

## An Author Visit from Damian Harvey

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If you are interested in a school or library visit, please feel free to get in touch without any obligation - I'll be delighted to hear from you.

Here I'll try to answer some questions you might have about an **author visit from me** and also suggest, from experience, things you might like to consider to help make the visit as successful as possible.

If you think of anything else... don't hesitate to get in touch.

### **WHY SHOULD WE HAVE AN AUTHOR VISIT?**

There are many positive reasons for arranging a visit from an author/illustrator. From a reading point of view it can help improve literacy and build/regenerate a culture of Reading for Pleasure (a vital aspect of reading - especially for those reluctant readers). An author visit can also help enthuse and give pupils confidence in their own writing - showing them different approaches to generating ideas, planning, writing and structuring a story. A visit gives pupils and adults the opportunity to meet an author/illustrator and ask questions for themselves.

Author visits are complementary to the National Curriculum and can help create a favourable impression with Ofsted/Estyn. They can be

used to fit into a scheme of work and help generate a new scheme of work, and tick National Curriculum boxes.

## WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM A VISIT FROM ME?

As a rough guide, I offer **performance sessions** and **writing / story creating sessions**. You can, of course, have a mixture of both during the course of a day. **I'm very flexible and it's all up to you.**

### Performance Sessions

- Performance sessions are fun, lively and interactive and are designed to get children excited and enthused about books, reading and writing.
- The sessions are suitable for **all** primary school aged children.
- The sessions can be held in a classroom, hall, library or any *suitable* room with enough space to fit the children in. Ideally not a room with lots of people passing to and fro, or a room where the session will be disrupted by noise from another room. Equally... you don't want my sessions disrupting anything else.
- In **Performance Sessions** I tell **stories**, share **poems/rhymes**, show **how a book is made** (from the initial idea, through the drafting and writing, illustrations, layout etc. - all the way to the finished book), **talk about writing and being a writer**, answer any and every **question** that children/adults want to ask.
- A session with **Nursery** would be around 20 minutes to half an hour and would consist of stories and rhymes.
- A session with **Reception** would be 30 to 45 minutes and would consist of stories, rhymes and a bit of chat.
- A session for Yr 1 & 2 could be 45 minutes to an hour and would contain stories, rhymes and more chat with questions etc.

- For sessions with Yr 3 & up I would recommend 60 minutes as more questions are asked and I can go into more detail with things. (These sessions can be longer if you prefer)
- There is no real upper limit to the **number of children** that can join in with a performance session so you can put **several classes** or **similar year groups** together. This means that in big schools no one misses out. If I know the number of classes in your school, and what you want from the day I can help suggest a timetable.

### Writing / Story Creating Sessions

- These sessions are fun, interactive and suitable for Year 1 to Year 6 though I am more than happy to work with Reception too.
- **Ideally**, I would use an **interactive whiteboard with pen** in these sessions. Alternatively, I can use a flip chart and pens - or a large whiteboard if all else fails.
- Starting with a blank sheet (board) I lead and work with the children to **create a character** and **build up a story**. (This can be completely open or you can suggest a theme/topic so that the story links with other subjects - Victorians, Romans, Outer Space etc.) Whilst showing the children one way that I come up with a story idea, it gives them ownership of the story and helps give them a technique that they can use themselves to generate a story idea from scratch. Depending on available time, children will then start to write their version of the story with my help. Alternatively, children can then create their own character, draw pictures etc.
- I can also work with children on **specific areas of writing** - creating characters, settings etc. and I can focus on specific topics - Greek Myths, Traditional Tales, Twists in the Tale,

Stories with an Historical setting etc. I'm very flexible so feel free to suggest anything.

- Writing / Story creating sessions do work best with a single class though it can be done with a bigger group if required.
- I would suggest hour long sessions as a minimum but I also work with classes for longer periods of time so that more can be produced.

### **HOW DO I ARRANGE A VISIT?**

You can send me an email [author@damianharvey.co.uk](mailto:author@damianharvey.co.uk) or you can call me on **07585 733 907**

I would recommend getting in touch **as soon as possible** to ensure that the date you want is still available. Dates such as World Book Day generally get booked up a year in advance - other days in that week go quickly too. It's always worth giving me a call though.

### **CAN YOU VISIT TOMORROW?**

Yes! If I'm available and can physically get there in time - I can come tomorrow, or the next day etc. Don't be afraid to ask.

### **DO YOU DO HALF DAY OR EVEN SHORTER VISITS?**

I am willing to consider half day visits (and shorter) at certain times of the year so feel free to get in touch - but please keep in mind that an hour spent somewhere that requires a long journey can effectively be a full day for me so costs may reflect this... Give me a shout though.

## HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

This can depend on **where** you are and **when** you would like a visit... I always try to be flexible with costs and appreciate that schools have to work to a budget so **please email me for details...**

Let me know **where** you are and **when** you have in mind for a visit so that I can work out travel costs and the cost of accommodation (if needed) - then I can give you a proper quote.

To help with costs... For more distant schools where I have to travel a long way and stay overnight, why not **get in touch with other schools in your area** - that way, the cost of travel can be shared. Additionally, I am sometimes able to offer an overall discount to schools if I'm staying in one area for a few days.

