



Take Away the A

Michaël Escoffier , Kris Di Giacomo (Illustrations)

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Take Away the A is a fun, imaginative romp through the alphabet. The idea behind the book is that within every language there are words that change and become a different word through the simple subtraction of a single letter. In other words, without the "A," the Beast is Best. Or, without the "M," a chomp becomes a chop—though it could be that this particular play on words didn't even make it into the book, there are so many! We certainly don't want to give too much away. . . . Now, take a look and find some more!

Discovering all of the words in the book is a lot of fun, and then there's the wild, exciting adventure that follows, of trying to find more!

Michaël Escoffier was born in France in 1970. Raised by a family of triceratops, he discovered his passion for writing and telling stories at a young age. He lives in Lyon, France, with his wife and two children.

Kris Di Giacomo is a popular children's book illustrator who has lived in France for most of her life. After living in the United States for a while, she moved to France, where teaching English to young children and discovering French picture books were the triggers that led her into illustration. This is her fourth book to be published with Enchanted Lion Books.

Take Away the A Details

Date : Published September 9th 2014 by Enchanted Lion Books (first published October 1st 2012)

ISBN : 9781592701568

Author : Michaël Escoffier , Kris Di Giacomo (Illustrations)

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From Reader Review Take Away the A for online ebook

JoJo Ames says

I love smart ABC books; and this one fits! The illustrations are clever and comical. Each double page spread begins with "Without the ..." EX: Without the K Monkey Makes Money, showing a monkey making money. Sometimes the letter taken away is the beginning of a word, sometimes not. This will encourage thinking beyond the standard A is for Apple.

mg says

With a subject as ubiquitous as the ABCs, it's quite a challenge to re-imagine an alphabet book in a way that hasn't been done before. And yet...Escoffier and Di Giacomo have done just that in this beautifully illustrated picture book.

Take Away the A has a unique phrase for each letter, showing how words change when the featured letter is absent. For example: "Without the A, the Beast is the Best;" and, "Without the R, the Crab hails a Cab." This clever new way of looking at words (and the importance of every single letter) not only helps readers learn their letters, it does it in a highly amusing way. Di Giacomo's illustrations are absolutely enchanting and pair wonderfully with Escoffier's very silly phrases.

This book is highly recommended for the preschooler who loves letters, the magic of words, and just plain silliness. Older readers who enjoy picture books for their fantastic illustrations are sure to enjoy this gem as well.

Jillian says

Really fun premise - I liked the wordplay, and it's a good kickoff to get kids playing those kids of games with taking away and adding letters to change one word into another. Some of the examples in the book worked better than others, though.

Some of the illustrations are suuuuper dark, too. (The plate is late!) They're very "black comedy," so they're absolutely funny, but know your kids before you just hand it over. :-p

Melle says

Charmingly eerie illustrations and delightfully smart wordplay make this maybe my all-time favorite alphabet book or, at least, my favorite one since Once Upon an Alphabet, with its similar off-beat humor and for-the-growups-too-especially tone.

Anna Louise says

Take Away the A is a fun, imaginative romp through the alphabet. The idea behind the book is that within every language there are words that change and become a different word through the simple subtraction of a single letter. In other words, without the "A," the Beast is Best. Good alphabet book although some of the words are questionable for younger children.

Dani - Perspective of a Writer says

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This book is NOT your average alphabet book... no it is MEANT for an older child who is fully aware of A to Z... instead it teaches that some words CHANGE when a letter is taken away... Basically it teaches the importance of spelling and understanding the meaning of words.

The large size format of the book caught my eye and I was TOTALLY intrigued by the title! We decided to give it a go and my nephew was SOO taken by it that he drew TWO pictures!! (Yes, that is a big deal as normally with one drawing he's done...)

I LOVED the whimsical and quirky art right off! It is not all sunbeams and newness, no this is an comfortable in its own skin type of book where you talk about the art and what it means... My nephew and I LOVED, LOVED, LOVED the word play and even with his condition he started to understand about a letter being removed and he found it quite enchanting...

