East Texas where stories of the New London school explosion and love across racial boundaries intertwine. *The Knife and the Butterfly* explores the lives of two teens connected by their struggles—and by an act of violence. *Kirkus Reviews* called it “an unflinching portrait with an ending that begs for another reading.” Her debut novel *What Can't Wait* was inspired by her high school students in Houston and was named to the YALSA 2012 Best Fiction for Young Adults list. Ashley is a professor of world literature at The Ohio State University and lives in Columbus, Ohio, with her husband and two sons. She is at work on a fourth novel.

Explore www.ashleyperez.com to learn more about Ashley and her writing, and find her on Facebook and Twitter (@ashleyhopeperez).