

SCHOOL & LIBRARY VISITS

with author Virginia Frances Schwartz

Since my books are written for a wide range of readers (Grade 4 – high school), I can present to any students within that age range. Prior knowledge of my books will enhance any presentation as I can lead stronger discussions that way.

Maximum audience: 75+. I often address large audiences if the setting is spacious and intimate, like a library (not auditorium), and teachers are proactive in supervising the group. With a background in teaching writing to elementary children, working as a Staff developer in NYC schools, training in The Writing Process with Lucy Caulkins for 20 years, and currently, teaching adults Creative Writing at UCLA, I also conduct workshops for teachers and adults interested in developing a writing practice.

Presentation Description

My talks can be edited to fit the needs of the audience. I have 4 basic presentations but can be talked into anything! I love the spontaneity of questions children ask at the end of my sessions. They are often so thought provoking and generate such exciting booktalk. I can wrap my presentation around specific questions or interests of the children and/or adults if you send questions in advance.

1. THE WRITING PROCESS

Since my “school” book, **4 KIDS IN 5E & 1 CRAZY YEAR** (Fall '07 Scholastic Canada) is all about my time spent writing with elementary children, I like to talk about how writers operate, where they get their ideas from, how they observe the world, and use a Writer’s Notebook to record those entries in. This includes a reading from the book, the backstory to writing it, an exercise in generating ideas like “Reading My Day”, and/or a Storytelling Circle where true stories are traded “off the cuff” about ourselves. For children and adults. Bring your writer’s notebooks.

2. HOW TO DEVELOP A WRITING PRACTICE

For adults interested in writing with some focus on writing for children. This presentation is based on my online teaching at UCLA where I teach a course that discusses the daily habits of writers. It includes use of a writer's notebook, daily writing, writer's resources, brainstorming in a Story Circle, writer's tricks, developing a practice, finding "seed" stories.

3. BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Talk will begin with slavery books, discussing how voices and images were developed in **SEND ONE ANGEL DOWN, IF I JUST HAD TWO WINGS** and my latest, **CROSSING TO FREEDOM**, historical fiction novels about slavery. These books address different aspects of slavery: one is daily life on a Southern plantation (SOAD); one is a trip on the Underground Railroad to Canada (IJHTW) and the latest is what happens to a young slave when he escapes into 1850's Canada (CTF). **Or this talk may just center on CROSSING TO FREEDOM, currently a 2012 Silver Birch nominee.** These books are all geared to Grade 4-8 curriculum.

4. THE PROCESS OF WRITING HISTORICAL FICTION

With a focus on using primary and secondary sources to develop an idea for historical fiction. Talk will begin with slavery books, discussing how voices, images, and setting were developed in **SEND ONE ANGEL DOWN, IF I JUST HAD TWO WINGS, CROSSING TO FREEDOM** but will also include the topics of Canadian immigration and use of family stories to create **MESSENGER**, and explore the myths and culture of Native American history, **INITIATION**.

FEES: Available upon request. Contact: virginiafschwartz@yahoo.com

Specifics:

Up to 2 presentations per day. Talk will also include book sales and signings. Author will bring own books or arrange with publisher to send books ahead.

A microphone, blackboard or whiteboard, tables and a CD player are required.

Usually the author visits Southern Ontario in early February for Black History month presentations. She travels from NYC so travel, lodging, tolls and food expenses are incorporated into her fee.