

Help K-8 Students Turn Anxiety into Curiosity through Adventure Storytelling

About Me

Bestselling author of 10 novels specializing in historical fiction and travelogue. Four of these capture local history and culture, making them ideal for engaging students in this region. Long-time member and Chair of the Southwest Chapter of The Explorers Club (TEC).

My Speaking Programs for K-8 Students

I connect with students to inspire curiosity as a powerful tool to overcome anxiety through wildlife and exploration storytelling. My talks help students notice what happens in their bodies when they feel scared or stressed, then practice using a “pause” to make calmer, safer choices.

Three-Part Program (Modular by Grade Level)

Leg 1 - The Body's Alarm and the Pause (K-8, emphasis K-5)

Wildlife encounter stories where I describe feeling my heart race, breathing change, and muscles tense, then show how I recognized those signals and chose a calmer, safer response. Students learn to notice physical sensations in their bodies (heart rate, breathing, muscle tension) and use strategies to manage stress and emotions.

Leg 2 - Oscar the Stoic Gorilla (3-8)

A mountain gorilla story showing how primates' minds are wired like--and unlike--ours and how they manage fear and conflict. This supports responsible decision-making and social awareness, giving students a memorable model of calm under pressure.

Leg 3 - The Explorer's Choice (4-8)

Exploration and travel stories in which fear and curiosity are both present. Students identify where in the story the body's stress response is activated and how reframing the situation helps. This connects to social studies (decision-making, exploration and risk) and reinforces goal-setting and responsible decision-making.

Standards Alignment

Arizona K-Adult Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies

My visits align with Arizona's K-Adult Social and Emotional Learning Competencies, especially **Self-Awareness** and **Self-Management**, where students learn to notice physical sensations in their bodies (heart rate, breathing, muscle tension) and use strategies to manage stress and emotions.

Arizona English Language Arts - Speaking and Listening

Students listen to and discuss live stories, ask and answer questions, and reflect on key ideas, directly supporting Arizona ELA Speaking and Listening standards in listening comprehension, collaboration, and responding to a speaker.

Session Details

- Format: Interactive storytelling with discussion and reflection
- Length: 30–55 minutes (adjustable by grade level)
- Group size: Flexible (classroom, grade level, or all-school assembly)
- Customization: Content can be tailored with counselors/teachers to fit specific classroom themes (English Composition, Earth Science, Social Studies, Photography)

Program Fees

- Single Assembly: \$500
- Two Assemblies (same day): \$800–\$900
- Full District Day (multiple assemblies + staff session): \$1,500–\$2,000
- Title I Funding: This program is designed to align with Title I, SEL initiatives, and school enrichment budgets.

Connections & Resources

The Explorers Club (TEC) and the EC Cubs program - As Chair of the Southwest Chapter of The Explorers Club, I organize a quarterly film festival that brings world-renowned scientists and explorers to the Southwest, including Sedona, Tucson, Phoenix, Santa Fe, and Las Vegas. Through TEC's Explorers Cubs initiative, I work to connect students directly with these explorers, creating real-life science and exploration experiences beyond the classroom.

How School Leaders Can Support This Program - Your endorsement and support can unlock district-wide opportunities:

- Enable access to schools and facilitate funding partnerships.
- Promote student participation in unique experiential learning events.
- Connect students with world-class scientists and explorers through TEC programming.

Testimonial

"Through the art of storytelling, Robert reminded us that curiosity transforms fear into wonder – that every unknown can become an adventure when approached with an open and questioning mind. Thank you for inspiring our thinkers, writers, and dreamers at Verde Valley School!"

(Zane Dickey, teacher, Theory of Knowledge Class, VVS)

Ready to Bring This Experience to Your School?

Please contact Robert with any questions:

Robert Louis DeMayo

Phone: (928) 300-3225

Email: rdemayo07@aol.com

Website: www.robertlouisdemayo.com

Available for individual classroom visits,
grade-level assemblies, and all-school
programs throughout Arizona.

