

# How to Schedule & Book Dates for your Science Seminar

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- Come up with a list of prospective dates based on your school's academic calendar. Avoid holidays, mid-term & finals weeks, dates clashing with school performances or other potential problem dates. Have your school's (or district's) calendar, as well as performing arts and testing schedules handy when making up the list.
- Choose a day of the week and a time on which to hold your seminars. Having sessions on the same day of the week and at the same time helps people to remember when to attend.
- Decide how many dates you want to have per semester. You may want to discuss this with teachers so as to decide how much extra credit each wants to offer per semester for attending sessions and completing the extra credit form. We do six per semester (12 a year) but some science cafes meet every month or every other month. It all depends on what you can support in terms of attendance. Maybe start with 4 per semester and ramp it up the next year as you gain buy-in and attendance.
- Once you have your list of possible dates, start offering them to prospective speakers. Split the dates up and offer several to each speaker, but do not offer the same set of dates to each speaker. In your boiler plate email, ask whether there are particular months which would be better for the speaker. Speakers may have grant deadlines and conferences that make certain months impossible.
- When a speaker confirms availability on a particular date or set of dates, the other dates you offered become available and can be offered to another, as yet uninvited speaker (or a speaker unable to make any of the dates you offered). As speakers confirm or reject dates, you can add these dates to the pool to be offered to other prospective speakers.
- Submit your facility use application form before the required deadline. Many school districts require a few weeks before the date. Talk with your school or site administrators to find out what is required. Make contact with site managers & speakers the week before each event to make sure everything is go.
- Speakers sometimes do need to switch dates. Checking in on them a month or so before their talk can be a good idea. Make sure you have extra dates for them to choose from and be sure to let your audience know of any date changes via email, updated flyers and social media. It is especially important to let site administrators and teachers know! You may have to submit an amended facilities use form so be sure to have extras.
- If you have questions about any of this, feel free to email me at the address above. Enjoy.