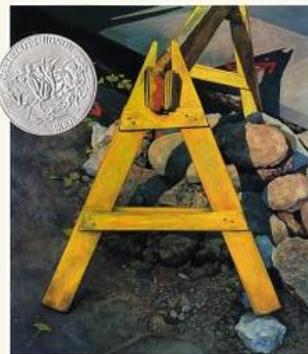


ALPHABET CITY



Stephen T. Johnson

Alphabet City

Stephen T. Johnson (Illustrations)

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The urban landscape will never look the same again. As Stephen T. Johnson demonstrates in a series of strikingly realistic pastels and watercolors, a simple sawhorse can contain the letter "A" — while lampposts alongside a highway can form a row of elegant, soaring Ys. A 1996 Caldecott Honor book, this sophisticated, wordless alphabet book is sure to appeal to young and old alike.

Alphabet City Details

Date : Published 1995 by Viking

ISBN : 9780670856312

Author : Stephen T. Johnson (Illustrations)

Format : Hardcover 32 pages

Genre : Childrens, Picture Books



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From Reader Review Alphabet City for online ebook

Miriam says

This would be of especial interest to New Yorkers, as all the sites used as letters seem to be there, but it could also be used as the basis for fun-educational activities like making a similar project in your own area (i.e. finding the letters in your surroundings).

Johnson is a fine realist painter. So fine, in fact, that it quickly occurred to me that he could just as well have used photographs and saved himself a ton of work! Seems like the effect would have been pretty much the same. But here speaks a lazy person, and one who enjoys photography -- presumably the author wanted to paint. I'll definitely have a look for more of his work.

Katie Fitzgerald says

My favorite thing about this book is that the artwork was found in real life and photographed. As a children's librarian, I'm constantly preaching the importance of print awareness, and this book really emphasizes the fact that early literacy learning opportunities are quite literally around every corner. I love the fact that Johnson manages to see letters in such interesting places. My favorites are the P on the end of the handrail, the R formed by cracks in sidewalk stones, and the T, which is made of the negative space between buildings.

Mary says

The letters of the alphabet are illustrated by photos taken around the city, with everyday objects forming the letters. By B, I was lost. And I know the alphabet. I can't imagine a toddler being able to pick out the B formed by the fire escape. A clever idea. Well done. But over the heads of children learning the alphabet.

Amy says

I don't know why I keep checking out alphabet books for the kids. I guess I'm hoping to reinforce the alphabet for my nephew, but it is rare that the kids really get excited over these kind of books. This one was no exception. My nephew was supremely bored by this book, so he barely even looked at it. As for my niece, the kids in her class have been learning about book awards when they have library day, so lately she's been on the look-out for Caldecott winners or Caldecott Honor books. After we finished this one she exclaimed, "How is that book a *Caldecott*?!" I guess this was just another "meh" alphabet book for them.

Laura says

This is a unique and artistic alphabet book, especially good for children from preschool through early

elementary, who will have fun picking out the shapes of familiar letters in everyday objects—some of which are less obvious than others. From the side of a sawhorse that resembles the letter A to the fire-escape that looks like a Z, each page shows the photorealistic painting of the letter in its urban setting with no text to distract the reader. Well deserving of its Caldecott Honor, this book can encourage children to look at everyday objects in a new way while reinforcing their letter knowledge.

CIP: “Paintings of objects in an urban setting present the letters of the alphabet.”

Hornbook gives *Alphabet City* a favorable review, calling its “handsome, realistic paintings...a tantalizing exercise in visual perception.” SLJ also reviews it favorably, and notes that it manages to be both a traditional alphabet book and an art book.

Luann says

I like the concept behind this, but somehow the execution of it didn't really bowl me over. Although I can definitely see why it won a Caldecott Honor. And I did like it more after reading the author's note - which I missed my first time through. This is an alphabet book worth looking at, but it would be pretty far down on my list of favorite alphabet books.

Mitchell says

Caldecot Honor picture book. Simple but awesome alphabet book idea. Basically letters found on the street, but paintings not photographs. The letters are clear and obvious but still imaginative and the art itself is well executed. It makes you look and think.

Manybooks says

As someone who (although generally and mostly rather more textual than visual) often does tend to visualise, to locate, multiple different images within given works of art, I massively enjoy Stephen T. Johnson's *Alphabet City* (and while a select few of the depicted urban alphabet images could be, perhaps, a bit difficult to easily discern, most are actually more than readily identifiable as specific letter shapes). That being said, I would not necessarily consider *Alphabet City* as a suitable tool for actually teaching younger children their letters, but as an alphabet review for older children, *Alphabet City* should likely work great, providing both a fun and engaging letter review, whilst at the same time also presenting much artistic food for thought (namely that letter images, that different object contours, can often be found in multiple areas and environments, and that especially modern metropolises with their many buildings, industrial constructs and machines are literally teeming with discoverable images).

As to the illustrations themselves, they are simply brilliant (and well deserving of the Caldecott Honour designation for illustrator/author Stephen J. Johnston). While I realise that Johnson's individual urban letter images are actually paintings, the amount of minute and specific depicted detail almost makes one think that the painted images are actually photographs (on their own, the illustrations would probably be almost a bit too photographic for my personal tastes, but as an urban alphabet book, they are simply and utterly

outstanding in every way).

SamZ says

1996 Caldecott Honor - Favorite Illustration: The B fire escape! It is so creative and took me a minute to see it!

I love this collection of illustrations that show the details commonly found in a city. I appreciated the author's note that he had rules for himself when it came to finding letters, and I really enjoyed looking for his inspiration in each painting. Beautiful alphabet and concept book.

Emily Birecki says

I thought that this book was very clever and artistic. The beautiful illustrations feature pictures of the city. It is very creatively done. This being said, I do not think that it will hold a child's attention. I feel like unless they are being told which letter is which children will not know. I think wordless books can be very effective and very uneffective depending on how it is done. This is one of those books that becomes uneffective because the child will not be engaged with the illustrations, since, I myself am bored with the illustrations. I think that this book would have been much better if it used brighter colors to keep children engaged.

Jenny says

I have seen this book before but I don't think I have ever read it. I was really impressed. Johnson found the alphabet in a variety of locations around a city and then painted realistic pictures of each letter. I can imagine reading this with a young child and then embarking on our own search for alphabet letters as we are out and about. Even without young children, I suspect I will be more aware of letters I pass as I walk and drive around my city. What especially amazed me is that most of the scenes are objects I have seen many, many times and most I have never noticed that they are in the shape of an alphabet letter. (For example, E in a streetlight turned sideways...or B in a set of stairs on the side of an apartment building.)

Anthony says

I enjoyed the concept of this book. I think that getting kids to spot the letter in ordinary objects can make the book a lot more interesting for kids. However, I did find that some of the letters were hard to see, even when you knew what to look for.

Melissa Mullins says

I loved this book. It was fun to find the different letters in the pictures. It was a unique view on where you can find things throughout our world. I think it would really help children use their imagination. Also, it gives children a new perspective of the world around them!

Luisa Knight says

If your child knows their alphabet, they'll enjoy trying to find the hidden letters in each picture!

Ages: 4 - 6

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Dolly says

With paintings created with pastels, watercolors, gouache, and charcoal on hot pressed watercolor paper, the letters of the alphabet are depicted in everyday urban scenes.

The images are so realistic that they often appear to be photographs, and I was very impressed with the author's ability to see art and language in the city's infrastructure.

This book was selected as one of the books for the November 2016- Caldecott Honor discussion at the Picture-Book Club in the Children's Books Group here at Goodreads.
