



Make the most of Authors Live

How to get the most out of watching our digital events

Age 5-16

CFE Levels Early – Senior Phase

Resource created by Scottish Book Trust

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About this resource

This resource will give you advice and ideas to help you get the most out of any Authors Live event. Although specific resources are provided to support most events, this resource gives activities which are suitable for all our Authors Live events. The resource will help you and your pupils prepare to watch events, and also give ideas for what to do during and after events.

About Authors Live

Authors Live is a series of free events with top children's writers and illustrators, streamed live in partnership with BBC Scotland Digital- Learning.

You can find upcoming events on [our website](#). Just click on the event you want to sign up for, and you'll be given instructions on how to register for that event. If you don't already have a log in for our website, you might be asked to create an account.

To watch a previous event, browse through our [Watch On Demand library](#). You can browse by age range, theme or author name. You do not need to log in to access this service.

Many events are supported by learning resources containing activity ideas and inspiration based on the broadcast.

Links with Bookbug and Read, Write, Count programmes

Each year Scottish Book Trust gifts bags of books to every Primary 1, 2 and 3 child in Scotland through the [Bookbug](#) and [Read, Write, Count](#) programmes. Every year we stream an Authors Live event to support Bookbug Week and the Read, Write, Count bags.

How to watch Authors Live

To ensure you are ready to watch a live streamed Authors Live broadcast, follow these steps below.

Watching the event

You will be able to view the event at: www.bbc.co.uk/authorslive. Make sure you click on the author's photo to access the live stream.

Test your school's/organisation's internet connection

You can test the speed of your school's/organisation's bandwidth at [Broadband Speed Checker](#). To stream BBC iPlayer, your internet speed needs to be higher than 2.8 Mp/s. If your internet connection is particularly slow or your local authority blocks live streaming, you may only be able to watch Authors Live on demand. Broadcasts are added to the [Watch On Demand library](#) two or three days after the broadcast date.

Logging in

When arriving at the web page: www.bbc.co.uk/authorslive you may be asked to sign in with a BBC iPlayer account.

If you have an iPlayer account, please use this to sign in. If you do not yet have one, please create one. This should only take a minute of your time, but you may wish to do it in advance to avoid having to rush to do so on the day.

You can [register for an iPlayer account here](#).

When registering you will be asked to provide details of your date of birth, email address, password, postcode, gender and whether you would like to subscribe to email updates. You may be asked whether you have a TV licence; please select "yes" as schools are entitled to educational output from the BBC free of charge.

Test stream

A test stream will be broadcast 15 minutes before the event is due to start. This will give you time to adjust sound/speakers etc. without missing any of the event.

Buffering

During the actual broadcast the screen may freeze occasionally with a note that it is 'buffering'. This is perfectly normal during a live internet broadcast. Don't try to adjust anything - please just be patient and wait for the broadcast to continue.

Activities to do before an event

Setting aside planning time before an Authors Live event can ensure you make the most of the content. If your pupils already enjoy the writer's work, it can be rewarding for them to build the anticipation, and increase their engagement during the live streaming.

Use the event resources to plan

Most of our Authors Live events have an accompanying resource to help you maximise the opportunities it offers. You'll find a link to the event resource from the Authors Live page ahead of the live stream, and on the events Watch On Demand webpage after broadcast. Have a look at the resource before the event to see if any of the activity suggestions suit your pupils.

If you only do one thing

We know that time can be tight before an event, so for most Authors Live events we have a quick activity suggestion titled "if you only do one thing". You'll find this information on the webpage for each author event.

Get involved on Twitter

In the lead up to each live streamed event, we run Twitter activities for your. This could be a question for the writer or panel member, or a drawing activity, or a thematic activity based on the authors books. Just check the hashtag #BBCAuthorsLive for the activity before each event, then tweet us and you could get a mention during the broadcast!

Go to the library

If you don't own the writer or illustrator's books, why not organise a class trip to a local library to borrow some? It's a great opportunity to build links with your library and gives pupils the chance to become members. The library can also be a great place to watch an Authors Live event.

Invite parents and other pupils in

Getting parents in to watch Authors Live events with pupils can lead to some great opportunities. If you watch the event in the library it can give pupils and their parents the chance to browse books together, and afterwards parents can read stories to groups of children.

If you're screening the event at lunchtime or after school, you could get pupils to design event posters or digital trailers to encourage others along. You ask pupils to plan and organise refreshments and competitions. For example, you could plan an Authors Live cinema themed event, and provide cushions, blankets and popcorn during the screening.

Talk about authors and illustrators

The concept of an author or an illustrator might be new to some Early or First Level pupils as they may never have seen one before. This is a good opportunity to explore the following questions:

- Look at the names written on the cover of a book. Who do you think these people are?
- What do you think an author does? What do you think an illustrator does?
- How do you think an author gets the ideas for stories?
- Do you think every author likes writing the same kind of stories? Do you think illustrators like drawing the same kind of stories?
- What different kinds of stories can you think of?
- A lot of books have pictures and words. An author and an illustrator work together to create these books. What do you think comes first, the pictures or the words?
- Imagine you are an illustrator – how do you decide what to put in your pictures? Look at a picture book you have in class- do the words and the pictures tell us exactly the same information?
- Is there anything you can see in the illustration that isn't included in the text?

