

bookinaday

Kwame Alexander, Founder and President
Book-in-a-Day, Inc.
PO Box 21
Alexandria, VA 22313
www.bookinaday.com
kwamepoet@gmail.com
703.371.4325

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Book-in-a-Day is both the title and the ultimate goal of a groundbreaking writing and publishing program aimed at upper elementary, middle, and high school students. Poet and educator, Kwame Alexander launched the program in May 2006. “Through poetry we can tap into students’ emotional intelligences, and we can connect with them in a powerful way. By publishing student work, we open doors that positively impact academic performance.”

“Publication gives students a sense of authorship, and that matters because it inducts students into the writerly life. This has proven to lead to greater confidence in learning and academic success amongst students. Because publication can provide such focus and tap such energy, this must be one of the first priorities in the literate classroom.”—Lucy Calkins, founding director of the Teachers College Writing Project

Educators in our school systems spend hours looking for exciting ways to bring to life what they are teaching students. The answer comes in the Book-in-a-Day program, a new fun-filled, hands-on literacy project that teaches students the fundamentals of creative writing and book publication. Book-in-a-Day introduces students to the “writerly life” and helps them find joy and excitement in writing through the process of publishing a book.

What makes Book-in-a-Day a unique project? Through literary and publishing mentoring, and “on-the-job” training, the students become the publishers, and they are ultimately responsible for the publication of their collected student work—poetry, fiction, and/or essay.

Already piloted at three schools (see Section 3.2), Book-in-a-Day can be an integral part of your Schools’ efforts to enhance literacy and help students achieve at high levels. We hope that your school will be inspired by this

historic project’s successes and become one of the first educational institutions in the country to offer Book-in-a-Day to K-12 students.

1 ORGANIZATION

Kwame Alexander has worked in public schools since 1992, as a creative writing teacher, poet-in-the-schools, guest lecturer, and writer-in-residence. As an author, he has written nine books. As a publishing professional, he has published more than 100 authors. Though Book-in-a-Day is a relatively new program, it is an extension of more than fifteen years of literacy, literary, and publishing work accomplished by Kwame Alexander.

The origin of Book-in-a-Day 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 trade paperback anthology of their poems, quotes, and creative non-fiction.

Alexander has assembled a stellar staff of educators and authors (see Section 4) to fine-tune the writing and publishing instruction, and assure that the Book-in-a-Day addresses national standards.

In addition to Book-in-a-Day, Alexander, through his company KA Productions, LLC—a licensed vendor/consultant of several school districts in Virginia, Washington, DC, Maryland, and New York—continues to

engage in related literacy and educational work.

- Professional Development Trainer, Board of Cooperative Educational Trainers, Nassau County, New York (BOCES)
- Poetry Workshop Facilitator, Washington, DC Public Schools
- Writer-in-Residence, Niskayuna Public Schools, NY
- Annual Author for a Day Speaker, Oscar Smith High School, Chesapeake, VA

2 STATEMENT OF NEED

Book-in-a-Day is the only literacy program that focuses on student work and student-run publication—in one day. The limited time allotted to the program addresses the oft-quoted problem that teachers “barely have enough time” to teach. With only one day of required classroom time, the impact on teaching time is minimal.

Many middle and high school students lack knowledge about the writing process and do not like to write. They are not able to develop and communicate their ideas effectively. Teachers find it hard to motivate students to write and to teach students how to use writing strategies effectively. The vision of *Book-in-a-Day* is to create an environment where students become deeply involved in writing and sharing their work with others, and where they see themselves as writers and authors. When students become deeply immersed in their own writing, they don’t need to be motivated to write. They want to do it, and when they want to do it, they do it well. The problem is too often students are not given the opportunity to discover the joy of writing. *Book-in-a-Day* will give them that opportunity.

3 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND DESIGN

Book-in-a-Day is a groundbreaking writing and publishing program where students become invested in their own literacy development. In *Book-in-a-Day*, students learn how to write a well-crafted poem, story, prose, essay, or other piece of creative writing; and publish their own work for public consumption. This writing and publishing program is built on the foundation that students will learn to love reading and writing when they assume complete responsibility for becoming authors; when they see the fruits of their labor, the response from readers, a permanent reading/writing connection is made that will transform the way they view and appreciate language. Although all genres are considered appropriate for *Book-in-a-Day*, poetry as a concise, easy-to-read, emotionally driven genre, lends itself to the one-day writer’s workshop. This proposal uses poetry as the model for a successful *Book-in-a-Day* program.

