

bookinaday

Inspiring Students to Do The Write Thing



Kwame Alexander's
2009-2010 Programs

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WHY POETRY?

I just want to tell you Kwame that my 7th & 8th graders ADORE your book *Crush*. If it were chocolate they would eat it up...but really I think it is, because they devour the copies I have every time they come into my classroom. Your ingenuity, brevity, and resonance with your word choice is just astounding. Thank you for touching me and my students with your wonderful art. Is there a way that I can get my class or school to participate in some of your events? Or would you consider giving a talk at our school? I hope you will consider my request to be part of the KA movement. I know your schedule must be incredibly busy, however, books like yours change the world for my students. You get them interested in reading and writing. —
Robin Highberg, ESOL Teacher, Herndon Middle School, Herndon, VA

That's Why!

ORGANIZATION

Kwame Alexander has worked in public schools since 1992, as a creative writing teacher, poet-in-the-schools, literacy trainer, guest lecturer, and writer-in-residence. As an author, he has written thirteen books. As a publishing professional, he has published more than 100 authors.

Book-in-a-Day (BID) is both the title and the ultimate goal of a groundbreaking poetry and publishing program aimed at middle and high school students. Launched in May 2006 by Poet/Publisher Kwame Alexander, the program teaches students how to write well-crafted poetry and publish a book of their own work for public consumption—in one day.



This poetry and publishing program is built on the foundation that students will become avid readers and engaged writers when they assume complete responsibility for becoming authors. Bringing the BID program to your school is a unique and effective way to engage students and teachers alike in a creative and intense exploration of the power of language and literature. A book published by, and for, your students will them a sense of authorship, which has proven to lead to higher academic confidence and success amongst students.

The origin of BID dates back to 2006, when Dana Davidson (Cass Technical High School, Detroit, MI) and Kwame Alexander worked under a seemingly impossible deadline—one day—to publish a collection of her AP English student's work. During the course of a single school day, Alexander and Davidson taught and coached 150 students through the entire book publishing process—from editing to cover design to dealing with book printers. By the end of the day, the students had a printer-ready digital file; and a week later, UPS delivered copies of *Unspoken*, a 132-page paperback anthology of their poems, quotes, and creative non-fiction.

BID has created more than 450 student authors in in New York, Virginia, South Carolina, Maryland, and Washington, D.C.

PROGRAMS

While Book-in-a-Day is Kwame Alexander's signature program, *Kwame offers poetry workshops, author visits, professional development, and writer-in-residences. Below are four of his most popular school presentations.*

- **Do The Write Thing Presentation (Grades 6-12).** When students are immersed in rich, lively poetry, they are introduced to intense, concise, skillfully crafted language. In this energetic, inspirational, and fun-filled performance/workshop, students will listen and engage in an exciting culture of poetry and performance. In this interactive setting, students will move beyond the staid notions of what poetry is, and discover poetry as a treasure that brings light to language. Alexander, through his verse, performance poetry, and witty storytelling, will enhance their understanding and appreciation of various forms of verse—haiku, free verse, rhyme, etc. Students will be encouraged to discuss poems, and at the conclusion of the presentation (classroom setting only), they will be given an opportunity to write and share their own poems. Finally, students will be tasked with self-editing, and rewriting a polished poem, ready for publication.
- **Crush Presentation (Grades 6-12).** This combination poetry performance, and workshop will illustrate how young adults can unleash their love for poetry through...love. Come and listen to Kwame Alexander weave together poems and stories of love and life. Based on Alexander's new YA title, *Crush: Love Poems*, this interactive workshop recalls the myriad woes and wonders of first love, in verse...From friendship to flirting to the first date to the break-up, intertwining innocent young adult angst with a passionate language that defines *the first love*, which none of us ever outgrows.
- **Meet The Author (Grades 1-6).** Geared towards elementary-aged children, this program features read-alouds, storytelling, and multimedia performances by Kwame and several of his accomplished children's book author-colleague, storytellers, and performers. Authors share their work with children during the school day and with families during PTA meetings.
- **Read. Write. Chill (Grades 1-8).** Kwame reads from several of his favorite collections of poems (Nikki Giovanni, Langston Hughes, Emily Dickinson, Jack Prelutsky, ee cummings...) and engages students in discussion about forms and theme. Kwame shares his thoughts on love, family, children, peace, literature, war, and other topics that will students sing and shout, laugh and tear. Students then have the opportunity to write "borrowed poems" from some of the pieces shared during the presentation. We all leaving this workshop with a renewed sense of literary "coolness."
- **Professional Development (K-12 Teachers).** *See attached.*



Each of these programs is offered in a classroom setting or large-group assembly.

