

The purpose of this document is to aid speakers and their offices in planning and preparing the basics of their Speakers for Schools talk. Be sure to see our **Talk Strands PDF** for specific topics suggested.

Before the Talk: Key Points for Planning

It is very important to give time to discuss the event with the school contact at least 2 weeks in advance of the school visit – please let us know if you have trouble scheduling this or the school is not responsive. The call will help to:

- **Know your Audience**
Your audiences can vary from 50 pupils to an entire Sixth Form and can be between 11–18 years of age – we try to encourage schools to select a broad range.
- **Set the Format**
Speakers for Schools talks are designed to be **interactive**, enabling students to ask direct questions after a short talk. The desired format is therefore that of a 20 minute talk, followed by a 40 minute Q&A.
- **Arrange to meet the Headteacher/Deputy**
Meeting the School Head before the talk is a great chance to learn more about the school, students and school community, all contributing to making your talk relevant to your student cohort.

During the Talk: Top Tips

1. **“Have a clear message and introduce yourself”**
Have a clear message you want students to take away. Despite prior student briefing by teachers it is always good to assume students know nothing about you; setting the scene is therefore crucial in ensuring good talk flow. With a good introduction and a clear message, the audience will be more involved which will help make the talk a success.
2. **“Be candid and genuine”**
Acknowledging mistakes, speaking candidly and admitting to difficulties helps personify a journey for students who might rarely hear this from successful figures, and helps it feel achievable for them too.
3. **“Be interested in students’ perspectives too”**
Inspiration happens best when dialogue is two-way. Show interest in your group and engage them by probing to see what their thoughts on your topic are and work around those.
4. **“Students won’t beat around the bush. ”**
It helps to remember questions about age, lifestyle or earnings are not personal but help them help contextualise the talk and your work. However be aware of general shyness and peer pressure that can be prevalent at that age.

Finally: Be sure logistics such as use of PowerPoint/AV, parking, the contact you’ll meet at reception and full running order are agreed in advance with the school. Any questions please contact info@speakers4schools.org or 020 3092 9743.