



A Is for Musk Ox

Erin Cabatingan, Matthew Myers (Illustrations)

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A is for musk ox because musk oxen are annoying and always about as aggravating as absolutely anyone alive.

A Is for Musk Ox Details

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From Reader Review A Is for Musk Ox for online ebook

babyhippoface says

I know what you're thinking, *it's supposed to say 'A is for apple'*. But that's what *every* abc book says, according to Musk Ox. He wants to change this book up a little, make it less boring and predictable.

He definitely achieves that goal, in spite of poor Zebra's protests that he's ruining the book, and that he can't use "musk ox" for the letter a, since there's not even an A *in* musk ox. Makes no difference to Musk Ox, who blasts his way through the alphabet, finding, amazingly, that nearly each and every letter can stand for musk ox (if you try hard enough). B is for musk ox, for example, because their fur is brown and black. G is for musk ox because musk oxen eat grass and live in Greenland. Q is for musk ox because the underwool of a musk ox is call qiviut. Sound reasoning, that.

I read this to some kindergarten classes this morning. (Zebra and Musk Ox talk like they're from Brooklyn when I read it. I have no idea why.) The kids liked it, and they laughed, but the more mature kids and better readers liked it more, which tells me it's probably better suited to kids a little older in a read-aloud setting. I'm thinking 2nd graders would really like it.

For use inside the curriculum, though, I think it would be a great creative writing lesson for kids around 6th grade (or younger gifted kids). They could take just about any topic they're researching, and write ABC books just like this, where every letter applies to their topic, whether it's football or Plymouth Colony or metamorphosis. It might take a great deal of research and outside-the-box thinking, but what fun projects it would make!

Samantha says

Very, very similar to Z is for Moose by Bingham (which I LOVE LOVE LOVE), but substitute the Moose for a Musk Ox. Beginning with eating the apple which traditionally represents the letter A in alphabet books the musk ox turns up on every page of the alphabet and justifies why that letter should stand for musk ox.

Funny, but wordier than Bingham's book and the illustrations displayed some weird facial expressions for the musk ox and zebra. The zebra made angry faces that verged on scary for me. Too long to be a read aloud. A newer idea for alphabet books, but a little long to keep the joke running.

Kristen says

This works beautifully for a writing lesson on voice, and is a fantastic springboard for kids who have to do a report on an animal or a state or a person... It's not my pick for teaching the alphabet, but I do love how it can be used with older kids. And who can resist a musk ox who, when asked why do male musk oxen headbutt at twenty-five miles an hour, ten, twelve, sometimes twenty times, responds, "It's all for the ladies."

Kelsey says

Age: Preschool - 1st grade

A funny story of a stubborn musk ox that insists on using the alphabet to describe himself because no one cares about the middle letter M. Although the Musk Ox chooses to use some different words, the repetition of "A is for Musk Ox," "B is for Musk Ox," "L is for musk ox" gets tedious after awhile. Still a funny tale with an unusual protagonist.

Fjóla says

How curious that two books with the exact same wacky theme should come out in the same year, but this book is strangely similar to Z Is for Moose, just replacing the moose with musk ox. I think they're both good, but the moose book probably gives for a better read aloud. This one felt longer, it's more "busy" and the musk ox is frankly quite a bit more cocky and obnoxious than the confused and out-of-place moose in Z Is for Moose. It may also be a better fit for a slightly older crowd, that is kindergarten - first grade, while the moose book would be fine for preschoolers.

Joella www.cinjoella.com says

This book should have started with "A is for Apple"; however, Musk Ox ate the apple. So Zebra is upset that his "book is ruined" but Musk Ox thinks that the book would be much better when "A" is for "awesome...Arctic...and Alaska" all of which describe Musk Ox or where Musk Ox lives. And so goes the rest of the alphabet. Musk Ox has taken over and the majority of the alphabet is used to describe Musk Ox. The story is funny, the illustrations have the right amount of quirky animal characteristics (the zebra wears a striped tie) and laughable details (the Musk Ox often has the alphabet letter objects in the background as he takes over each letter). This isn't a book for the young kids who are unsure about alphabet letters. Instead, this is perfect for younger elementary school aged kids who know their letters and understand how funny it is that this goes against the conventional alphabet book.

