

### Message from the Author

I am the author of *Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe* (Random House Children's Books/winner, Southern Book Prize/Amazon Teacher's Pick/Publisher's Weekly Bestseller). I am also a lawyer and a first-generation college graduate. I've now presented to over 23,000 educators and students on a variety of topics listed below and I love to collaborate with educators to create new presentations to support your work. My passion is helping students increase skills that promote grit and resiliency, improve writing skills, and use time in nature to destress and recharge. I also love sharing the story of how writing changed my life and took me from the tiny rural ghost town where I grew up to Millsaps College, Yale Law School, and beyond. If writing can help me achieve my dreams, it can do the same for your students. I am also a member of the Aspen Global Leadership Network and the Founder of <https://Outdoorosity.org>, a free resource for information and inspiration about nature. I love visiting classrooms across the United States and across the world. I've presented at the American Library Association Conference, the Children and Nature Network International Conference, the Fay B. Kaigler Conference, the International Association of School Librarianship Conference, the National Council of Teachers of English Conference, the Texas Library Association Conference, and numerous state educator conferences, nErDcamps, and book festivals. In short, I love to connect with people like you and your students!

### Rates

**In-Person Visits:** In lieu of an honorarium for presentations, I request that you purchase \$1500 in copies of *Smack Dab* and give them to children in need in your community. I believe in supporting independent bookstores and request that you purchase from your local independent bookstore. If needed, I'm happy to work with your organization to obtain grants to cover book purchases and travel costs.

**Virtual Visits:** Please contact me at [Jo@JoHackl.com](mailto:Jo@JoHackl.com) about arranging a low-cost virtual visit. I also provide free virtual visits for Battle of the Books teams for states in which *Smack Dab* is on the Battle of the Books list.

**Free Activities:** Working with experienced educators, my team and I have developed a bounty of free resources for educators and other readers, available at

<https://johackl.com/activities/>:

- Building Grit Kits to help students increase skills that promote grit, resiliency, and social and emotional learning
- Writing and Revision Toolkit with a bookmark revision tool to help students take their writing to the next level
- A Book Club Kit with Book Club discussion questions for young and older readers, a book-inspired playlist featuring Mississippi artists, and a Book Club menu featuring book-inspired recipes
- Summer Adventure Kit
- Educator's Guide and over 30 lesson plans
- Series of "Woods Time Adventures" to encourage engagement with the natural world
- Series of "Cricket Challenges" for readers to extend their reading experience into the real world, available on my [Youtube channel](#)

- Activity Guide with activities that can be performed in school, community, and home settings
- Book trailer
- An interactive map with links to the real places that inspired parts of the book
- A “hidden objects” search featuring items from the clue trail in the book
- Bookmarks with fun, free things to do outdoors and ways to make reading more fun
- An interactive clue trail challenge that readers can solve using things that they learned from the book; readers who solve the clue trail receive a printable clue solvers badge

### **Presentations Topics:**

I love to collaborate with educators and am happy to tailor a presentation to your needs or to help plan a whole-school read or book fair activity. Here’s a link to information about some of the activities on which I’ve collaborated with educators <https://johackl.com/activities/educators/using-smack-dab-in-the-classroom/>. In addition, below is a list of presentations I frequently give. Each of these can be presented in lecture or workshop format and I’m happy to tailor a presentation to your audience.

#### **Writing and Revision Techniques that Really Work**

Would you like to take your students’ writing to the next level? This session will equip you and your students with tools and techniques to make their writing (both academic and creative) more powerful, more persuasive, and more fun. It also encourages students to embrace revision as an integral part of the writing process. Handouts include a variety of writing prompts, brainstorming tools, tips to keep inspiration close at hand, and bookmark revision tools designed to be used for both creative writing and academic essays.

#### **Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Writing but Were Afraid to Ask**

Now is the chance for your students to get a behind-the-scenes look at the writing process. In this interactive session, I offer insights about lessons I’ve learned, mistakes I’ve made, and how my writing and revision process has evolved. I also answer student questions and brainstorm with students about how to turn their ideas into polished pieces of work.

