

## School Visits with Author Holly Thompson

**Holly Thompson** is the author of the young adult verse novel *Orchards*, the picture book *The Wakame Gatherers* and the novel *Ash*. She is also the editor of *Tomo: Friendship Through Fiction—An Anthology of Japan Teen Stories*. Originally from Massachusetts, she is a longtime resident of Japan, where she teaches creative and academic writing at Yokohama City University. She serves as the Regional Advisor for the Tokyo Chapter of the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators. Visit her website [www.hatbooks.com](http://www.hatbooks.com) and her blog <http://hatbooks.blogspot.com>.



Holly has presented and led creative writing workshops in schools, universities, after-school groups and hospital wards in the U.S., Japan, Cambodia, Australia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Mongolia. She presents at teaching and writing conferences, as well as organizations relating to interculturalism and Japanese culture. She is happy to give readings, workshops and presentations to students from elementary grades through university, to writing teachers, and to adult writers and readers. All of the presentations include Q&A. She is very willing to combine presentations and adapt them to fit a particular curriculum unit or teaching focus.

### A few of Holly's Young Adult Presentations:

**The Research Behind *Orchards*.** This PowerPoint presentation takes students to the Japanese mikan orange villages that were models for Kohama village in *Orchards* and introduces local customs and traditions.

**Telling Your Stories in Verse.** This writing workshop introduces teens to verse novels—the what, the why, and the how—and teaches some poetry tools used in narrative verse, then leads students to writing their own scenes in verse.

**Story Seeds--Preserving, Sowing and Growing Story Ideas.** This talk focuses on the many ways that writers can gather ideas and nurture them into creative works of fiction.

**From Fact to Fiction.** This writing workshop focuses on generating stories from observation and experience and helps students make the leap from describing actual events to creating fiction.

### A few of Holly's Children's Presentations:

**The *Wakame Gatherers*.** A reading of *The Wakame Gatherers* (Shen's Books) can be combined with an introduction to Japanese seaweed cultivation and harvesting through PowerPoint presentation, demonstration on seaweed spore tying and wakame rehydration. The book can be used in conjunction with educational units on the sea, grandparents, sharing cultures and Japan.

**The Story Behind *The Wakame Gatherers*.** A partial reading of *The Wakame Gatherers* (Shen's Books) and introduction to wakame cultivation and harvesting can be followed by discussion of how the book evolved from scribbled ideas, photographs and onsite research, to manuscript, to storyboard collaboration with the illustrator, to final book. A storyboarding activity for students can be included OR fiction writing exercises can be introduced with a focus on plot development and story structure.

**Poetry Workshops--Creating Odes, Cinquains and Other Types of Poetry.** Readings of odes and cinquain poems can be followed by workshops in which students create poems and focus on developing powerful imagery.

### A few of Holly's Adult Presentations:

**Writing Verse Novels for Young Adults.** This talk introduces with many examples the varying styles of verse novels, shares some elements of narrative verse, and explores why novels in verse resonate with young adults.

**Tackling Novel Revision: Techniques and Tips.** Your novel's first draft is done; now to revise. But how to create order from chaos? How to keep the big picture in mind while focusing on details? How to keep track of story elements and deepen themes? This talk offers helpful techniques and practical approaches to tackling novel revision.

**Crafting Intercultural Fiction—A Workshop on Writing Fiction Across Cultures.** This workshop offers guidance on writing intercultural fiction. Dos and don'ts are discussed with particular focus on character development, setting portrayal, bilingual dialogue and traps to avoid.

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