Tasha says

The story begins right at the cover with Musk Ox chomping on the apple that would have been what "A" stands for. Instead, he insists that A is really for musk ox. Zebra argues with him, after all there isn't even a single letter A in musk ox. Musk Ox explains using lots of words that start with "A" that musk oxen are Awesome; they live in the Artic and even Alaska. Turn the page and you will see that B is also for musk ox, rather than baby. Again, Musk Ox has plenty of explanations for exactly why. This silliness continues through the book, forming a pattern until you reach the letter M. And I don't want to spoil the surprise, but I bet you won't guess what M stands for.

This zany book is filled with humor, pure cheer and a jolly spirit.

This is not an alphabet book for those first learning their letters. Instead, children who know how the alphabet works and who are veterans of ABC books will enjoy it most. They will get the jokes that are being

poked at more normal alphabet books as well as the more pointed humor of the storyline. Cabatingan's writing, done entirely in dialogue, is a pleasure to read aloud. It has a natural flow and a great sense of timing.

Myers' illustrations are simple and quite silly when called for. The personalities of the two characters come across in their body language.

A hilarious alphabet book that is guaranteed to get kids giggling. Appropriate for ages 5-7.

Dolly says

We recently read *Musk Ox Counts* by Erin Cabatingan and Matthew Myers and we really liked it. When posting my review for that book here, we discovered that this team also collaborated on this book. So we definitely wanted to read this one as well.

This is a humorous alphabet book, again featuring a musk ox (named Joseph) and a zebra. The narrative is very humorous and our girls loved the dialogue between the zebra and musk ox.

I loved that the book also teaches about musk oxen, such as where they live, what they eat, their unique body characteristics, and the fact that they've been around since the times of the Wooly mammoths. It doesn't hurt that the illustrations are hilarious, too. Overall, we really enjoyed reading this book together.

Stefanie Kellum says

A hilarious alphabet book where the musk ox tells you why every letter could stand for musk ox. I love this!

Samantha Davis-durham says

Have you ever wonder why musk ox are just so cool? this book tell you from a 2 z why there just so interesting. If you've ever had just burning desire to find out about these interesting creatures pick up this book it is a real page turner.

GraceAnne says

I suspect I just don't like anarchy in the alphabet. At least not today.

Laura Salas says

A IS FOR MUSK OX, by Erin Cabatingan. This is so funny (and I even learned a lot about musk oxen)! "F is for musk ox -- Because musk oxen have fur. And lots of it. Does this fur make me look fat?"

I love the way Musk Ox finds a way to be every single letter--except for M. "Well, I felt kinda bad about what happened back at the beginning of the book, so I figured the apple could have my spot."

This is a musk ox and a zebra with loads of personality. The relationship between them is a hoot--kids will love it. And how fun would it be in a classroom to have the kids make an alphabet book about themselves, figuring out why they should be each letter.

Even if you've already read and enjoyed (I did) Kelly Bingham's *Z IS FOR MOOSE*, don't miss *A IS FOR MUSK OX*.

Pamela says

Cute book, but I much preferred *Z is for Moose* by Laura Bingham. *A is for Musk Ox* is a picture book, yes, with some funny pictures, but the length of the text is much too long to use for a storytime.

I did, however, learn a lot about musk oxen that I didn't know before. :)

Cheryl says

This was a debut?! I could totally imagine reading it over and over to my kids w/out getting tired of it. I love how the original alphabet book shows through Joseph's improvements, including a Rainbow that ends in the playpen full of baby musk ox. I will def. look for more by both creators.

Betsy says

I confess that I went into this book with a chip on my shoulder. After all, *Z Is for Moose* was AWESOME and hilariously funny and clever. This sounded like a knock off (although both books were independently in production with neither author/illustrator team knowing that the OTHER was happening... weird, huh?).

At any rate, this one is a touch more complex than *Z is for Moose*. Musk Ox manages to make nearly every letter in the alphabet about himself. And it's hilarious. I love his expressions in this one. You will learn quite a bit about musk oxen which leads me to this stellar curriculum connection: research an animal of choice and write a report using the alphabet as your organizing theme! Fun!

Note: if you're reading this aloud to a group of children, it may be best to have TWO narrators read unless you're really good at voices and keeping them straight. There is no "he said," just dialogue.

So, to sum up: *Z is for Moose* is a great fit for K5-1st graders, *A is for Musk Ox* is a good fit for 1st-3rd graders.
