

SpeakTogether

House of SpeakEasy's Educational Initiatives

House of SpeakEasy's SpeakTogether programs connect writers and students in New York City public schools to foster a love of literature and writing, provide insights into what it means to be a writer, and help students develop the critical thinking skills to pursue higher education.

We bring acclaimed writers (and copies of their books) into high school classrooms and auditoriums, including National Book Award finalist Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah; Lincoln Center's first Poet-in-Residence, Mahogany L. Browne; and award-winning New York Times bestselling author Jason Reynolds. Reynolds, who found his way to poetry through rap despite early struggles in English classes, inspires students to see their own experiences as fuel for powerful storytelling. Whether through shared backgrounds or resonant themes, our writers connect with students in ways that feel authentic and meaningful.

Please note that fees shared here are approximate numbers and are subject to change. We work with schools and teachers to adapt our programming to their student body's needs, which changes costs. As a nonprofit, our fees go towards covering direct costs: materials, author times, and our team's time.



Student Matinees

Our in-school matinees bring acclaimed writers into public school auditoriums and theaters, where they share personal, impactful stories with students. Modeled after our public literary cabaret series *Seriously Entertaining at Joe's Pub*, student matinees feature writers from various disciplines (poets, playwrights, novelists, journalists), offering inspiring narratives centered on a preselected theme (e.g., "Seize the Day," "You Only Live Once," "Turn the Page").

Authors perform original stories that align with the event's theme, forging a direct connection with students and demonstrating how storytelling relates to students. Afterward, writers lead breakout sessions where students are encouraged to share their own stories and ask questions. Each student receives a free copy of a book by one of the participating writers, which they are invited to have signed by the author for further engagement.

Class time:	3 hours
Group size:	100-120
True cost:	Approx. \$5,840 (\$48.30 per student)
School fee:	Partner rate is 50% of true cost (\$2,920)
Subsidized rate:	Sliding scale

"Kids need to know how much you care, before they care about how much you know"

— **Torrey Maldonado**, *SpeakTogether* Teacher and author of *Tight*

"Today's performance basically made me feel that I could do anything if I put my mind to it"

— **Kashanti**, Junior at Talent Unlimited High School

Author Talkbacks

Author Talkbacks bring authors and students together. Two authors read excerpts from their books, interview each other about their craft and writing process, and take part in a student-driven Q&A session. Afterward, the authors sign copies of their books and engage with students. House of SpeakEasy coordinates the visits and provides the books.

Class time:	2 hours
Group size:	80-100
True cost:	Approx. \$4,900 (\$49 per student)
School fee:	Partner rate is 50% of true cost (\$2,540)
Subsidized rate:	Sliding scale

Student Storytelling Workshops

Student Storytelling Workshops bring writers and performers together to lead a focused four-to-six-week series with small classes of 15 to 20 students. Participants learn story composition methods alongside storytelling and spoken-word techniques. Throughout the program, students refine their storytelling skills through direct instruction from the writers themselves. The workshop culminates in a student performance of original stories before an audience of peers and teachers. Please see attached video for example of programming outcome.

Class time:	8 hours over 8 weeks (1 hour/session)
Group size:	70-80 (split into groups)
True cost:	Approx. \$16,000 (\$200 per student)
School fee:	Partner rate is 50% of true cost (\$8,000)
Subsidized rate:	Sliding scale



“The SpeakEasy program was eye-opening for me ... It was a really unique experience.”

– Brianna, Junior at Union Settlement

“It helped with my writing ... SpeakEasy helped me express my creativity better.”

– Jael, Junior at Union Settlement

“Enlightening ... that’s the word.”

– Che, Junior at Talent Unlimited High School

“I found who I really was this summer through art. It made me feel like I can tell a story about my life.”

– Danielle, Junior at Union Settlement

College Readiness Essay Workshops

Our summer college readiness workshop supports rising juniors and seniors in identifying self-awareness, college career goals, and crafting personal essays for college applications. Students meet twice weekly for writing sessions, discussions, and peer reviews, where they write and revise college essays, compose poems to enhance their use of figurative language, and develop interviewing skills.

Class time:	16 hours over four weeks (2 hours/session; 2 sessions/week)
Group size:	6-12 students
True cost:	Approx. \$15,250 (\$1,270 per student)
School fee:	Partner rate is 50% of true cost (\$7,625)
Subsidized rate:	Sliding scale

After-School Author Visits

We create custom after-school author visits tailored to your school's needs. These sessions cover writing, story composition, critical thinking, and insights into the professional writing world. Past author participants include John Guare, Susan Cheever, David Gilbert, Margo Jefferson, and Doug Wright. We offer the option of a single writer visiting multiple times throughout the school year.

Class time:	Flexible
Group size:	Flexible
True cost:	Starts at \$3,250
School fee:	Partner rate is 50% of true cost (\$1,625)
Subsidized rate:	Sliding scale

Creative Arts Toolkits

House of SpeakEasy's Creative Arts Toolkits are a library of 45 author videos accompanied by robust, peer-reviewed lesson plans that provide engaging literary arts curricula to teachers and students. Designed for independent use by educators nationwide, these free toolkits introduce a wide range of genres and disciplines—including fiction, poetry, journalism, storytelling, and visual arts. Each toolkit includes craft lessons and project-based activities thoughtfully curated to equip teachers and students with the language and tools to explore and make sense of the world's complexities through literature.

See sample toolkits [here](#).

For custom toolkit development:

[Contact Annie Kiyonaga, Manager of Educational Initiatives](#)

About House of SpeakEasy

House of SpeakEasy is grounded in the belief that the ability to read and write enables a person to know their rights, be confident in their identity, and engage boldly and empathetically with the world around them. Our programs support reading, writing, and public participation in literary culture.

On Stage. In Schools. On the Road.

On Stage

Seriously Entertaining, our monthly literary cabaret at Joe's Pub at The Public Theater, focuses on how writers become writers, how their ideas shape their writing, and how their writing shapes the world. We feature ideas and storytelling for all genres of writers.

In Schools

From in-school matinees and storytelling workshops to college readiness programs, SpeakEasy's educational initiatives bring our authors off the stage and into schools, connecting published authors with students.

On the Road

The SpeakEasy Bookmobile brings books and literary culture across New York and beyond, nurturing the literary landscape wherever it goes. From live readings and author performances to free book distribution, the Bookmobile partners with communities to make reading and writing an accessible resource for everyone.

Discover more at houseofspeakeasy.org