



# The Racecar Alphabet

*Brian Floca*

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## **The Racecar Alphabet** Brian Floca

**A** is for Automobiles, machines on wheels.

**B** is for Belts turning, fuel burning, the buzz and bark of engines.

**C** is for Curves and crowds and cars, of course --

A century of racecars, from bare beginnings to present-day marvels, from stock cars to Formula 1, from Ford to Ferrari, caught in crackling action, in fan-friendly pictures, and in words that bounce and jounce for the fun of it.

## **The Racecar Alphabet Details**

Date : Published November 1st 2003 by Atheneum/Richard Jackson Books

ISBN : 9780689850912

Author : Brian Floca

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Genre : Childrens, Picture Books

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## From Reader Review The Racecar Alphabet for online ebook

### Owen Love says

This book had great word play and wonderful illustrations of cars.

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### Betsy says

This book is GREAT. As with most of Floca's nonfiction picture books, this is not a picture book for a 2 or 3 year old. Rather, the 6-8 year old crowd (or even older) will enjoy it more.

Made for racecar fans, the details in this book are stunning. Yes, it's an alphabet book, but that ends up being more of an organization scheme that shows Floca's talent off nicely. Each car is numbered with a number 1-26 and shows up on the corresponding letter's page. Sometimes we only see the number in a rear view mirror, but it's there. (Except for one page--can't remember which one, now, but I couldn't find it!).

This book also gives a concise history of racecars; each car, from 1/A to 26/Z gets progressively newer and flashier. The end pages show all the cars lined up so the progression is clear (and one set shows the engines!).

Very fun and young racecar fans should enjoy.

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### Diana Pettis says

If you Have a child that enjoys race cars this is the alphabet book. My recommendation would be use as a read aloud.

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### Kelly says

Smart to put number 26 on cover of book - 26 letters in alphabet. Amazing that a story is told with the letters of the alphabet in order. ABC book with a story and Floca's illustrations! Wonderful.

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### D'metria says

This book discusses the different aspects of car racing in alphabetical order. Whether we are talking about "... automobiles, belts turning, fuel burning, the buzz and bark of engines, or curves and crowds and cars." This book contains many different words that reference things that have effects on speed, such as curves; which is a great class discussion topic: What are some things that can stop or slow motion of any object down. What happens to a car when it comes to a curve too fast? The book also has great definitions as well, for example, "Automobiles, machines on wheels."

## Jennifer says

This is the kind of book that an eight-year old sits down to try to memorize the end pages. Fresh realistic illustrations and zingy, thoughtful prose elicit cheers for this alphabet book about racecars.

CIP: An exciting day at the races highlights the letters of the alphabet as a variety of automobiles burn fuel speeding through the curves of the track.

"Hold onto your hats." *Kirkus Reviews*

"While clever, the writing is occasionally stilted." *School Library Journal*

(NOTE-not part of 25 wordreview): For some reason I LOVE Brian Floca's stuff-his book about "Lightships" rocks. There's something about the details that makes me want to read the books again and again. Sure there are some problems which School Library Journal alludes to--many of the characters in both books are primarily white men, with a few exceptions, and yah, they aren't wrong to insinuate that some of the writing for the alphabet is a stretch (but come on, the guy is writing about racecars-give him a break)--but, I think the benefits of both books outweigh any of the negatives because he is so into his subjects and it comes through. Hey, he makes me want to like cars, which is saying a lot.

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## Alice says

This is a really fun alphabet book. Each letter is alliterative. I also like all the cars (Thanks to BBC's Top Gear...I know my cars) and the progressions from A to an oldies car from the 1920 and Z being modern day. My favorite 2 letters were J and O.

My only criticism of this book is YES it is an alphabet book, but I isn't for preschoolers. With the alliteration, you get the letter but for the letter N you can't have "KNOW" as part of the alliteration --too confusing... Also, for an alphabet book, I think the letters of the Alphabet need to be pronounced and prominent that say with no doubt -THIS PAGE WE ARE TALKING ABOUT THE LETTER A-. Yes each paragraph starts with the Capital letter of what we are talking about but I don't think it is enough. All in all VERY nicely Done. I will put it on my recommendation shelf!

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## Deania says

I like this book. The one I borrowed was well read as it had tape holding the pages together. The alphabet was well used in this book and in a creative way. The illustrations were good throughout the book. In the front and the back of the book there are pictures of old racing cars. I think this book is good for any child.

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## **D'metria says**

This book discusses the different aspects of car racing in alphabetical order. Whether we are talking about "... automobiles, belts turning, fuel burning, the buzz and bark of engines, or curves and crowds and cars." This book contains many different words that reference things that have effects on speed, such as curves; which is a great class discussion topic: What are some things that can stop or slow motion of any object down. What happens to a car when it comes to a curve too fast? The book also has great definitions as well, for example, "Automobiles, machines on wheels."

