

WRITERS in The SCHOOLS



AUTHOR / ILLUSTRATOR GUIDE SEPTEMBER, 2025

For grades P to 6 pages 2 to 7

For grades 7 to 9 pages 4 to 8

For grades 10 to 12 pages 4 to 8

Through Writers In The Schools (WITS), you can book a virtual or in-person classroom visit from a local writer or illustrator! Details on back cover and at writers.ns.ca/wits



Linda Hudson
(she/her)

Program Manager
(Arts Education),
WFNS

Linda leads Writers In The Schools (WITS) behind-the-scenes: she can answer all your questions about how to request a WITS visit, what to expect from an author/illustrator visit, and how to submit your co-pay.

Contact Linda by email (wits@writers.ns.ca) or phone (902-423-8116).



Whitney Moran
(she/her)

author of
*I Want to Build
a Seahouse*

P - 3

Fiction
Picture books
Poetry

Whitney's dynamic, interactive 45-minute workshop combines a reading and a fun take-home craft. Kids will be inspired to express themselves verbally and artistically in celebration of imagination, independence, and the sea.



**Janice
Walsh-Cruddas**
(she/her)

author of *Read-a-
Jig-Jig Presents:
Bird's the Word!*

P - 4

Drama
Fiction
Picture books
Songwriting

Janice offers playful, musical, interactive workshops designed to encourage students' interest in local birds, in fun writing tools like alliteration, and in the important themes of kindness and appreciation of differences. Workshops include music, games, reading, and discussion. Follow-up activities are provided.



**Doretta
Groenendyk**
(she/her)

author-illustrator
of *TRUCK!*

P - 5

Fiction
Illustration
Picture books
Poetry

Doretta brings a variety of objects and original artworks to show how a book comes to life. She will read, ask strange questions, inspire imaginative drawings, generate story-starters, and help students see themselves as author-illustrators. Presentations include a drawing and writing activity, a few laughs, funny images, and impromptu storytelling.



Jacqueline Halsey
(she/her)

author of *Joe and
the Wreck of the
Tribune*

P - 6

Historical fiction
Picture books
Oral storytelling

For younger grades, Jacqueline mixes pirates, mermaids, and littered beaches into a fun show-and-tell environmental program. For older grades, she reads from her latest book, shows slides of the Halifax Explosion, and initiates a lively discussion on heroism.



Mireille Messier
(she/her/elle)

author of *No Horses
in the House
/ Pas de chevaux
dans la maison!*

P - 6

Biography
Fiction
Nonfiction
Picture books

Looking for a francophone children's author with years of experience with immersion groups? Invite Mireille! She will adapt her presentation to the French level and curriculum that best suits your classes. With over 30 books for readers 3 to 12 on a variety of subjects, Mireille is a sure bet to get students excited about reading in French.



Nancy Rose
(she/her)

author of *Oakley's
Great Canadian
Adventure*

P - 6

Crafting props
Photography
Picture books

Though Nancy doesn't bring live squirrels, she does bring posters and a big tote box of handcrafted items used in her photos of live squirrels exploring her dioramas. She talks about dreaming up a story; the process of creating the props, scenes, and words; and the numerous challenges of working with wildlife as her characters.



**Heidi Tattrie
Rushton**
(she/her)

author of
Pet Tales

P - 6

Fiction

Heidi's workshops inspire creativity and empathy. Students begin with a fun warm-up, sharing ideas to create a collaborative story. Then, age-appropriate guided exercises help them craft their own pet tales, blending fact and fiction to explore personality and adventure. This workshop focuses on having fun while building story-outlining and writing skills.



Geraldine Tuck
(she/her)

author of
Marauders
Mystery series

P - 6

Drama
Historical fiction
Mystery

It's 1930s Nova Scotia, and 11-year-old Dan and Becky solve local mysteries. In presenting her mystery series, Geraldine reads aloud and provides detective, prospector, and pirate costumes for volunteers. Her 'Show, Don't Tell' and 'Artifacts Inspire' segments get students thinking about their own writing.



Jan L. Coates
(she/her)

author of
The King of Keji

2 - 6

Fiction
Historical fiction
Illustration
Picture books

Jan's lively presentations draw on her 30+ published books to engage kids as readers and writers. After a short reading, students will write and share a short description using all their senses but sight. As their classmates try to guess the object being described, they'll soon see that clarity and precision are essential to communication.



