

2025

YO! Book Festival Session Descriptions

CONVERSATION: *Authors and illustrators share their craft by responding to questions from a host, fellow panelists, and attendees.*

10:30-12:30 - Picture Book/Children's; 12:30-3:30 - MG & YA

FUN & GAMES: *Activities that delight and excite all readers.*

INTERACTIVE: *Authors and Illustrators engage in an activity such as a game, drawing/writing workshop, or a special book-specific activity with attendees. 10:30-12:30 - Picture Book/Children's; 12:30-3:30 - MG & YA*

STORY SHARE: *Authors and illustrators read from/show/talk about their books. 10:30-12:30 - Picture Book/Children's; 12:30-3:30 - MG & YA*

FUN & GAMES

Activities to delight and excite all readers!

10:00-4:00

BOOK BOUTIQUE / Aux Gym

Signed books by YO! Book Fest authors and illustrators are awaiting you! Meet your new favorites and bring them home along with other booky items. And while you're at it, buy a raffle ticket to support the YO! Book Fest supported nonprofit, Bringing Books to Life!

Authors and Illustrators will be signing throughout the day; most will be at their signing stations during these time bands:

11:30 AM-12:30 PM: Middle Grades/YA

12:30 PM-1:30 PM: Children's & Picture Book

10:00-10:30

CHARACTER PARADE / Gym

Celebrate the opening of the first-ever YOUNG People's Book Festival by joining the character parade! Led by the Black Rock MS Pep Band, you can join Bruce, Elephant & Piggie, Paddington Bear, Pete the Cat, Rainbow Fish, and more! Costumes are encouraged but not required!

10:30-4:00

BOOK CRAFTS & CHILL SPACE * 10:30-1:00 & 2:30-3:30 / 2083

Take a break from the hustle and bustle of festing to make bookish crafts with bookish friends, old and new.

CHARACTER PHOTO-OPS * 11:00-11:30 & 12:00-12:30 / Gym

Take a picture with our visiting picture book characters!

FOOD TRUCKS * 10:30-3:30 / Courtyard (enter through Dining Hall)

All this reading is making you hungry! So go grab some meatballs, chicken fingers, pizza, tacos, funnel cake, and more!

GYM GAMES: Vincent Tirado + Friends * 1:00-1:30 & 2:00-2:30 / Gym

Readers are players, too! Play giant tic-tac-toe, H.O.R.S.E., Connect Four, and more! Maybe you will be your new favorite illustrator's teammate or play against an illustrator who will write about it later.

KARAOKE: Amy Ignatow + Friends * 1:30-2:00 / Gym

She said, "I will destroy all of you in karaoke. My rendition of Juice Newton's *Playing With the Queen of Hearts* will melt your faces off."
You say, "I've got next!"

LEGO SNAPOLOGY * 10:30-1:00 / Heart

Build a book cover or a favorite book character (maybe even one you meet at the festival) to add to a LEGO bookshelf.

LIBRARY CARD SIGN-UPS * 10:30-1:30 / Heart

Sign up for a library card with Lower Merion Library System librarians and learn about upcoming programming.

SNACK STATION * 10:30-3:30 / Dining Hall

Stop by to refuel with some sweet and savory snacks between sessions.

FREEDOM TO READ TRIVIA * 3:30-4:00 / Theater

Join Katie Locke, Amy Sarig King + Friends in an all-ages game of trivia celebrating the freedom to read.

PICTURE BOOK & CHILDREN'S SESSIONS

Readers ages 0-10 & their families will love these!

10:30-11:00

ANIMAL TALES: Jonathan Stutzman; Berrie Torgan-Randall / Room 2066

Find out what your animal friends are up to in two authors' newest books.

ART OF THE PICTURE BOOK: Gene Berratta; Judy Schachner; David Wiesner / Room 2040

Three award-winning illustrators talk about the art of creating a picture book.

IT'S ALL RELATIVE: Ruth Behar; Gabriel Frye-Behar / Room 2042

Mother and son authors talk about writing as a team.

QUICK DRAW: Kay Healy; Julia Mills / Room 2063

Learn from the experts as you draw along with some of our favorite illustrators!

WHO COULD IT BE?: Katherine Locke; Amy Sarig King; Tracey West / Room 2050

Help the authors guess the secret characters! You'll need to give great clues.