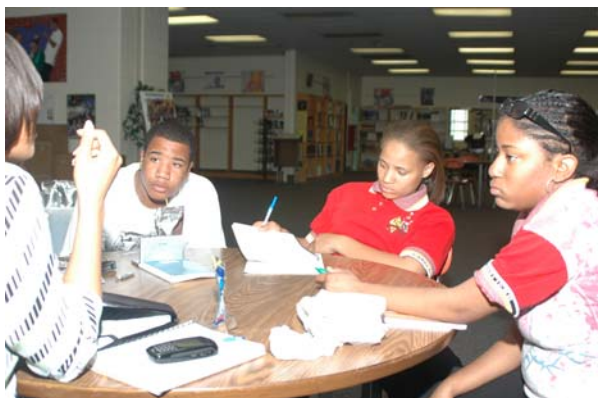
“Poems help us get inside texts and the characters inside those texts. They help us place ourselves in the world in relation to others. Mostly, however, they give us a different way of thinking about things.” — Jim Burke, the “guru” of English educators, in his book “The Teachers Companion”

This is a two-day literacy program, with the bulk of the book publishing work takes place in a single day, thus the name *Book-in-a-Day*.

Day One. A pre-selected group of thirty students are immersed in rich, lively poetry; they are introduced to intense, concise, skillfully crafted language through the writer’s workshop. In this energetic, inspirational, and fun-filled performance/workshop (classroom setting), participants will listen and engage in an exciting culture of poetry and performance; and move beyond the staid notions of what

poetry is, and discover poetry as a treasure that brings light to language. Many teachers are unsure how creative writing addresses the “standards.” Does not poetry encourage and require analysis, literary response, social interaction, and comprehension?

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 self-editing, and rewriting a polished poem—on a subject brainstormed and determined by students—in preparation for Day Two. 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.



Book-in-a-Day Students at Crossland High School Brainstorm Book Marketing Ideas during Day Two

Day Two. In this cutting edge, hands-on, workshop, the same group of 30 students from Day One are taught the creative tips, techniques, and tools necessary to publish a collection of polished student work (poetry, fiction, journal, etc.). With clarity and focus, Kwame Alexander teaches a crash course on the basics of publishing success: *Writing, Editing, the Business of Publishing, Design, and Printing*. Students are 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 daylong workshop, the students will have a final digital file ready to submit to a book printer. Printing takes 2-6 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).

One of the highlights of the program is when students are able to read from their books and autograph copies at an author-signing event. For example, Karibu Books, an independent bookstore chain located in Prince George’s County, Maryland, has committed to arrange book signings, as well as sell and promote all state of Maryland *Book-in-a-Day* books through their stores.

BID as School Fundraiser

Revenue generated from book sales can be placed in a student-run and/or PTA-sponsored endowment that will allow future students access to funding for future literacy and publishing projects. Crossland High School student authors have participated in over 15 different book signings and literary events.

3.1 Program Objective

Book-in-a-Day is designed to provide a product-driven opportunity to promote writing, reading, and thinking creatively for students from upper elementary to senior high school. At the end of the *Book-in-a-Day* 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 *Book-in-a-Day* 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.

3.2 Proven Strategies and Program Successes

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

During the pilot phase, three schools successfully completed the *Book-in-a-Day* program.

- Crossland High School, Temple Hills, Maryland
- Cass Technical High School, Detroit, Michigan
- The Nora School, Silver Spring, Maryland

Each school successfully published within the established timeline. In every instance, both parents and community businesses supported the program, financially and otherwise; and administrators, were extremely pleased at the end product.

The greatest gift you can give a child is the gift of reading. If you can read you can go anywhere, do anything, just be whoever you want to be. That's why BOOK-IN-A-DAY was such an important project to the Crossland High School PTSA. The entire school embraced this project: the English and Art Department; the school administrators, the business community, and local government all came together to make this project a huge success. Our CHILDREN REALLY MUST COME FIRST, This is an excellent project to encourage students to read more and consider a literary career after high school. —Tanya Hill, Chair, Newsletter Committee 2006-2007, Crossland High School PTSA

“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 (After completing the Book-in-a-Day program, she will be attending college and majoring in Journalism)

4 PERSONNEL

Consistent with *Book-in-a-Day's* goals of shaping young lives through the power of poetry and publishing, the program is staffed by professional authors/educators who will direct and manage students, in conjunction with teachers and school officials.