Anne C. Kelly
(she/her)

author of
Jacques' Escape

2 - 6

Fiction
Historical fiction
Mystery
Short stories

Anne loves to share about all things writing: finding story ideas, doing research, and the importance of editing and re-writing. Her workshops are informal and interactive. Her *Jacques' Escape* presentation on Acadian life supports the Language Arts and Social Studies curriculum. Mini-lessons focus on setting, wordplay, description, and action.



Melanie Mosher
(she/her)

author of
*Bertie Stewart
is Perfectly
Imperfect*

3 - 6

Early readers
Fiction
Middle-grade
Picture books

Melanie talks about story building—the who, what, where, when, why, and how of a story—and about how changing any one of these things will create a new story. What if Wilbur the pig from *Charlotte's Web* was an elephant in a zoo? What if Little Red Riding Hood set out in a blizzard?



**Jessica
Scott Kerrin**
(she/her)

author of
Martin Bridge
series

3 - 6

Fiction
Historical fiction
Mystery
Picture books

Jessica delivers a behind-the-scenes look at the everyday experiences she writes about: exploding rockets, dizzying tree forts, and haunted woods. Her two most popular topics include how to develop an idea into a first draft and how to write funny stories.



Karen Kelloway
(she/her)

author of
*Keepers of the
Pact*

4 - 6

Fantasy
Fiction

Karen delivers an interactive workshop that has students colouring a mermaid's tail while she shares tips on how she blends historical facts and fiction and adds in a supernatural twist. The workshop wraps up with writing prompts and exercises.



Andy Tolson
(he/him)

author of
*How to Kidnap
a Mermaid*

4 - 6

Adventure
Fantasy
Fiction
Middle-grade

Andy offers a lively workshop on writing heroes and villains, the importance of these key characters, and how they intersect throughout a story. Kids will create their own unique heroes and villains—using writing prompts, visualization, and verbal characteristics—and discuss their favourite heroes and villains in books and movies.



Chad Lucas
(he/him)

author of
*Thanks a Lot,
Universe*

P - 9

Fiction
Journalism
Nonfiction

Chad is a middle grade author and former journalist who offers compelling, interactive workshops on writing skills for fiction and nonfiction, developing memorable characters, and understanding how conflict shapes and drives a story. Chad's presentations help foster competencies in communication, critical thinking, creativity, and innovation.



Sarah Sweeney
(she/her)

author of
The Misfit Animals

P - 9

Fiction
Journalism
Picture books
Oral storytelling

Sarah presents the first book she wrote when she was a child, as well as her published books. She encourages children with her motto "Don't think, just write!" and reminds them that mistakes can be fixed later. Sarah believes that if you can tell a story, you can write one. Everyone can be a storyteller.



Hui Zhou
(she/her)

author of
Puppy Oland

P - 9

Nonfiction
Science writing

Hui's presentations discuss how creative nonfiction tells, educates, and entertains; the importance of the 3 Rs (research, revision, references) in nonfiction writing; and insect facts, including their success, their vital roles in lifecycles, and human impacts on their survival.



Vivian Zhou
(they/them/
she/her)

author of *Atana
and the Firebird*

P - 9

Graphic novels
Fantasy
Fiction
Illustration

Vivian's workshops give a peek behind the scenes of making a graphic novel. She talks about drawing inspiration for fantasy from real life, writing and illustrating graphic novels, and tips on how to get started making short comics. Her workshops encourage creativity and self expression through a mixture of art and writing.



Katie Arthur
(she/her)

author of
Our Woolly Bear

P - 12

Comics
Illustration
Graphic novels
Picture books

Katie offers readings of her recent books, as well as writing and drawing workshops for kids of all ages. She's especially skilled at demonstrating how words and images work together to build a narrative, and she loves to lead comic making sessions. As an author, illustrator, and editor, she can also present to older students on working in publishing.



Sarah Butland
(she/her)

author of
*Sending You
Sammy*

P - 12

Fiction
Journalism
Mystery
Picture books

Sarah will inspire your students to eat healthier, to be more active, and to dream! Sarah will read her picture book; introduce the superhero BananaBoy, who was inspired by low literacy rates, especially among boys; and interact with students to make them feel involved.



Lesley Choyce
(he/him)
author of
*The Thing You're
Good At*

P - 12
Fiction
Memoir
Nonfiction
Spoken word

The main goal of Lesley's presentations is to get students enthusiastic about reading, imagination, and creativity. Storytelling, animated discussion, and interaction are key to these presentations and, for Lesley, adapting to the interests and needs of the students and teachers is essential.