BOOK-IN-A-DAY: SIGNATURE PROGRAM

There are several different variation of the BID program. While we can customize our program to accommodate more students (up to 100), to include teachers, or even to adjust the length of our workshop, BID is traditionally divided into two six-hour workshops:

- ***Poetry Workshop (One School Day)***: In this energetic, inspirational, and fun-filled, one-day performance/workshop (classroom setting) led by your BID Coach, a pre-selected group of up to 30 students will listen and engage in an exciting culture of poetry and performance; move beyond the staid notions of what poetry is, and discover poetry as a treasure that brings light to language. Through performance poetry, social verse, and witty storytelling, the workshop will enhance student’s understanding and appreciation of various forms of verse—haiku, free verse, rhyme, etc. Participants will be tasked with drafting, self-editing and rewriting a polished poem—on a subject brainstormed and determined by students—in preparation for the publishing workshop. Students discuss possible titles for a collection of their work. Finally, participants are given an opportunity to share their own poems in an energetic and fun open mic setting. NOTE: THIS WORKSHOP IS OPTIONAL.
- ***Publishing Workshop (One School Day)***: In this cutting edge, hands-on, one day workshop led by your BID Coach, a group of no more than 30 students are taught the creative tips, techniques, and tools necessary to publish a collection of the poems. With clarity and focus, the BID Coach teaches a crash course on the basics of publishing success: *Writing, Editing, the Business of Publishing, Design, and Printing*. Students are then coached through the entire book publishing process in an effort to prepare their own collection for publication—selecting cover art, book design, proofreading, writing front and back matter, communicating with printer, arranging book signings, etc. At the conclusion of the workshop, the students will have a final digital file ready to submit to a book printer. Printing takes 1-2 weeks, depending on the quantity, whereupon students and teachers are rewarded with the finished result: a quality published paperback book (printing quantities are determined by school), and a book launch party.

Note: If your school selects only the Publishing Workshop, all poems to be published MUST be completed at least one week prior to the Publishing Workshop.

OBJECTIVES OF THE BID PROGRAM

BID is designed to provide a product-driven opportunity to promote writing, reading, and thinking creatively for middle and secondary students. At the end of the BID program students will have a published, high quality book as testament to their creative efforts and literary development; and should be able to:

- Generate creative ideas;
- Organize creative ideas;
- Employ the Writing Process to create a written piece of poetry, short story, or personal essay;
- Read, evaluate, critique, revise, and improve the



- writing of their peers and themselves by using the Writing Process;
- Generate a collection of student work, in preparation for publication;
- Work collaboratively to create title of collected student work, design cover art and text; and
- Manage the production and publishing process for a book of their collected student work.

Another important objective of the BID program is to provide an opportunity for young people to build their self-esteem and confidence, while increasing an appreciation of, and affinity for, the written word.

PROVEN STRATEGIES AND SUCCESSES

Our program relies on the literacy and publishing expertise of the BID staff. Students are coached and supervised during both days using literacy strategies that foster intelligent, self-motivated, and creative student participation.

BID has created over 450 students authors since our beginning, and we plan to have over 1000 by the end of 2009. Each of the schools we've worked with successfully published books within the established timeline. In every instance, parents, educators, and community businesses supported the program, financially and otherwise; and administrators, were extremely pleased at the end product. Selected schools include:

- Students at Hauppauge High School in Long Island, NY completed the BID program, and participated in a book signing at the Book Expo of America at Jacob Javits Center in New York City.
- A group of hearing and deaf students in Washington, DC completed the BID program as part of the National Endowment for the Arts "Big Read" initiative.
- Students at Frederick Douglass High School in Prince George's County, Maryland, held their book launch at the *Washington Post Capital BookFest*.



ASSESSMENT

Evaluation of the BID program is ongoing. All students complete pre- and post-assessments during each workshop day. We also utilize the published book as a chief mode of assessment. As a product-driven program, the final measurement of the students' success is determined by the degree to which students are able to generate and organize their creative ideas, employ the writing process to craft a polished written piece, work collaboratively, and produce a published book. The published book can then be assessed for its editorial integrity, written content, creativity, continuity, visual appeal, and overall professional presentation. Along the way, however, students will be evaluated on the following:

- Their creative writing topic.
- Their use of effective, interesting and engaging diction, syntax, grammar, and text structure.
- Their ability to work collaboratively at each stage of the publishing production process.

In addition to evaluation forms provided to students, teachers, and administrators, anecdotal feedback will be combined with our formal pre- and post- assessment to gauge what students learn via the project.

