



Tips to Prepare for an Author Visit (Schools)

I am so excited about the upcoming visit to your school!! One of my favorite things to do is to engage with young readers and I thank you again for the opportunity. I am sure that you have had visits from authors and guest speakers before, but I often receive questions about the best ways to prepare for a visit, so I want to share some tips for a stress-free visit where you and your students will have a wonderful time. Feel free to print this out and share with teachers, PTO coordinators, staff and tech support. If you still have questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at contact@aldapdobbs.com

What you will find in this guide:

- Preparing for the Visit
- Scheduling the Day
- Setting up the Visit
- FAQ'S

PREPARING FOR THE VISIT

My presentations are always much more enjoyable and rewarding for the students when they are involved and asking questions. This happens when they are familiar with the book and feel comfortable with the material. Ensuring students have access to the book in the library and classroom in the weeks prior to the visit is helpful. Assigning the book in class is ideal, however, with the already packed school schedules, this isn't always possible. If the schedule does not permit the students to read the entire book, I recommend focusing on the opening of the book (prologue), Chapters 1-3, and the timeline and Author's Note in the back of the book, which will make the students familiar enough with the material to understand the presentation.

I encourage educators and students to visit my website at www.aldapdobbs.com where they can find more information about me and about my book. On the *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna* page, they will find the Educator's Guide and a book trailer along with a videos, pictures, and other enriching activities that introduce children to the Mexican Revolution.

The Educator's Guide contains suggestions for art projects and other interactive events that help students understand the subject material and have fun learning. I always love seeing pictures of these events, so I encourage you to send them to contact@aldapdobbs.com.

SCHEDULING THE DAY

I know my visit must fit into what is already a very busy school day and I want to accommodate in whatever way I can. I can tailor my visit as needed but generally, I recommend scheduling 30-35 minutes for the presentation followed by a 20-25 minute question and answer session.

I will need access to the area where the presentation will be held at least 15 minutes prior so that I can set up and test the equipment.

I can tailor my presentation to larger groups in a larger setting (auditorium, gym, cafeteria), or smaller groups in a smaller setting (classroom, library). I will conduct a maximum of three presentations/day, and it is preferable to have these back-to-back whenever possible. Please allow a 15-minute break between sessions to allow for students to flow in and out. If desired, I can conduct an autographing session separately from the presentation or between presentations. Please allow additional time if this is to be done between sessions.

Some techniques that may help deconflict schedules:

- Consider having an indoor picnic where kids bring a bag lunch
- Avoid moving presentations from one location to another

SETTING UP THE VISIT

I will need access to a projector and some type of microphone/speaker system. Please have a technical expert there to help with setup. I will bring my presentation on a USB/flash drive and on my MacBook Air. If a microphone/speaker or projector are not available, let me know so that I can tailor the presentation to accommodate. I will need a table and chair if you'd like me to conduct book signings after the presentation. Whether using my equipment or the school's equipment please have the following available:

- Projection Screen
- VGA/HDMI Cords
- Extension Cords

Common Issues Encountered:

- Batteries!!! Please ensure fresh batteries (and bulbs) and have spare batteries on hand for any school equipment being used.
- Remember to select an area that can be darkened so that the projection can be seen.
- Room Lighting - Please make sure that someone familiar with the lighting is available, especially if there are time delay lights.
- Visibility – Sometimes a screen is too small and if the room is too large, some students may not be able to see the screen from certain angles. Splitting the groups into two smaller sessions may help alleviate this issue.

- Equipment – Please cordon off the areas where the projector and screen are so that they don't get jostled by students coming and going between presentations.

Frequently Asked Questions

What Sort of Program Does the Author Do?

Every program includes a PowerPoint presentation about the book and the research behind it, followed by Q&A.

Do we need to prepare students for the Q&A?

You can help students prepare questions in advance by reading the book or by watching or reading interviews with me on my website. Also, sometimes it helps for teachers to “seed” the Q&A with questions of their own to break the ice.

What do we do about lunch for the author?

I am always happy to talk with students or teachers in a more informal setting such as a lunch. If you would like to schedule a lunch with teachers/librarians or lunch with students, please let me know ahead of time.

How do we go about ordering books?

There are several options:

- Contact your local independent bookstore and be sure to inquire as to whether they offer a discount for large book orders, many do.
- Order from AMAZON.
- Contact Lance Vanderhagen at Sourcebooks, my publisher (they offer a bulk price discount) lance.vanderhagen@sourcebooks.com

What is the best way to get books ready for autographing?

Organization is the key!! One method is to place a post-it note on the front cover of each book with the FIRST NAME of the person for whom the book is to be autographed. Make sure that the name is printed clearly and spelled correctly. Organizing the books by classroom/teacher and adding the full name and classroom number at the bottom of the post-it to can make it easier to return the books. Please have a post-it in every book requiring an autograph. If there are many books to be autographed (+100) having a volunteer available to help is greatly appreciated. Please have a comfortable chair and sturdy table for autographing. Every book will be signed before I leave!

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions at contact@aldapdobbs.com.

I can't wait to meet you and your students!! Thank you again for your interest in my book and for allowing me to share my story with your students.