11:00-11:30

AUTHORSTRATORS ASSEMBLE: Kay Healy; Judy Schachner; Berrie Torgan-Randall / Room 2038

Do you write AND draw your own stories? If so, you are an authorstrator! Listen to three authorstrators talk about creating stories with words AND pictures.

FINS & FUR / Room 2064

Join Rainbow Fish and Bruce for some of their favorite stories.

SCRIBBLE SHOWDOWN: Mike Ciccotello; John Patrick Green; Matt Phelan / Room 2051

3 Illustrators, 3 easels, 1 terrific time!

SERIES-US BUSINESS: Hilda Eunice Burgos; Tracey West / Room 2041

Two authors share how they create stories so big they can't be contained to a single book.

STORIES EN ESPAÑOL: Ruth Behar; Andrea Cáceres; Gabriel Frye-Behar / Room 2067

¡Vámanos! Enjoy hearing picture books in Spanish and English read by the authors!

TRICKY CHOPSTICKS: Sylvia Chen / Room 2048

Try a number of chopstick challenges with the author.

11:30-12:00

BIG FEELINGS & TOUGH TOPICS: Hallee Adelman / Room 2042

Books can help children through difficult times. An author will share how books can make a difference.

BOOKISH Pictionary: Andrea Cáceres; Angel Gloom; Sunny Gloom; Julia Mills / Room 2063

Which illustrator's team will win this group game of Bookish Pictionary?

LAUGH OUT LOUD: Alex London; Greg Pizzoli / Room 2065

Join authors who read stories that will tickle your funny bone.

SPOOKY BOOBOOKS: Beth Ferry; Heather Stigall / Room 2066

Gather close for some spooky fun with a ghost and a witch.

SPOOKY DRAW WITH ME: Brian Biggs; Mike Ciccotello / Room 2050

Learn to draw something spooky just in time for Halloween.

WHICH COMES FIRST WORDS OR PICTURES: Gene Barretta; Julie Fortenberry / Room 2040

Ever wonder which comes first– the pictures or the words? Get the inside scoop from two very talented authorstrators!

12:00-12:30

BOOK TITLE CHARADES: Beth Ferry; Jonathan Stutzman / Room 2051

Join in the fun playing charades.

CREATURE FEATURE: Lauren Magaziner; Matt Phelan; Tracey West / Room 2038

Dragons, Peacocks and Krakens, oh my! Listen to three authors talk about why they make these creatures the stars of their stories.

IMAGINATION CAN TAKE YOU ANYWHERE: Hallee Adelman; Julie Fortenberry / Room 2067

Sail in a ship? Soar through the sky? Two authors will captivate you with touching stories about the importance of imagination.

VISUAL VOICES: Brian Biggs; Greg Pizzoli; David Wiesner / Room 2041

Ever look at a picture and hear what the character is saying without reading any words? How does that happen? Hear 3 distinguished author/illustrators discuss how they give voice to their artwork.

WOOF! STORY SHARE / Room 2083 Patio

Come read along with a certified service dog!

12:30-1:30

Most children's and picture book authors and illustrators will be signing books. / Aux Gym

MIDDLE GRADES & YA SESSIONS

Readers ages 10-18 & their families will love these!

11:30-12:30

Most middle grades and YA authors & illustrators will be signing books. / Aux Gym

12:30-1:00

EMPOWERING YOUNG VOICES: Amy Sarig King / Room 2065

Hear from empathetic characters just like you who also ask big questions and use their voices to improve the world.

FIGURING IT OUT: Laurie Morrison; Laura Parnum; Ali Terese / Room 2042

Stories can provide insight into problem-solving and navigating challenges. Hear from three authors whose characters are figuring things out.

POETRY WORKSHOP: Cordelia Jensen; Dana Kramaroff / Room 2050

Two authors of novels-in-verse lead writers in selecting precise language to express specific ideas.

ILLUSTRATOR WORKSHOP: Kay Healy; Liz Montague / Room 2063

Explore how pictures tell stories using pattern, color, and imagination.

TELLING HISTORICAL STORIES: Ruth Behar; Deborah Heiligman; Rita Williams-Garcia / Room 2040

Three authors bring history to life by blending research and empathy into compelling narratives.