I would TOTALLY buy this book for a home library... LITERALLY HOURS of re-reading and pouring over the illustrations! A child who is struggling with English will find it quite enchanting as the sentences DO make sense but are sometimes a bit of a stretch... in a word it makes English FUN!

BOTTOM LINE: An older A to Z play on words book...

You can find this review and many others on my book blog @ Perspective of a Writer. See my picture book reviews in a special feature called Boo's Picture Gallery...

Steven R. McEvoy says

This books available in English is a translation from the original French book 'Sans le A'. It is a wonderful fun picture book. My youngest two insisted we read it back to back because they wanted to go through it again. My son who is 9 read it the second time through to is 6 year old sister and to me.

This book goes through the whole alphabet and for each letter has a paring of words one with the letter and one without the letter. The book is fun, it is very funny and my kids think it is Fantastic.

The illustrations are wonderful, my kids poured over them for hours without losing interest. Kris Di Giacomo's illustrations are simply wonderful.

There appears to be numerous books from this dynamic duo available in English, and based on how much my children loved this one we need to track more of them down. And to be honest that is one of the best book recommendations for my children they want more books by the same authors or illustrators. So this is one of the best picture books we have encountered this year. And the three of us highly endorse it!

Read the review on my blog Book Reviews and More.

Karen says

I guess I had to highlight one star to say I did not like this picture book. First, a picture book is usually written for young children. Second, a alphabet picture book should be written with examples children understand. I thought the book was clever enough until we got to the letter Q. Poor Q. It is seldom alone. QU is a pair. The author's dead end. How to continue the book....and he chose FAQIR and then remove the Q for FAIR. Well, that seems like a solution but then again, perhaps the concept is flawed. Perhaps a lesson in pairs might be a good next book.

Peg says

Word play par excellence! "Without the A the Beast is the Best, "Without the A the BEAST is BEST. Without the B the BRIDE goes for a RIDE. Without the C the CHAIR has HAIR." and so forth. This is a fun alphabetical exploration of words and letters, showing how words quickly transform just by removing a letter. The humorous and sophisticated illustrations call for even more thought. This will be loved by kids and teachers alike; it is a great mentor text that can be used in a wide variety of ways! Love it!

Dianna says

So clever! The illustrations were not my cup of tea, but the wordplay won me over.

Kristen says

This alphabet book works well for end of kindergarten, first graders and older who can see how rearranging letters changes words. Some of these pairs work better than others. "Without the A, the beast is the best" shows a beast winning a trophy. Cute. "Without the J, Jam I am." Not so much. If the art were able to actually show the transformation of one thing to another, I think I'd really like this book. Still, fun concept and a fun springboard for kids to look for their own transformative words.

Cheryl says

Once the buzz wears off, I bet I won't be the only reader disappointed by this. I mean, come on, the pictures are dimly colored & ugly, there is no connection running through the book, the sentences have no meaning... it's just a gimmick. The (original) French version looks somewhat more successful (but do understand it's a very different book, of course).

I do adore the concept. I do think that schoolchildren could become much more facile language users if they played word-games like the one in this book. I recommend using "Without the Q, the Faqir goes to the Fair" (because there's no way they'll know Faqir, and they won't like the broken 'qu' rule) as an example, and letting the children come up with their very own examples. But you don't need to subject you or your children to the book.

One more use for the concept, in which case you might want to use the book instead of having your students come up with examples themselves: foreign-language learning, ESL, high-school students of French, etc.

I am tempted to look for other works by the author, as this is clever and I do like clever. But they're all illustrated by the same person, so I'm not sure how motivated I am to read on.

Bill says

Original French version of what became "Take Away the A" in English.

Dichotomy Girl says

A. (age 3) said that she wanted to give this 100 stars, because she loved it a whole lot, and told me to make sure and put that in my computer!

Rachel Yoder says

My 5 year old son laughed really hard on some of the take aways. Such a fun book.