Kwame Alexander, Founder/President.

Poet, publisher, and producer, Kwame is the founder and driving creative force behind the *Book-in-a-Day* program. During his twenty-year book publishing career, he 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 nine books including the best-

selling *Do The Write Thing: 7 Steps to Publishing Success*, *Tough Love: The Life and Death of Tupac Shakur*, and most recently his second young adult title, *Crush: Love Poems*. Alexander serves as producer of the annual *Capital BookFest* presented by The Washington Post. 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.

Titilayo Ngwenya, Executive Director.

Titilayo Ngwenya comes from a family of educators. Her parents grew up in Sierra Leone and Mozambique where (as in many African countries) the value of education was paramount. She received a B.A. in English from Yale University, and an M.A. in Contemporary Improvisation from the New England Conservatory of Music. At Yale, she founded the internationally-acclaimed vocal ensemble, *Shades*. Nineteen years and going strong, the *Shades* family continues to perform contemporary and traditional music to uplift young and adult audiences around the world. Titilayo has led her own music ensemble, released her popular CD *Beware the Short Hair Girl*, and worked to develop and implement songwriting workshops for young adults. She has been featured on *NPR's All Things Considered*, in *Billboard Magazine*, *The Boston Sunday Globe*, and *The New Yorker*. Balancing out her creative expertise, Titilayo has honed her technical, collaborative, and creative management skills in such financial institutions as Bear Stearns, Morgan Stanley, and Eisner LLP.

Barbara Alexander, Upper Elementary Literacy Consultant. Educator, school principal, author, folklorist, and professional developer, Barbara has been a literacy consultant for twenty five years, most recently with the Children's Literacy Initiative, where she has been a senior literacy trainer for more than ten years. Prior to that she served as a literacy coach and trainer for HeadStart and the Fund for Children's Excellence; and as the principal of the Ruth Nelson Cooke Academy, a private K-6 school in Tidewater, Virginia. She holds a master's in education from Columbia University Teacher's College, and is the author of two children's picture books, the most recent "Papa's Penny Party."

Christine Compo-Martin, Middle School Literacy Consultant.

Teacher and writer, Christine Compo-Martin was educated at State University of New York (SUNY), Potsdam, where she received her BA in English and her M.A. in Teaching. Although she set out to write professionally, the past 19 years has found her teaching middle and high school English at her alma mater in the sturdy hamlet of Brasher Falls. She has managed to meld her love of writing and teaching as she prepares future teachers as an adjunct instructor at SUNY Potsdam.

Dana Davidson, High School Literacy Consultant.

Davidson is a veteran high school AP English Teacher at Cass Technical High School in Detroit, Michigan. She was the 2001 winner of the Newsweek/WDIV Outstanding Teacher Award. She is the author of two critically acclaimed Young Adult novels *Played*, and *Jason & Kyra*, a love story that Booklist said "Teens won't be able to stop reading and an American Library Association Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Adult Readers."

5 BUDGET

Provided upon request.

6 PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Evaluation of the *Book-in-a-Day* program is ongoing. Initially, we will utilize the published book as the 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 educator's informal assessment of what students learn via the project. *Book-in-a-Day* staff will work closely with school administration to develop and assess the program and its effectiveness.

6.1 Sustainability/Follow-up

Book-in-a-Day is structured so that students develop a newfound appreciation and excitement for literature and publishing. Pre- and Post-assessments are incorporated in to the program. There is no formal follow-up with participants, yet it is expected that teachers and administrators will want to

pursue future publishing opportunities with students. Specifically, at the conclusion of the program, schools are provided with a *Book-in-a-Day* kit to supplement the skills and resources acquired during the two days. Teachers should be able to (1) develop a publishing center in the classroom to support literacy efforts; (2) understand and select a publishing option (broadside, newspaper, anthology, book, Internet, etc.); and (3) implement a literacy program that uses *Book-in-a-Day* as a model for a more long-term publishing effort—perhaps a Book-in-a-Month, or Year. Many schools have expressed an interest in having *Book-in-a-Day* staff return to provide the program to additional students. Certainly, schools that have successfully completed the program are given priority status for return visits.

In conclusion, *Book-in-a-Day* is designed to engage students and teachers alike in a creative and intense exploration of the power of literature. Publication gives students a sense of authorship, which has proven to lead to higher academic confidence and success amongst students.