Natalie Corbett
(she/her)
author of
No Girls Allowed

P - 12
Fiction

Natalie's workshops are designed to hook students' interest in reading and writing by leaning into their own hobbies, experiences, and questions. Through discussion, games, and individual / group activities, she shows students how to use what they know to convince readers to believe in their stories.



Deirdre Dwyer
(she/her)
author of
*The Blomidon
Logs*

P - 12
Memoir
Nonfiction
Poetry
Travel writing

Deirdre asks student to respond to the images, sensory detail, and emotions in her poetry and prose. She leads fun exercises—like writing about earrings for elephants (inspired by her travels in Thailand) or exploring the special images that students have experienced in their own travels.



Sylvia Gunnery
(she/her)
author of
*Road Signs That
Say West*

P - 12
Fiction
Nonfiction

Sylvia's workshop, 'The Story Behind the Cover,' explores how stories develop from the first spark of an idea, through the stages of the writing process (especially revision), to a published book ready for readers. Sylvia's workshop is adaptable for grades P - 12 and makes lots of room for student questions.



Martine Jacquot
(she/her)
author of
*Déferlement sur le
siècle nouveau*

P - 12
Fiction
Historical fiction
Nonfiction
Poetry

For younger groups, Martine tells one of her stories, explains how she wrote it, and guides students in starting a story together. For older groups, Martine talks about researching for historical fiction (including where to find material, how to chose what to use, and what to invent and why) and lays the groundwork for a story students can work on.



**Hugh R.
MacDonald**
(he/him)
author of
Trapper Boy

P - 12
Fiction
Historical fiction
History
Music

Hugh enjoys speaking with young people and sharing his passion for writing. His presentation includes readings from his work, using his songs and videos to share thoughts on his writing process, and encouraging young people to try their own hand at writing.



**Danielle
Metcalfe-Chenail**
(she/her)
author of
Freddie the Flyer

P - 12
History
Memoir
Nonfiction
Picture books

Danielle offers dynamic, interactive, cross-curricular workshops and presentations for a variety of ages and learning styles. These focus on history, the North, cultural diversity, STEM, and how to reach your dreams with a team (like Danielle's Indigenous co-author and artist team for *Freddie the Flyer*)! Learning links, printables, and activities provided.



Sarah Mian
(she/her)
author of
When the Saints

P - 12
Drama
Fiction
Nonfiction
Paranormal

Sarah engages students in the creative process and shares the journey of how she achieved her childhood dream to become a published novelist. She is passionate about inspiring young writers, has extensive classroom experience as a substitute teacher, and has developed a variety of creative writing exercises suitable for all grades.



John Read
(he/him)
author of
*110 Things to See
with a Telescope*

P - 12
Science writing

John discusses writing about space exploration, including working on his 20th space book. He brings direct experience from his time at Johns Hopkins University, where most of his classmates worked on Deep Space robotic missions for NASA, primarily to Saturn and Jupiter.



Camilla Thompson
(she/her)
author of
*Nova Scotia
Bummer*

P - 12
Picture books
Oral storytelling
Poetry

Camilla is a 'wishworker,' believing that even our wildest wishes can come true when we mix them with a little bit of work. Students of all ages (and their teachers) are inspired to learn how Camilla worked to make her wish of becoming an author come true, and they love using her magic wishing tools to make wild wishes of their own.



Alice Walsh
(she/her)
author of
*A Long Way from
Home*

P - 12
Fiction
Mystery
Nonfiction
Picture books

Alice discusses how to create believable characters and why they are important in a story. Using examples from her own work, she will show how real-life experiences and events can be turned into fiction. Her writing exercises are designed to encourage creative expression. Students will have an opportunity to share their writing with the class.



Dave Beynon
(he/him)
author of
*Evolve 2: Vampire
Stories of the
Future Undead*

4 - 12
Fantasy
Fiction
Paranormal
Science writing

Dave offers a general workshop on the elements of a short story as well as a session for more advanced creative writing students that condenses elements of creating scenes, developing characters, and writing effective dialogue.



**Laura Churchill
Duke**
(she/her)
author of
Two Crows Sorrow

5 - 12
Historical fiction
History
Journalism
Nonfiction

Laura teaches students how to research a historical figure from their region and how to turn that research into a first-person monologue that retells the figure's life story. Curriculum outcomes include using a variety of writing techniques to explore culture.



Don Aker
(he/him)
author of
The First Stone

6 - 12
Fiction
Historical fiction
Memoir
Poetry

Author of 20+ books and retired teacher with 33 years of classroom experience, Don offers workshops in fiction, memoir, and specific literary elements (e.g., point of view), all of which address specific curriculum outcomes such as the effective and purposeful use of language.



