



Elementary Grades 3-6  
Tuesday, March 10, 2020

Secondary Grades 6-12  
Wednesday, March 11, 2020

Held at William Penn University in Oskaloosa  
9:00 am – 2:05 pm

The purpose of the Young Writers' Conference is to celebrate the talents of young authors. It is a day in which young authors have an opportunity to share some of their personal writing with peers, to hear from published authors, and to attend small group sessions.

#### **Young Writers' Conference Program**

The 2020 program will offer students a rich variety of experiences. The large group session will be conducted by keynote speaker, Bob Kann.

Bob Kann grew up in Skokie, Illinois, but it happened so long ago that he remembers nothing of the event.

As a child, he loved sports above all else and could perform a standing back flip by the age of nine. His mother worried that reading nothing but sports books would stunt Bob's intellectual growth, but his older brother assured her that he would eventually read books on other topics (he did). Little did any of them know that he also would write several books including a book about a baseball player and another about an athlete who competed in several sports. Listening to his father's tales about growing up during the Depression, driving at the age of twelve to make deliveries for his father's store, and other stories of the south side of Chicago planted the seeds for Bob's later passion for storytelling.

Bob attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison, became a teacher, received his Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and later a Professor of Education at UW-Parkside and UW-Stevens Point. Shortly after becoming a professor, Bob realized that he liked making his students laugh more than he liked teaching them. He also recognized that what he wanted to next undertake was the challenge of simultaneously entertaining children and adults since this seemed limitlessly interesting and creative.

In 1982, Bob became a storyteller, juggler, and magician who began performing for children and families throughout the United States. In 1985, he realized that being a former teacher/professor turned entertainer, he had unique insights into the relationship between entertainment and education. Hence, he began teaching graduate classes and presenting keynotes and workshops for educators and nonprofit organizations on topics related to humor, storytelling, creativity, and motivation.

As a free-lancer for more than thirty years, Bob has developed many interests which have led him to produce storytelling tapes and write books for children, design curriculums for teachers, collect and write historical stories for nonprofit organizations, and apply his research skills as a consultant for social service agencies.

## Who can attend?

- *Each elementary teacher in grades three through six may send two students from their class.*
- *In grades seven through twelve, school districts may send the equivalent of one student per section of English. (Small school districts may send two students per grade, whichever is more).*

Adults will find many activities to enjoy with their students. Teachers will be assigned to facilitate a sharing session. A minimum ratio of one chaperone per **8 elementary and 8 secondary students is strongly needed.**

Teachers are encouraged to select a heterogeneous, cross section of students with varying talents and abilities. Avoid selecting only “best” writers and try to include budding authors. Select students who have not attended in the past. Enthusiastic writers are as welcome as accomplished writers.

## How can I prepare my students NOW for the Young Writers’ Conference?

- Start all students writing now.
- Save all written work in a student/teacher folder.
- Encourage students to revise and polish pieces until the conference.
- Provide time for oral sharing of writing, followed by positive and honest response from the class. Students will be expected to share their writing with other students.

## How do teachers select student participants for Young Writers’ Conference?

- Identify who would like to attend Young Writers’ Conference. Please choose students who have not attended in previous years.
- Students review pieces in portfolio, revise and edit for consideration.
- Suggestions for narrowing choices:
  - Teacher chooses from file of selected pieces.
  - Peers select – Display pieces on bulletin board, author reads aloud, students nominate based on previous sharing, former Young Writers’ Conference participants assist in selection, etc.
  - High school class (English, journalism) judges a collection of pieces from elementary or middle school level.
  - High school students trade pieces with middle school.
  - Community members, such as retired teachers, read numbered student works.
  - After student input and/or teacher screening, a random drawing could be used for final selection.

## Timeline for Preparing Manuscripts

Every year, there are students who come with their manuscript in need of revision and editing. We want the students to be proud of their work and for it to be a good reflection of their school district.

**During November/December** students are selected for participation in the Young Writers’ Conference, based on various pieces of their writing.

**In early January**, the first copy of the students’ manuscripts should be proofread by the student and by someone other than the student. This someone could be the student’s teacher, the district’s YWC Committee Member, the school building YWC contact person, or the school principal. Appropriate topics should also be noted.

**Student registration is due by January 27, 2020.**

**By late February**, the manuscripts should have been proofread, revised, and edited a couple times and are now ready for duplication.

**By March**, have the 11 copies made of each manuscript to ensure that each student can look forward to sharing their writing at the sharing session at the Young Writers’ Conference.

## Writing Guidelines

Student participants will select an appropriate piece of their best writing to bring to the Young Writers’ Conference. (Please, no blood, guts, or gore.) Students need to be prepared to read aloud their piece of writing with a small group of students in a sharing session. During most of the sharing session, students will be in the role of audience, as both listener and responder.

Students should bring 11 copies of a revised, polished manuscript or collection of poems to disseminate to each person in their sharing session. Copies must be typed, with ample margins, limited to 500 words (around two pages) and may be illustrated. All pieces need to be labeled with name of student, grade level and name of school and district.

**Manuscripts will not be collected by the agency. It is strongly encouraged for each building to have their own collection.**

**Registration materials will be emailed to contacts in December.**

**FEE:** William Penn University is charging **\$2.00** per student in attendance. *Students and facilitators can bring sack lunches or Sodexo, Inc. at William Pen will offer chicken nuggets, tater tots, vegetable with salad bar for \$4.00 in the dining center. Space is limited in the dining center. Bring money to purchase or school can submit a purchase order for students and teachers. Teachers are to eat with their students. Location assignments will be arranged for elementary groups.*

Books from the author will be available at the conference for purchase when available. Books are priced from \$9.00 – \$15.00. T-shirts/sweatshirts may be ordered ahead or available the day of the conference

**Please direct questions regarding the conference to your building representative or contact Carol Ryon or Lisa Sines**

*Remember the Young Writers' Conference is not a contest. Highly competitive selection should be avoided. Caution should be taken not to base selection of participants on one piece written for Young Writers' Conference only.*

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