

# Michelle Schusterman

## School Visits & In-Classroom Workshops



How to Turn an Idea into a Story Presentation at the Brooklyn Public Library

### Hello!

I'm the author of over a dozen novels for kids. But I've also worn many hats as an educator: a Garland ISD middle school and high school band director, an ESL teacher in Brazil and South Korea, and a creative writing instructor in New York. I grew up in Dallas and I'm excited to be back in my hometown—and I would love the opportunity to visit your school! I offer a variety of *mix-and-match packages* that include:

1

#### ASSEMBLIES!

Multi-media presentations. 35 minutes.

2

#### CLASS WORKSHOPS!

Fun writing exercises and games, along with Q&A. 30-45 minutes.

3

#### SKYPE VISITS!

FREE with purchase of classroom or library sets! 30 minutes.



Premise to Plot Workshop at Mark Twain School for the Gifted & Talented, Coney Island



Genre Fiction Workshop at Dr. Sun Yet Sen Middle School, Manhattan



Secrets of Topsea Launch Party at Books of Wonder in Manhattan

Two assemblies and three in-class workshops? No problem. An assembly one day with a Skype chat weeks later, after students have had a chance to read my book? Sure! A full day of in-class workshops, or just a one-and-done big assembly? You got it! Whatever suits your students' needs best.

## Assemblies

*Multi-media presentations for groups of all sizes.*

**1. How to Turn an Idea into a Book:** I explain what inspired the idea for my novel SPELL & SPINDLE, then let the audience in on the secret for taking an idea and developing it into a full story. 35 minutes.

**2. Fairy Tales and Myths:** I discuss the fairy tales, mythological elements, and poems that inspired my novels SPELL & SPINDLE and OLIVE AND THE BACKSTAGE GHOST, and discuss the importance of daydreaming in the writing process. 35 minutes.

**3. What Makes Me Weird?** I discuss the specific "weird" traits and likes I share in common with my SECRETS OF TOPSEA series co-author, and how we used that weirdness to create the world of Topsea. 35 minutes.

## Class Workshops

*Interactive writing games and exercises in the classroom.*

**1. Turn Your Idea into a Story:** In this workshop, students will learn the simple three-step secret of turning an idea into a story. Students will each create a potential plot, then



Historical Fantasy Workshop at NY Historical Society  
Harry Potter History of Magic Exhibition

write roundtable stories in small groups. Up to 45 minutes.

**2. Write Your Own Fairy Tale:** In this workshop, students will discuss their favorite fairy tales, myths, and legends. Together, we will brainstorm a list of objects, magical elements, and archetypal characters from these tales. Then students will mix and match story ingredients from this list to write their own original fairy tales. Up to 45 minutes.

**3. Everything You Need to Know About My Hometown:** Based on the "Everything You Need to Know About Topsea" excerpts in the SECRETS OF TOPSEA series, this workshop gets students brainstorming about the most unique aspects of their hometown, neighborhood, and community. Each student will write a short, second-person perspective piece informing the reader about one special element they'll find when visiting. Up to 45 minutes.

**4. Epistolary This!** Based on the "Topsea Gazette" articles in the SECRETS OF TOPSEA

series, this workshop focuses on telling a story through letters, newspaper articles, and diary entries. Students will come up with original characters and write a short story about them using this format. Up to 45 minutes.

**5. Your Own Weird World:** This world-building workshop gets students talking about their favorite fictional worlds and what makes them unique. Students will collaborate on a word cloud featuring the sights, smells, sounds, tastes, and textures that make a setting special, then pick and choose to build their own fictional worlds. Up to 45 minutes.

Looking for a more customized workshop to fit your current lessons? I'm all ears! Just let me know what you're looking for and I'm happy to accommodate.

- **Spell & Spindle**, Random House Children's, Junior Library Guild Selection, Kirkus Starred Review
- **Olive and the Backstage Ghost**, Random House Children's, Booklist Starred Review
- **Secrets of Topsea (series)**, Disney Hyperion, Junior Library Guild Selection
- **The Pros of Cons**, Scholastic, ALA Rainbow List Selection, Publisher's Weekly Starred Review
- **The Kat Sinclair Files (series)**, Penguin Grosset & Dunlap
- **I Heart Band! (series)**, Penguin Grosset & Dunlap, Scholastic Book Club Pick

## Skype Sessions

*A live Q&A in your classroom.*

I offer FREE 30 minute Skype visits to classes who have classroom sets of my books and/or schools where I've previously given an assembly. These are a fun way to let students ask any questions that I didn't get to answer during my presentation or just chat with students who recently finished reading one of my books!

## My Books



All of my books are middle grade (aimed at ages 8-13), with the exception of The Pros of Cons, which is young adult (13+). Classroom sets can be purchased at discount from my publishers. Just let me know which book you'd like to order and I'll provide the order forms!

# My Teaching Experience

I've enjoyed a diverse and exciting career as an educator for the past sixteen years. Currently, I'm an instructor with Writing Workshops Dallas, where I offer both online and in-person courses on writing MG and YA novels. Prior to that, I was an instructor at Writopia Lab in Manhattan, a non-profit that offers creative writing workshops for kids and teens. During my six years at Writopia, I ran 80+ workshop groups for both semester-long classes and summer camps, and taught over 500 budding short story writers, poets, novelists, and playwrights. Several of my students received honors such as the Gold Key for the Scholastic Art & Writing Competition and selection for the Worldwide Plays Festival, an Off-Broadway festival showcasing one-act plays written by 6-18 year olds.

Before moving to New York, I floated around abroad and taught ESL kindergarten and elementary classes in Suwon, South Korea and conversational ESL in Salvador, Brazil, all while trying to write my first novel. But I started my teaching career here in Dallas as a band director at Lakeview Centennial High School and Lyles Middle School in Garland for four years. I graduated from UNT in 2003 with a bachelor's in music education, a degree I chose to pursue after my incredible experience as a percussionist in the band programs at Marcus High School and Lamar Middle School in Flower Mound.

I know every student—and every school—is unique. That's why I strive to be as flexible as possible when it comes to school visits, from pricing and customized packages to giving my presentation outside in the snow while the fire alarm blares in the distance (it's happened—more than once!).

**Let's Talk!** Email: [mischubooks@gmail.com](mailto:mischubooks@gmail.com)  
Instagram: [@michelleschusterman](https://www.instagram.com/michelleschusterman)  
Website: [michelleschusterman.com](http://michelleschusterman.com)

## TESTIMONIALS

"I'm so glad we had the chance to host Michelle! She had a funny, engaging, interactive presentation on turning an idea into a story, and a warm, friendly, comfortable rapport with the kids."  
*Kyle Lukoff, Librarian, Corlears School, Manhattan*

"Michelle, thank you for working with my students and teaching an awesome lesson. I learned a lot about writing from a published author that I can use in future lessons! You helped my students create a short story and also affirmed their strengths as writers, which lit up their faces with smiles."  
*Errol Lee, 7th Grade Teacher, M.S. 131 Dr. Sun Yat Sen Middle School, Manhattan*

"My sixth grade students were so excited for Michelle Schusterman's visit, and she did not disappoint! Her easygoing personality made her very approachable, and she did a writing workshop activity that got the kids engaged right away. The students really got a sense of the building blocks of a short story, and they were eager to share their ideas with Michelle and receive feedback. They were so upset when the bell rang and they had to leave for another class!"  
*-Michele Wallach, Creative Writing Teacher at Mark Twain School for the Gifted and Talented, Brooklyn*

