

## Dos and Don'ts for Author Photos

It can be a good photo without being a good photo for an author photo.

An author photo should help a person pick you out of a crowd. If the last good photo of you was taken over 10 years ago, it is time for an update.

**Framing:** Your face should be most of the frame. Your from head to toe does not help. You in a nice scene of standing at distance on a beach or in a forest is too small.

**Focus:** The photo should not be blurry. Be centred in frame.

**Lighting:** It should be well-lit so the face is not in harsh shadows or grainy. Be in natural light, ideally an overcast day outdoors. The cloudy day lighting also is kinder to wrinkles than overhead indoor light.

**Uncluttered:** A photo that frames the head and shoulders or upper half of the body is fine so long as your face is recognizable. Think of i.d. photos: no hats and their shadows, hair or sunglasses obscuring the face.

**Size:** A photo should be big enough to be useable. This means at least 1000 pixels in the narrowest dimension. This is to allow for print quality, publicity posters, re-sizing to various screens. It should leave room if the photo needs to be cropped to be round, square, portrait or landscape according to website, instagram or other media needs for shape and text overlay.

**Live vs. Posed:** Photos taken during reading tends to be of a stressed person mid-facial expression blurred in dark lighting. If you are uncomfortable being photographed, a professional can help.

**Professional vs. Selfie:** A professionally done portrait is good but not necessary. Most people don't like getting their picture taken but a good photographer can make you feel more comfortable and get good results. For the price you get paid for some readings, you can get a portrait to use for years. (But not for 20 years.)

**Selfie, or by a friend:** If you are going to do it yourself, here are some tips:

- Use a non-cluttered background.
- Look straight at the camera, or to the side, not the unflattering under-the-chin perspective
- Stand near a daytime window 45 to 90 degrees or nearly facing out a window with the camera facing along the wall or into the room. Not with your back to a window. This gives a soft even light without a dark side to the face.
- Don't use a flash: If its attached to the camera it shouldn't be used. It flattens the face not flatters. It blows out highlights, especially cheeks, foreheads and men's bald patches. All the curves make the shape and if they are all black or white, it's harder to make out the person.
- Go to your happy place
- Take dozens of photos to choose the best