#### **A Ghost Town, A Reclusive Artist, and a Poetry-Loving Dog: Drawing Inspiration from Real Life**

Sometimes the best ideas for works of fiction come from real life. This session provides a behind-the-scenes look at the inspiration and research for *Smack Dab* and explores how participants can draw upon their own experiences to create characters who come alive, settings that feel lived-in, and plots that keep the reader engaged from the first page to the last word. The presentation and handouts include worksheets for mining personal experiences for character, setting and plot ideas, and tools and techniques to translate those ideas into stories that connect with readers.

#### **Using the Power of Poetry to Improve Your Overall Writing**

Poetry can be a powerful tool for students to express their diverse perspectives, honor the perspectives of others, and improve overall writing skills. This session presents tips and techniques that poets use in their craft to brainstorm, create and refine their work. The session also provides practical ways to help students use poetic techniques to

become more critical readers and to make their own writing stronger. Handouts include a revision tool to use the power of poetry to improve overall writing.

### **Explore Your Natural World through Cricket Challenges**

Study after study has shown that spending time in nature can reduce stress, boost creativity, and improve well-being, and that students benefit from making cross-curricular connections, but how do you inspire students to use nature to make connections between their readings, their own world and STEM subjects? This session presents a series of nature-based “Cricket Challenges,” nature-based activities designed to encourage curiosity and interaction with the natural world and to help students make cross-curricular STEM connections to fictional stories and non-fiction works. Handouts include Cricket Challenges to help students explore their natural world.

### **Harnessing the Power of Nature to Make You Happier, More Creative, and Less Stressed**

Study after study shows that engaging with nature makes students happier, more creative, and less stressed, but how do you start? This session presents easy, free, and low-cost ways to make nature a part of every day. Handouts include free nature activities.

### **Becoming the Hero in Your Own Story with the Building Grit Kit**

We all know that grit, resiliency, and social-emotional awareness are key qualities for student success but how do we go about building them? This session introduces students to the free “Building Grit Kit,” (developed and revised over three years in collaboration with experienced professionals) and primes students for success. A version of the kit is available for both young readers and young adults. Each kit helps students become the hero in their own story by setting personal goals, brainstorming potential obstacles to those goals, and developing strategies to help them navigate around those obstacles. Through the activities, students identify their strengths and things they would like to work on. Students also identify positive adult role models who can help them achieve their goals. They explore positive habits that they can build into their daily lives to help them become the best version of themselves. Each kit also includes team-building activities and nature activities to help students explore their natural world and reduce stress. Handouts include the Building Grit Kit.

### **Engaging Your Curiosity to Take Your Writing to the Next Level**

Curious students are engaged learners. This session provides the backstory of how curiosity created a career and a novel. In the session I lead students through an exploration of things about which they are curious and, with handouts and activities, provide students with a template to capture their ideas and map out next steps for turning their ideas into academic essays, research papers, and creative writing pieces.

### **Making Books Come Alive with Music**

We all know that students learn in a variety of ways. In this session I help students explore the book they are studying by creating a chapter-by-chapter playlist, with a narrative explaining the connection between the song and the chapter, and playlist artwork that relates to the overall theme of the book. I provide examples of each. Students learn to critically examine each element in their book and song, and to write from the perspective of a music critic as they engage more deeply with the world of the

book's characters and explore the setting, history, and culture that shaped the book characters' choices.

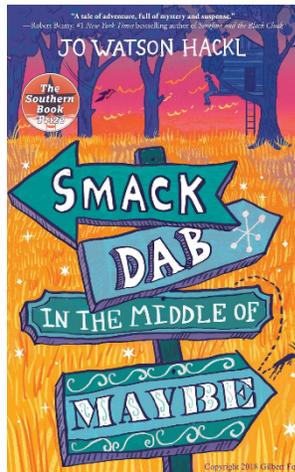
### Ordering Books

Teachers/librarians will be provided a PDF flyer with ordering instructions to send home with students. I'm happy to personally autograph each book either before or at the event.

### Technology needs

A projector, microphone, and screen.

Contact me at [Jo@JoHackl.com](mailto:Jo@JoHackl.com). I look forward to visiting your school, library, or community group.



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