

Amy MacDonald

SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS

* Grades K-8 Assembly

"Becoming a Writer" An ideal foundation for later writing workshops, this assembly consists of a reading, followed by a discussion of the process of writing, illustrating, and being published. Using many visual aids, Amy dwells on some of the pleasures as well as the pitfalls of writing (with special emphasis on the need to revise). Includes a Q & A session.

* Large-Group Writing Workshops

Grades K-8 * 25-50 Students

These mini writing workshops can accommodate two-to-three classes at a time. They include a Q. and A. follow-up to the assembly. Amy then teaches the students the rudiments of writing a story or piece of non-fiction, depending on grade level. Though most large groups don't complete the story in the workshop itself, teachers are given enough information to complete the writing afterwards.

* Small-Group Writing Workshops

Grades K-8 * 25 students

Students create their own stories (see Writing Workshops, below). By meeting in a single classroom, students receive more individual attention and complete much of the story, under Amy's guidance.

* Artist-in-Residence

For a more in-depth writing experience, Amy can meet with 4-5 classes a day over a space of three or more days, each one devoted to planning, writing, and revising a story.

* Teacher Workshops/Professional Development

Amy is a Teaching Artist as part of the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts "Partners in Education" National Touring Program. Developed in conjunction with the Kennedy Ctr., the Professional Development workshops train teachers to give Amy's arts-integrated classroom workshops as well as dwelling on the principles of teaching good writing. Some info is available on her page in the Kennedy Center's [brochure](#).

* Family Evenings/Book Signings

Each school visit involves a daytime book signing. Additional family evenings may be scheduled.



WRITING WORKSHOPS

Kindergarten "Big Book"

We write a "Big Book" together with emphasis on rhyme, which aids reading as well as writing through phonemic awareness.

Gr. 1-5 "Where Do Ideas Come From?"

A fun look at the sources of creativity, which includes a quick writing exercise that helps children come up with new ideas for stories. Can be done with unlimited numbers, in individual classroom, or as part of assembly.

Grades 1-4 "Writing by Storm"

Using [Rachel Fister's Blister](#) for inspiration, students brainstorm to produce a finished story

together, using a method that helps reluctant writers participate, and teaches all involved to recognize the elements of a story, overcome common obstacles to writing (getting started, getting stuck, finishing it), and how to tackle revision.

Gr. 3-6 “The Dr. Seuss-inator” Need a new angle for Dr. Seuss’s birthday? This year, celebrate the good doctor’s birthday by writing your own Dr. Seuss-style story. As a Seuss fan and author of a half dozen rhyming books, Amy has developed a special “Seussinator” mini-writing workshop for elementary school children. In a quick 30-minute session, she helps them each write their own version of a Seuss favorite.

Grades 5-12 Persuasive Writing

This workshop is a playful yet serious look at ways we are manipulated – and can learn to manipulate others – with language, in various media: politics, advertising, and even in fiction. Applicable across the curriculum. Adaptable for lower grades as well.

Grades 5-8 Trickster Tales

How do you create a trickster tale? What are some of the basic elements of this universal story form? We create the framework for such a story, using *Please Males!* as an example.

Grades 5-8 The Dreaded 5-Paragraph Essay

Special emphasis on the difficult Introduction and Conclusion. This workshop is aimed at both beginners and more advanced writers. As with all my workshops, the tools come from my personal “writer’s toolbox”: my own essays and non-fiction have been published everywhere from *The Times of London* to the *New Yorker* magazine. Not available as a large-group workshop.

Gr. 5-12 “Writing about Diversity”

This workshop takes the difficult and abstract topic of diversity and tolerance and helps students find ways to express themselves on the topic through a few short, powerful quotes on the subject. These quotes can be combined with other efforts (using artwork, for example) to celebrate diversity and discourage bullying in a school system. Producing a short, impactful quote is basically the same thing as writing a poem. It requires the writer to take a complex, abstract, idea and reduce it to a few words. The workshop provides students with **9 writing tools** used in both **poetry** and **persuasive writing**.



GENERAL INFO

AUDIENCE

Grades K-8, Families, Teachers
Teacher In-service & Professional Development options [here](#).

LENGTH

30-60 minutes

NUMBER OF PROGRAMS

Four/day (five, if kindergarten is included). A mixture of a school-wide assembly and classroom visits reaches the maximum number of children. Each visit includes a mini-writing exercise.

AUDIENCE SIZE

Unlimited for assemblies, family evenings, and classroom visits. 50 for large-group writing workshops. 25 for small-group writing workshops.

BOOK SIGNINGS

Each school visit can accommodate a book signing during or immediately following the school day. Books are available directly from the author; or from the publisher or a local bookstore.