



Author Appearances and Events Q&A / FAQ

One of the most rewarding experiences that comes from being an author is the opportunity to meet prospective readers through events and appearances. The following are frequently asked questions that address all aspects of events, and whether they might be effective for your book's promotion.

Q: How do bookstores decide which books to feature in their autographing programs?

A: Bookstores actively seek out books and authors to support their in-store programs. They typically schedule events that they believe will stimulate traffic and sales and promote goodwill in the community. If your book is geared to professionals in your field or has a very narrow audience, it might be difficult to schedule author signings in stores that cater to the general reader. Because bookstores can be quite selective about their author events, opportunities for signings are limited. Publishers are in keen competition to schedule their authors for slots in dynamic, well-organized, and popular stores. To ensure enough lead time to promote and organize events, bookstores usually schedule signings at least **three months ahead**.

Q: What if I have time to schedule a last-minute signing during an unexpected trip?

A: Because stores fill their calendars and promote signings months in advance, most will not schedule spontaneous events.

Q: I'd like to have a signing at my local bookstore during December to take advantage of holiday sales opportunities. Can this be arranged?

A: Because of limited sales space during the holiday season, many bookstores hesitate to schedule author events between Thanksgiving and New Year's for books that do not have wide appeal to gift-givers (bestsellers, cookbooks, illustrated books, etc.).

Q: Where will my author signings be scheduled?

A: Typically, you will enjoy the best turnout in your hometown and local area. We will review your author's questionnaire for suggested signing venues. If you are traveling to an area that is related to your topic, we would be pleased to investigate signing opportunities for you. **We need to know travel plans as early as possible in order to maximize chances of scheduling an event.**

Q: What if I arrange an event myself—is that ok?

A: Events should not be scheduled until **after** the book's publication date. Earlier events risk not having books available for sale. Note that we are unable to pay for expedited shipping and can't drop ship books from a printer directly to events.

If you have contacts at a venue that you feel comfortable approaching about an event, feel free to do so! If you do confirm an event, be sure to alert UNC Press as soon as possible with the venue's contact information, the time, date, and location for the signing.

Q: What about signing opportunities in cities where I will be attending a meeting or conference?

A: If you'll be attending a conference and want to explore bookstore events in that city, let us know early. These slots can be competitive due to the number of authors in town, but we're happy to try, particularly if your book's audience is more general interest and if there's a local angle to your topic.

Q: Who handles the promotion of bookstore events?

A: Once an event is confirmed, UNC Press will send the venue promotional materials and an email (copying you) confirming the event details. UNC Press also posts the signing date, time, and location on our blog and will promote your event widely across our social media channels.

Bookstores handle their own local promotion, which may include email newsletters, social media, signage, and community calendars. If you'd like a promotional graphic or help with your own invites or posts, just ask!

Q: How can I invite people to my signing?

A: Your own outreach is key! Personal invitations—whether via email, text, social media, or newsletter—are often the most effective in getting people in the door. Many stores will ask for a list of local contacts to help with outreach.

Q: How many copies of my book will be available at the signing?

A: Bookstores determine their own order quantities for author signings. UNC Press advises on quantities and ensures the book will be available at the event.

A: Will I be reimbursed for expenses related to my author signing?

A: While we do have a modest marketing budget to support key publicity efforts, we're unfortunately not in a position to provide funding for travel or event costs. Be sure to speak to your publicist to determine what support—such as promotional materials, outreach to venues, or help identifying local opportunities—we may be able to provide.

Q: What will be expected of me at the signing?

A: Some bookstores will seat you at a table with a display of your books for an informal "meet and greet." Most will prefer that you have a brief presentation, an introduction to your topic, followed by audience Q&A and a signing. Inviting a local moderator to join you in conversation is a great way to enrich the event and expand its reach—especially if they have their own community or following in the area. The length and format of your presentation may vary from store to store. It's a good idea to develop a short (fifteen to twenty minute) informal talk that will appeal to a general audience and help stimulate discussion in a variety of venues. In most cases, store signings should be informal and relaxed.

Bring energy, curiosity, and maybe a friend for support. If you have postcards, a prop, or even refreshments to share, they can help make the event more inviting. The goal is to be warm, accessible, and open to conversation.

Q: How will I know if my signing has been a success?

A: Try not to gauge success by the number of books sold or the number of people in attendance.

Events can build awareness, generate goodwill with bookstores, and support long-term buzz for your book. Signed copies frequently stay on prominent display and continue selling after an event has taken place.