12:30-2:00

WOOF! STORY SHARE / Room 2083 Hall Patio

Come read along with a certified service dog!

1:00-1:30

BUILDING A MYSTERY: Lauren Magaziner / Room 2048

Uncover secrets as you find out what makes a good mystery.

BOLD AND BEAUTIFUL POEMS: Traci N. Todd / Room 2067

Hear from a collection that touches on themes such as hope and struggle, joy and pride, home and food, music and family.

SIGNS OF YOUR WORLD WORKSHOP: Alison Green Myers / Room 2051

The best stories start within YOU. Create bold, graphic signs that mix words and images in the image of Grant Snider: Short, powerful signs that tell the world about YOU.

WHO DID IT?: Laura Parnum; Dianne Salerni / Room 2038

Is a mystery solved before or after the author starts writing?

YAY, YOU!: Jesse Callans; Torrey Maldonado / Room 2041

Two authors share their stories that celebrate individuality, self-expression, and embracing identity.

1:30-2:00

CRAFTIVISM: Ali Terese / Room 2050

Use your hands and mind to create an object with a message to raise awareness or advocate for a cause.

DAYDREAMER: Cameron Robertson / Room 2064

Meet a character who copes by weaving his reality into a magical realm and who uses his creativity to save both of his worlds from destructive forces.

WRITING WORKSHOP: Traci N. Todd / Room 2063

Use your words to write messages of pride, resistance, and hope.

WRITING YA: De Elizabeth; Helena Haywoode Henry; Kim Johnson / Room 2042

Hear from three writers who craft authentic, powerful stories that entertain, inspire, and empower teens.

YOU'VE GOT THE MAGIC IN YOU: Alex London; Lauren Magaziner, Liz Montague / Room 2040

Join three authors discussing imagination, creativity, and believing in your own magic.

2:00-2:30

FINDING YOUR WAY: Alison Green Myers; Erin Yun / Room 2041

There are many paths that lead to a happy life. Hear from two authors whose characters are finding their way.

STUDENT SHARE: Local Students Ages 2-12 / Library Stairs

Support young writers from our community who are making their voices heard. Maybe you will even feel inspired to step up to the mic!

ILLUSTRATOR WORKSHOP: Sara Goetter; Terry LaBan, Natalie Riess / Room 2051

Use your imagination and your hands to do some visual storytelling.

SOCRATIC SUMMIT: Helena Haywoode Henry / Room 2048

Engage in a dialogue exercise based on the reality show motif in *Last Chance Live!*

WRITING FRIENDS: Lisa Graff; Lisa Greenwald; Caroline Hickey / Room 2038

A trio of IRL friends who often write about friendship share their writing inspirations.

2:30-3:00

DID YOU DO YOUR RESEARCH?: Deborah Heiligman; Katherine Locke; Margo Rabb / Room 2042

Learn about the importance of research whether you are writing about a person, time period, or place.

PENNSYLVANIA HAS STORIES: Kim Johnson; Amy Sarig King / Room 2040

History happens here. Explore how Pennsylvania's landscapes, communities, and history inspire these writers' stories.

PHILLY SPORTS WRITING: Mike Sielski / Room 2063

Dallas XXXXX! Go Birds! Practice crafting headlines that make readers cheer.

STUDENT SHARE: Local Students Ages 13+/ Library Stairs

Support young writers from our community who are making their voices heard. Maybe you will even feel inspired to step up to the mic!

ZINE STATION: Jesse Callans; Terry LaBan; Sunny & Gloomy / Room 2050

Using DIY creativity, explore self-expression as you create your own mini-magazine.

3:00-3:30

BLACK HISTORY IS YOUR HISTORY: Taylor Cassidy / Room 2064

Hear from a Tik Tok star and creator of Fast Black History as she shares her nonfiction debut that blends history and memoir.

HIDDEN TRUTHS: De Elizabeth; Vincent Tirado; Alex Villasante / Room 2041

Untangle secrets, make discoveries, and experiment with truth within these authors' compelling stories.

WORLD BUILDING: Shveta Thakrar / Room 2067

Listen to an excerpt from a writer whose works are vividly strewn with unique and descriptive settings, cultures, and characters.

WRITING WORKSHOP: Isaac Blum / Room 2051

Build character(s) using wit and empathy.