Debate the issues beforehand

Some of our teen events feature thought provoking discussion on topical issues. For instance, our event with Bessora and translator Sarah Ardizzone the creators of the *Alpha* graphic novel focused on the refugee experience, our Juno Dawson event discussed mental health, and our Unheard Voices panel event discussed the importance of self-expression and making your voice heard.

Talking about these issues beforehand is a great way to increase pupils' engagement with the events. You can ask them to research the issues and present their findings to others before the event, and recommend other books and websites to check out afterwards.

Creating a display

Displays are a good way to build a buzz around an event. You can ask pupils to make a display informing others about the writer's work, or based around the theme of the Authors Live event: for instance, our Storytelling Relay event could inspire a display of stories from around the world.

Activities to do during an event

There are ways for your pupils to interact during the event:

On Twitter: you and your pupils can continue to tweet throughout the event using the hashtag #BBCAuthorsLive. You can tweet pictures of your class watching the event, or perhaps drawing along with the illustrator if this is a feature of the event.

Draw along: some of our events with illustrators allow pupils to 'draw along', following the illustrator's lead. Before an illustration event, make sure you have paper and pencils ready for your pupils.

Think of questions to investigate afterwards: you could ask pupils to write down three things they'd like to find out more about after the event. This can work especially well when a writer is speaking about a topical issue.

Activities to do after an event

Once your pupils are familiar with the writer and their work, there are lots of opportunities for creative learning to take place. We have lots of activity suggestions which can work with any book in our "10 Activities to do with Any Book" resource series. These can be found in the learning resource section of the website.

Find some more of the writer's work

After watching an Authors Live event, the natural next step is to get pupils finding more books to read! You could ask them to investigate the featured writer, or find similar books by other authors: for instance, pupils who enjoy Anthony Horowitz's event could find other books about spies and adventure.

You could start a recommendations wall in your classroom where pupils can put up Post It notes recommending different books. They can also create recommendation bookmarks to leave inside favourite reads, to tell others more about the book and why they've enjoyed it.

Reading with your pupils

Reading alongside your pupils can be motivating for them, as you can make your own recommendations and read the books they've recommended to you.

Writing and performance

Hold a Poetry Slam. Our poetry events are hugely popular and have inspired schools to develop performance poetry projects. You could get your pupils to write their own poems and perform them. You can find resources to help you introduce poetry for upper primary pupils on the learning resources section of our website, as well as resources on performance poetry for secondary school pupils.

Adapt the writer's work

It can be especially rewarding for pupils to adapt a writer's work into a different format. For secondary pupils, they could adapt a scene from a novel into comic strip or into a book trailer.

For lower primary pupils, pupils could adapt a picture book into a play. We have a comprehensive resource to support you turning picture books into plays. This can be found in the learning section of the website.

Plan a cross-curricular project

If you want to tackle a more in-depth project inspired by an event, you could use the Authors Live event as a starting point for a cross curricular project. For example, our Storytelling Relay has been used by schools to explore the Commonwealth and our Nicola Davies Authors Live event has been used as a starting point to explore environmentalism.

Frequently asked questions

What time does the event start?

The event starts promptly at 11 am. Please go to the web page by 10.45 am to give time to adjust speakers etc. before the event starts.

How long does the event last?

Events will usually last 40 minutes unless otherwise stated.

I can't get the link- www.bbc.co.uk/authorslive- to work

Please check with technical staff in your school- it may be the website is blocked and you need to ask them to unblock it (they may need to pass this request on to your local authority).

I can access the link but can't view the test stream 15 minutes prior to the event.

It may be that your schools internet isn't fast enough. You can check speed on [Broadband Speed Checker](#). To stream BBC iPlayer, you will need a speed higher than 2.8 Mp/s.

I have been trying to register our school for an Authors Live event, but have been unable to. What can I do about this?

Get in touch with the School Communities Team on schools@scottishbooktrust.com or call on 0131 524 0160.

Where will the event be shown?

The event will be broadcast on www.bbc.co.uk/authorslive.

Can we ask the author questions? Why wasn't our question answered?

For most of our broadcasts, we collect questions from schools across the country to put to our authors. To have your pupils' question considered, please tweet your question using the #BBCAuthorsLive. Please keep in mind that many thousands of children will be watching and will have submitted questions, and we only have a limited amount of time. To increase the likelihood of your question being asked, think of more unusual questions.

Can we watch the event later?

You can watch the event on our Watch On Demand library on the Scottish Book Trust website. The event is usually available two to three working days after the live broadcast. If you have registered to watch a broadcast, we will send you an email to let you know when it is available to watch again.