ABOUT OUR FOUNDER

Kwame Alexander. Poet, publisher, and producer, Kwame is the founder and driving creative force behind the BID program. During his twenty-year book-publishing career, he founded two publishing companies, published over 40 books, more than 100 authors, and was named one of the top ten independent publishers by *Black Issues Book Review* (1999). Dubbed a “phenom” in the poetry world by The Charleston (SC) City Paper, over the past fifteen years he has regularly performed poetry, conducted writing and publishing workshops, and delivered speeches at schools, colleges, theaters, and conferences throughout the country and abroad. Alexander has authored eleven books including the best-selling *Do The Write Thing: 7 Steps to Publishing Success*, *Crush: Love Poems*, and his newest book *And Then You Know: New & Selected Poems*. Alexander serves as producer of the annual *Capital BookFest*. He has delivered presentations and keynote speeches on the power of poetry and publishing to various organizations, including the New York State English Teachers Council, The South Carolina Library Association Annual Conference, and the Virginia Association for Teachers of English Conference. The Kwame Alexander Papers, a collection of his writings, correspondence, and other professional documents is held at the George Washington University Gelman Library.

WHAT EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS SAY ABOUT KWAME ALEXANDER & BID

“If I can have a literary son, I like to think it is Kwame Alexander. Hard worker; truth seeker; soul sharer.” —Nikki Giovanni

I read through both books, from the Book-in-a-Day program, and I cannot express to you how touched I was by these amazing works of art! They literally filled me with much emotion. —Kim Hardwick, ELA Coordinator, Hauppauge Public Schools, Long Island, NY

“What great excitement and energy on Friday night! Congratulations on another successful publishing enterprise. I loved being a part of the book launch and all the students did an amazing job.” —Susan Flanigan, Director of PR, Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center, Galludet University

“Every teacher has come to the media center today to rave, absolutely RAVE about your poetry sessions and about you! We have never seen the students relate so well and respond so completely to anyone! You have inspired us. Truly, you were a gift to our students and staff!!!” —Kathy Allen, Librarian and Media Director, Oscar Smith High School, Chesapeake, VA

“What a gift it's been to have you with us at Stafford this week! Students and teachers alike raved about your presentations in the auditorium. A number of teachers told me how much they appreciated the fact that your presentations seemed to be tailored to each audience. You have a unique ability to connect with students from so many backgrounds. The students who attended

your writing workshops came away with a new energy and enthusiasm for poetry " —Kate Messner, English Department Chair, Stafford Middle School, Plattsburg, NY

"Kwame, I thank you so much for so much support and getting me in the door. Thank you so much, you have made a great impact on my life. With all of this I know college won't be much stress. Thanks for everything." —Lisa Middleton, 12th Grader, Crossland High School

"Scholars and staff alike found the first Book-in-a-Day session so powerful and affirming. I would love to dialogue about possibilities for next year or the summer." —Thaly Germain, Assistant Principal, Maya Angelou Public Charter School, Washington, DC

May I say that the reception you received today was just what I imagined. The students were engaged and the teachers were thrilled to hear your presentations. I think you mesmerized both students and teachers. I am even more amazed at some of the educators who gave you kudos. I am sure your name will echo through the school halls the next few days. I am so pleased that you will be here with us again next year. —Carol Varsalona, Director of Language Arts & Testing, West Babylon School District, West Babylon, NY

"It makes such a difference to hear poetry read by the author. The power of his words was amazing! He definitely has a gift and talent worthy of sharing. I was so impressed with the students too." —Sue Meckler, Language Arts Program Specialist, Curriculum and Instruction, Sarasota County Schools, Sarasota, FL

"Dear Kwame, I certainly hope my personality (and my last name) was big enough to stick in you memory, but if it wasn't, let me quickly remind you that I was student at Niskayuna HS who participated in your poetry workshop. I wanted to send you a very late "thank you" for everything your poetry has done for me. Through meeting you and from reading your poetry, I learned to open myself up to being creative out loud. Though I don't write much poetry myself, I do write quite a bit of music. I credit my ability to express myself very much to working with you. Thank you for helping me open myself up, and for supplying me with an enormous supply of inspiring poetry." —Jacob Finkle, Student & Musician, Vassar College

2009-2010 FEES

- Meet the Author: \$250-500 depending on number of authors
- Performance/Workshop: \$1250 per day (Includes 2-3 presentations, depending on whether small group or assembly)
- Writer-in-Residency: \$2250 plus expenses (2-day); \$3200 plus expenses (3-day)
- Book-in-a-Day: \$1500 plus expenses for one day workshop; \$3000 plus expenses for 2 days

CONTACT BID

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