I am also happy to split my day between **two schools** (if they aren't too far apart) or **two/three libraries** if it helps. Library sessions would normally be 2 sessions in the morning and 1 in the afternoon.

## ACCOMMODATION

I try to attend most visits without needing an overnight stay, however, sometimes it is necessary due to time and distance. In these cases I will book into a local Premier Inn or Travelodge - whichever works out cheaper. The earlier I can book this, the cheaper it usually is. As per above, you will already have been given a price for the visit which includes all travel and accommodation costs so there won't be any last minute surprises.

## PAYMENT

I will send an invoice for payment which should ideally be made on the day - or as soon as possible afterwards (I appreciate that some schools pay through the local authority). As I am self-employed I

pay my own tax and National Insurance so these should not be deducted.

## **INSURANCE AND DBS**

I have **£10 million public liability insurance and a current, enhanced DBS Certificate** and will bring it with me on the day - or email you an image of it. I also have a photo ID (Driving Licence).

In the unlikely event that your school needs anything else, please let me know in advance.

## **AFTER YOU HAVE MADE A BOOKING**

I will confirm the visit with you over the phone, or by email and at this stage you can consider it a firm booking. I will follow this up with a written letter of confirmation.

## **PREPARING FOR THE VISIT**

The longer lead up you have, the more excitement can be generated. An author visit to school can create a real buzz...

I don't expect children to have read my books before a visit but it is good if they **and the staff** know who I am and what I do, so please direct them to my website [www.damianharvey.co.uk](http://www.damianharvey.co.uk) - you might like to let parents know too. Children can make book **displays, pictures, posters** etc. Please feel free to use any pictures on my website to help with your displays and feel free to email me if there is something else you would like. I'm always happy to help.

Children can also **discuss questions** they might ask - some people like to make a note of questions before the event but I am more than happy for children and adults to ask anything they think of as the sessions progress - it makes it more interesting and personal for each group.

You can also involve the PTA and wider community (feeder or link schools and/or local library/Twitter/Facebook etc.) Local newspapers etc.

## ON THE DAY

I generally **travel** everywhere **by car** as I find this cheaper and easier all round. With this in mind I will need **somewhere to park** when I get to school. This isn't normally a problem but please let me know if you think there may be any difficulty so it can be sorted out in advance...

- Is an on street parking permit required?
- Is the school gate locked at a certain time?
- Does a space need reserving in the school car park (always appreciated but not usually necessary)?

I always aim to **arrive** at school **between 8.15 and 8.25** to enable easy parking and to give me chance to bring all my things into school and get set up. Please let me know in advance if you would like me to arrive earlier or at a specific time. If I get delayed for any reason, I will ring the school and let them know of my progress, though it's unlikely that I will be late for the start of my day.

Please ensure that the Receptionist/Office Staff are **expecting me**. I don't expect a red carpet on arrival but it's nice to have someone at school to meet and take me to the correct place rather than sit around for half an hour with my bags and equipment.

From experience I find that sessions work better and have a bigger, more effective impact when the members of staff who would normally teach the children are present. As well as encouraging the children it makes follow up work/chat easier.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEO**

I am more than happy for pictures to be taken at any time during my sessions - and please feel free to use video recording equipment - cameras/tablets etc. if you like. If you post video clips on the internet it'd be great to know so that I can take a look too.

## **INTERVIEWS**

Some schools have a school newspaper/magazine/blog and I am more than happy to be interviewed by pupils for this during the day.

## **NEWSPAPERS/PRESS**

Why not let your local newspaper/Radio Station know about the event - it's a good way of letting the local community see/hear what sort of things are going on in school and brings the school a bit of good publicity too... and I'm not complaining about it either of course.

Remember to check the position regarding parental consent and the publication of pictures.

## **BREAKS / REFRESHMENTS / LUNCH**

I work hard in school and my sessions are high impact and energetic so it's good to be able to have a break with everyone else in school - I don't need additional breaks building into the timetable though.

I generally bring my own lunch with me, however, if I'm not able to do this due to being away from home, a sandwich is always appreciated - but I will mention this at the time of booking.

I also bring a supply of water and coffee etc. - but please let me know where the staffroom is.



## BOOKSELLING

Despite what you might think, authors/illustrators do not make much money from the sale of individual books, however, signed books can really inspire a child to read for pleasure, so I always carry a small supply with me for anyone wishing to purchase any to have signed as a memento. These are generally priced at £5. I'm also happy to sign books children have brought in from home. This can be done at the end of the school day, or sometimes at lunchtime. For this I will need **a table** to put books on, **a chair** to sit on, and **a member of staff** to assist.

## AFTER THE VISIT

Teachers might like to talk to the children about the event. Undertake follow-up work with the children - let me know if you would like me to suggest things (though I will be adding suggestions to my website asap).

I am always happy to hear from children/classes after an event - sometimes they want to email with a question that they hadn't thought of or didn't want to ask in front of their friends... sometimes they want to send pictures, letters, stories. People can also leave comments on my web diary

<https://damiansdiary.blogspot.co.uk/>

## FEEDBACK

I am always looking for ways to improve my school and library visits so would love to hear what you think - the good and the bad. If I can add a positive comment or picture to my website that would be appreciated too.

**Please let me know if I've forgotten anything...**