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## **Brandy says**

I'm going to have to read this one every night for the next two years, so i'm glad it is well done.

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## **Cathy says**

A is for Automobiles, machines on wheels.

B is for Belts turning, fuel burning, the buzz and bark of engines.

C is for Curves and crowds and cars, of course —

A century of racecars, from bare beginnings to present-day marvels, from stock cars to Formula 1, from Ford to Ferrari, caught in crackling action, in fan-friendly pictures, and in words that bounce and jounce for the fun of it.

Cute alphabet word plays, but over most alphabet-book-readers' heads. My little car lover loved it though, irregardless.

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## **Mary Ann says**

Dynamite! Wow oh wow! Kids will be drawn in by his dynamic illustrations, but they'll come back again and again for the layers of information they discover with each reading.

You can just about feel the wind and hear the roar as you see the 1934 Mercedes-Benz thundering across the cover, can't you? But this is no ordinary alphabet book. Floca combines alliteration, rhythm and rhymes to pull readers right in. Here are the opening stanzas:

Automobiles--  
machines on wheels.//

Belts turning,  
fuel burning,  
the buzz and bark of engines.  
The flap of a flag--

a race begins!

But there's more! Look closely at the endpapers as you open the book, and you'll notice that the cars are arranged in chronological order. Read the text again and you'll notice that each letter of the alphabet progresses through automobile history, from the 1906 Renault (emblazoned with a number 1, because it's on the A page) to a 1934 Mercedes-Benz (number 9, "instruments / indicating speed") to a 2001 Ferrari F1 (number 26, "zipping, zigzagging, with zeal and zing").

Brian Floca, winner of this year's Caldecott Award for the mightily impressive *Locomotive*, brings readers right into the race, shifting perspective at each turn.

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### **Amy says**

Well, this was an interesting book. I checked it out mainly for my nephew, but once I read the text I thought my niece might enjoy it too. The kids listened to the story, but there wasn't really a whole lot of excitement coming from either one of them.

I think that my nephew would have enjoyed the book a lot more if the pictures had been of modern race cars as opposed to the older style cars. He's been raised on Lightning McQueen, for goodness sake, so anything less than a modern NASCAR style car isn't going to reach out and grab him where he lives. He did like the story, but he wasn't busting his seams with enthusiasm.

I was a little surprised that my niece didn't pick up on the fact that this was an alphabet book, or that the text for each letter included numerous words that started with that letter. This completely went over her head. She is an observant child, so I'm not sure how this slipped past her, but in some ways, that's a good thing. She's not a major ABC book fan, and the text of this was so well written that she was just able to enjoy this as a story. She also heard a lot of new words and asked what they meant, so that's always a plus.

So, *The Racecar Alphabet* is a pretty decent ABC book. It's well written, full of potentially new vocabulary words, and it can be enjoyed as an ABC book or just as a story. Apparently my niece and nephew need a little more pop and dazzle in their race car books, but it was still worth the read.

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### **Alison Reads says**

If your little one loves fast vehicles than this is a winner of an alphabet book. In addition to the alphabet driving the story (ha ha!) there is also a simultaneous journey through the historical progression of race cars. Its not an introductory alphabet book and has great variety of vocabulary.

Brian Floca has a knack for historical storytelling - we adored his book "*The Locomotive*."

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### **Katie Fitzgerald says**

This is an alphabet book all about race cars. Instead of the traditional alphabet book format, however, where each page shows a letter and an object beginning with that letter, this book takes a different approach. Like *Graeme Base in Animalia* (1986) Brian Floca writes a statement or verse on each page, where every word

begins with or includes the sound of the featured letter.

For H, we have Helmets holding heads.

The page for J is designed in such a way that the text looks blurry. The words also jump around the page, adding to the movement suggested by the words:

Jarring,

jerk,

jolt,  
and jounce.

O describes the racetrack in simple, but brilliant terms:

Oval  
(over and over).

V makes great use of the "ver" sound in "driver" and "versus" to suggest the sound of a motor running.

Vroom -  
driver versus driver  
veering, vying  
vowing victory.

And X uses the typical image of an X-ray, but expands upon that theme to include the internal X sound formed by the double C in accident.

X-ray  
after an accident.

This book works well on many levels. The brightly colored illustrations portray the ins and outs of racecar driving, which I know appeals to the many preschool boys who frequent my library. The alphabet format is somewhat restrictive, but Floca does everything he can within that framework, and takes a truly clever and poetic approach to highlighting each letter and its corresponding sound. The book is also a great history lesson on the changes in racing and racecars over the years. It's great for helping kids to learn and reinforce their letters, but it's also just a really interesting book on a subject with great appeal to kids.

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