We invite you to partner with *Book-in-a-Day* in presenting students with a new and inspiring way to *Do The Write Thing*.



Charles Thomas, Crossland Principal and PTSA President Yvette Willis at Book-in-a-Day Launch and Celebration

ANNEX A—PRESS

Gazette.Net

Thursday, June 28, 2007

Crossland students Publish Book-in-a-Day

Nineteen students from Crossland High School in Temple Hills were chosen to write and publish a book in a day. The final book, which features poetry and artwork from students, was unveiled June 12 at a book signing by the young authors.



Students Brittany Edmonds, De’Nico Washington, Ellise Saunders, Endia Thomas, Jacqueline Johnson, Jasmine Daughtry, Jasmine Taylor, Johnathan Savoy, Johnika Brown, Lisa Middleton, Melquia Pitts, Malcolm Towler, Naemah Powell, Sunita Jones, William Williams, Zabria Pringle and Duane Johnson contributed poetry for the book. Brandon Carter and Norceia Daughtridge contributed artwork for the front cover of the book.



Although the production process spanned two days, the bulk of the publishing work took place in one day. In two days students were taught and coached through the entire publishing process. After the book launch, students will embark upon a mini-book tour for signings and discussions at local bookstores.

For Immediate Release

June 30, 2007

Contact: Gabrielle Faulcon
202/479-2777

**30 CROSSLAND STUDENTS CHOSEN TO
WRITE AND PUBLISH A “BOOK IN A DAY”**

Temple Hills, Md. (January 30, 2007) - Educators in our school systems spend hours looking for exciting ways to bring to life what they are teaching students. The answer for Crossland High School comes in the “Book-in-a-Day” program, a new fun-filled and hands-on literacy program. Book-in-a-Day introduces students to the “writerly life” and helps them find joy and excitement in writing through the process of publishing a book.

Book-in-a-Day is both the title and the ultimate goal for students. Over the course of two school days, Young Adult Author and Publisher, Kwame Alexander will teach and coach students through the entire book publishing process - from editing to cover design to dealing with book printers. “I’ve published, or helped, hundreds of authors get published. I enjoy walking others through the process, particularly when working with students,” said Alexander. “Our goal for the 30 upperclassmen chosen to participate in Book-in-a-Day is that each of them will be encouraged by this process. They’re getting a unique opportunity to not only express themselves through poetry, but to publish a collection of their work, and see it on the shelves of bookstores. That’s an amazing experience for a high school student.

As part of the program, students have the opportunity to meet and have lunch with established authors on Wednesday, February 7. Authors participating include: Marita Golden, Wadud, A’Lelia Bundles, Karyn Langhorne, Donna Maria Smith and Kayeen Thomas. Each author has been invited to share their writing experiences and serve as an example of what is possible for those interested in pursuing a writing career.

“With Book-in-a-Day, students will have fun and be inspired,” said Charles Thomas, the principal of Crossland High School, which was selected from schools nationwide for this pilot program. “Nothing is more important than the ability to read and write. Good teachers are set apart by the ability to get their students excited about what is taught. Anything we can do that lights that fire in students is worth Crossland’s participation.”

Although the process spans two days, the bulk of the publishing work takes place in one day. In March, students meet for the last time to choose the cover art, proofread, write the back cover copy, communicate with the printer and plan the April book launch to coincide with National Poetry Month. After the book launch, students will embark upon a mini-book tour for signings and discussions at local bookstores.

ANNEX B—TESTIMONIALS

“What you did with the Book-in-a-Day students was nothing short of phenomenal. It will have a tremendous impact on their lives.”

**—Lauri Lyles, English Department Chair
Crossland High School, Temple Hills, MD**

“Please express my appreciation to Kwame for the “Do the Write Thing” presentation done on May 30, 2007 at Nassau BOCES. It was certainly a pleasure meeting him but more importantly the workshop was a huge success. I don't know if he took the time to read the evaluations but the participants were well pleased with the presentation and found valuable instructional strategies that they can take back to their classrooms. Some of the comments were: “Kwame Alexander did a fabulous job of running an informative, interesting and interactive workshop;” and “Fabulous and dynamic instructor. Best ever!! I would love to have Kwame present for us again next spring.

**—Laverne Mitchell, Program Coordinator, Professional Development
Nassau, Long Island BOCES**

“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**

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, as varied as they were. 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**

“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**

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

—Nikki Giovanni