

Jen Bryant — Presentations

Below is information for teachers and librarians who wish to have Jen visit their school. *All* bookings are made through Jean Dayton at Dayton Bookings, jean@daytonbookings.com.

Jen offers three basic presentations, each of which lasts approximately 50 to 60 minutes (can be adjusted to accommodate bell schedules), including a Question & Answer portion at the end. All talks are accompanied by PowerPoint slides, which Jen brings with her on a flash drive.

Talk #1: “Combining Fact & Fiction”

Recommended for all grade levels

This is an overview of Jen’s current books with an emphasis on how she combines research and imagination to develop historical and biographically-based stories and novels.

Outline for this talk: Begins with a brief look at the author’s childhood interests and what made her become a writer; then a glimpse into her current writing life and how she develops an idea into a book; samples of illustrations from each of Jen’s picture books and discussion of how artists interpret and expand upon the author’s words; excerpts from picture book texts to show use of literary devices and making the connection to poetry; discussion of the research and writing of Jen’s historical novel *The Trial*, based on the 1935 Lindbergh baby kidnapping trial; additional slides showing research and writing of Jen’s contemporary novel *Pieces of Georgia*, which incorporates the lives and paintings of the three generations of Wyeth artists at the Brandywine River Museum in Chester County, PA; list of Jen’s tips for young writers; Q & A.

Talk #2: “The Magic of Picture Books”

Recommended for lower elementary grades

This presentation focuses on Jen’s current *picture book titles*, which are all based on real people. It shows how she develops a story around each biographical subject (the painter Georgia O’Keeffe, the composer Olivier Messiaen, the poets William Carlos Williams and Marianne Moore, the young Abraham Lincoln) and how she researches them. The creative process is emphasized, including the value of individual perspectives and the necessity of hard work.

Outline: *the same as* Talk #1, but with additional slides and discussion for the picture books and with only a brief mention of the novels (to compare/contrast the two types of books from a writer’s perspective.) Q & A.

Talk #3: “Write What You Know, Write What You Love”

Recommended for middle schools and high schools

This talk focuses on Jen’s historical novel *The Trial*, based on the 1935 Lindbergh baby kidnapping trial, and also on her contemporary novel *Pieces of Georgia*, which incorporates the lives and paintings of the Wyeth family. Two more recent novels, *Ringside 1925: Views from the Scopes Trial* and *Kaleidoscope Eyes*, can also be added to Jen’s discussion and slide presentation if desired.

Outline: Brief overview of Jen’s childhood (she grew up in Flemington, NJ, the town where the Lindbergh baby kidnapping trial was held) and current writing life (she lives in Chester County, PA, not far from Chadds Ford and the Brandywine River Museum, where the novel *Pieces of Georgia* takes place). Slides and discussion will focus on how Jen has incorporated autobiographical elements and her interest in the creative process into her novels; the themes of overcoming loss, personal and economic difficulties, and the power of friendship, explored in both novels, will also be discussed. Jen will read a few excerpts from each book. Q & A follows.

The school is responsible for providing the following:

1. Laptop with PowerPoint software and flash drive portal
2. Remote control to forward slides (or volunteer/staff to do this)
3. LCD projector and extension cord
4. Screen and ability to darken the room
5. Table for book display
6. Microphone (for large group talks) ... podium is nice, but optional
7. Directions to the school and any parking regulations
8. Written schedule for the day, including times, approximate group size, grade levels