Andre Fenton
(he/him)

author of
ANNAKA

6 - 12

Fiction
Spoken word
YA

Andre offers a versatile, supportive, and inspiring writing workshop that looks at our unique stories through the lens of self reflection. Students will engage in fun warm up exercises and activities, focusing on their own stories through the arts of poetry and/or fiction.



donalee Moulton
(she/her)

author of
Bind

6 - 12

Fiction
Historical fiction
Mystery
Nonfiction

Students will figure out whodunnit as they explore the modern mystery. They'll dig into their powers of deduction and rely on their gut instinct. Questions will also be asked—and answered—about a \$17.8 million watch and the largest heist in Canadian history.



Habiba Diallo
(she/her)

author of
#BlackInSchool

7 - 12

Biography
Fiction
Journalism
Nonfiction

Habiba's workshops are interactive, encouraging reflection on important issues of equity, such as overcoming anti-Black racism. Student will read short texts, bring their ideas back to a larger group discussion, and have the opportunity to create their own short pieces of literature.



Barbara Emodi
(she/her)

author of
*Gasper's Cove
Mysteries*

7 - 12

Fiction
Mystery

Barbara offers a series of one-session workshops, developed during her university teaching, to help students find their authentic voices: "The Memory," "The 5 Senses," "Legend," "Natural Environment," "Human Environment," "Writing Sound" (dialogue), and "The Uncomfortable Exercises."



David Huebert
(he/him)

author of
Oil People

7 - 12

Fiction
Nonfiction
Poetry
Eco writing

David's hands-on "Sentences and Scene" workshop gives students tools to write specific, dynamic, and active sentences, building around strong verbs. While teaching students that the verb is the centre of the sentence, and the sentence is the centre of the scene—applicable in many genres—David makes things fun and invites students to play with verbs!



Josh MacDonald
(he/him)

author of
I Am The Cheese

7 - 12

Drama
Paranormal
Playwriting
Screenwriting

Josh will engage students in a high-energy, interactive lab about storytelling from Aristotle to Instagram. He uses teen-friendly pop culture selections, as well as some selections from his own work, and is known for treating students as creative equals.



RC Shaw
(he/him)

author of
Captain Solitude

7 - 12

Memoir
Nonfiction
Oral storytelling
Travel writing

Seasoned high school teacher RC leads an engaging, writing-rich workshop centred around the key craft tips of travel writing: evoking place, sparking the senses, and bringing characters to life. Students will come away with a fresh energy to see, to create, and to turn everyday adventures into riveting stories.



Lori Weber
(she/her)
author of
The Ribbon Leaf

7 - 12
Fiction
Historical fiction

Lori's workshop uses authentic Nazi documents to show what life was like for German and Canadian youth during WWII. Students think critically about race and discrimination and discuss whether they would risk their lives for a friend. For multi-day workshops, students create and present their own representations of war. A teacher's guide is available.



TP Wood
(he/him)
author of
77° North

7 - 12
Fantasy
Fiction
Journaling
Poetry

TP offers two workshops: 'Hooz Talking,' a five-point roadmap for tapping into the creative process and examining resistance that blocks artistic potential, and 'In My Words,' a deep-dive into journal writing based on thirty-seven years of personal experience.



**Donna Jones
Alward**
(she/her)
author of
*When the World
Fell Silent*

10 - 12
Fiction
Historical fiction

Donna offers two workshops: 'Putting the Story in History' explores how fiction can bring history alive by filtering it through characters' points of view, and 'Behind the Book' gives students a glimpse into how books are made, from drafting the first page to landing on store shelves.

About Writers In The Schools (WITS)

Inspire your students to write, to explore how writing impacts their daily lives, and to improve their literacy skills in fun and engaging ways through WITS!

Invite local professional authors into your classroom (in-person or virtually) to enrich your students' learning, reading, writing, and creative expression!

Book authors & illustrators
online at writers.ns.ca/wits

\$87.50

School co-pay for half-day visit
(1 or 2 sessions of 45 to 55 mins each)

\$175.00

School co-pay for full-day visit
(3 or 4 sessions of 45 to 55 mins each):

WITS authors come from diverse backgrounds and are experienced in delivering writing activities and speaking with students about many literary genres—as well as topics like discovering inspiration, plotting, worldbuilding, designing characters, revising, & publishing. Authors can also adapt their presentations to assist with your curriculum outcomes.

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