

School visit modules, Jess Bright

I am a children's author whose books are aimed at 9-12 year olds.

Sister Sister

You can't choose your family, but in *Sister Sister*, Willow would definitely like to choose hers. An extra sibling to be precise, preferably a sister, because she feels something's missing living with just her mum. However, they say be careful what you wish for, for that's exactly what happens! A family secret is dramatically revealed and she discovers that she has a half-brother and sister. But it's not all happy families. There's all sorts of stuff Willow didn't bargain for. Like her half-sister, Bella, hating her on sight and the fact that Willow might have to face her biggest fear in order to help Bella conquer a life-threatening illness.

'Sister Sister packs a powerful emotional punch.' **The Scotsman**
Picked as one of the top summer reads for kids summer 2015 in **The Telegraph**

Training

I have been trained by the guys at Author Profile as a Twentieth Century Author in conjunction with the National Literacy Trust. Look on my web site www.jessbright.com and check out the link. You can contact me via the link on my web site or email me at jess@jessbright.com. My site also gives you lots of info about me. Contact the National Literacy Trust for information on free author visits for schools and a chance to get your hands on resource materials. www.literacytrust.org.uk

Workshops and visits

I usually start with a general talk to all the classes involved in the visit, possibly in the assembly hall where everyone can hear me. Sometimes I do a PowerPoint if it is easy to access, sometimes not! Mostly showing embarrassing pics of me as a teenager. I chat about how I got into writing (lots of 'amusing' stories), how I hated reading etc. and breaking into publishing and helping launch Harry Potter at the start of my career. I have written lots of books under my other name – Janet Hoggarth, but they're not on that web site. I will also talk about the books I have written and can arrange for books to be available for children to buy in order for me to sign them. This talk lasts about half an hour max.

Then I go into the individual classes and we can jump straight into the creative writing workshop. I can use either the whiteboard or a flip chart. As a class we can work out the basic plot of the story. Beginning middle end. Then split into groups and we can work out the characters. What are they like? What are their characteristics? Are they funny, rude, happy go lucky, serious, geeky, cool etc.? What do they look like? What is their favourite colour? What kind of clothes do they wear? What is their favourite film or music? Are they gamers or more into reading? Who are their friends? Would you trust them with secrets, are they trustworthy? Have they ever had their heart broken? Are their parents still married, or were they ever married. If this is an

adult what were their childhood dreams. What did they want to be when they grew up? How are they going to affect the plot? Are they kind or can they be mean? Have they got a dark side or are they happy all the time? Have they got brothers and sisters? Have they got pets? You decide! I know not all children are so descriptive with words and find drawing easier, so this is also encouraged, anything to help with the creative process really. There aren't any rules! The workshop has to fit into a lesson timing. They can be longer if fewer classes are involved during the day!

At the end of the session, the teacher is left with the synopsis to do so as they wish – further work for the kids. The kids can finish their stories once they have done the character profiles. The idea of the workshop is to give the children an idea of how an author works using characters to drive the plot forward. If you have solid characters then you will have a more engaging story.

I can do half days or a full school day plus expenses. A half day costs £150 and full day £250.