# Lucy Ann Unwin

# The Octopus, Dadu and Me

## School Events.

**Events suitable for:** Key Stage 2

**Key Themes:** Animal facts, friendship, empathy, cherishing older generations, inspiring creativity, understanding emotions.

## In-person events:

I offer an assembly presentations, smaller class workshops, or a combination as a discounted half day or full day rate.

**Assembly. (45 - 60 mins. max 300 students)**

**Author presentation, reading and Q&A.**

*A 45 minute interactive presentation with slides, suitable for an assembly or large group. Discovering the things I loved as a child that led me to become an author and why we’re all born storytellers. We also spend some time with some rather magnificent cephalopods in The Great Big Octopus True or False Quiz. Ending on a Q&A.*

* *Storytelling: why I’ve not always been a writer, but I’ve always loved stories, thanks to computer games, comics, reading, playing and daydreaming. You’re all storytellers!*
* *We go through each examining how computer games are great distillations of PLOT, comics express CHARACTER, playing makes you skilled at WORLD BUILDING and reading and daydreaming have it all!*
* *Octopuses: I invite the children to join in a TRUE or FALSE octopus quiz. Includes a 1-2 min reading introducing Ian the Octopus. If there is time, I share my Top 5 octopus species.*
* *Finishing on a Q+A — ask me anything!*

**Technical requirements:**

Means to display a powerpoint/ keynote presentation, or a projector I can plug my mac into.

**Class workshops (30 mins, max 30 students)**

**Option 1 — Editing: Fiction vs News**

* I’ll describe my editing process for fiction: namely I draft a whole book in a month, then take a year + to edit.
* I’ll share the waves I edit in — from big picture down to details — plus the professional editing process before publication.
* I describe how this contrasts to my old job, writing for broadcast news at the BBC. Fiction editing often involves adding texture in, while editing for broadcast involves stripping to the core details.
* Exercise 1: We’ll look at a bit of news text and examine how it would be edited for broadcast, then look at how it might be told differently if we were fictionalising the story.
* Exercise 2: I’ll share a story and children can try and re-write it for news and/or fiction.

**Option 2 — The Happy/Sad Octopus: Empathy and Emotions.**

* First we’ll use a selection of happy/sad reversible octopus toys to identify and label complex and confusing emotions, using examples from *The Octopus, Dadu and Me*.
* We can discuss empathy, and how we can practice it.
* Talk about how we use *memories* of emotions when we write, how they feel in your body, and how you can use that in your writing.
* Private writing session about times we felt a strong emotion.

**Option 3 — The Secret Letter: Appreciating an Older Generation**

* We’ll talk about Sashi’s feelings for Dadu in the book and some of her regrets.
* We’ll learn to fold an origami secret letter, while thinking of a question or request for someone older we know.
* We’ll look at the illustrations from the book and then decorate our letter to take home and pass on.

**Option 4 - Pet Perspective: Creative Writing Workshop.**

* Discuss character want, character need and conflict through the eyes of an animal.
* Discover how ‘want’ and ‘conflict’ are the basis of all story, with examples.
* Look at animal/pet perspective using printout of comic strips from The Octopus, Dadu and Me.
* Invent our own funny animal story together based on what we’ve learnt, and have time to continue it alone using either a comic strip layout or writing.

**Option 5 - Guided Free Write session.**

* Inspired by my time working with the 826Valencia creative writing tutoring charity in San Francisco, I will run a session encouraging kids to write their own authentic stories using free-writing technique.
* I will provide prompts and guidance and students can share their work if desired.

## Virtual Events

**Author presentation**

Same content as in-person

**Quick Q&A.**

A 20 minute Q&A for classes who have already read the book — ask me anything you like about writing it, or indeed anything else.

**Technical requirements:**

*Zoom /Teams/Equivalent with ability to screen share*

## Fees

**In person**

In person Author Presentation: **£150** + travel (standard class rail fare or 45p per mile if driving)

In person Class Workshop: **£100** + travel

In person Half Day - presentation plus 1 workshop: **£200** + travel.

In person Full Day - presentation plus 3 workshops (can be 1 workshop delivered to three classes, or three workshops to one class!): **£350** + travel

**Virtual**

Virtual Presentation (60 mins): **£75**

2 x 60 min: **£140**

3 x60 min: **£200**

Virtual Q&A (max 30 mins): **~~£30~~ Currently FREE for classes that have read the book.**

## Book Sales

Can be arranged through my local children’s bookshop, The Book Nook, in Hove. Books will be available to buy at a discounted rate and delivered to your school ahead of the event. A letter to parents with details of how to purchase, and a dedicated webpage for orders ahead of the event will be provided.

Alternatively, I am happy to work with any local bookshop you have a relationship with.

It is helpful if students have started to read some of *The Octopus, Dadu and Me* before the event, but not essential.