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Alpha by Isabelle Arsenault

Publisher: Walker Books

RRP \$29.99

A unique alphabet book imbued with style and sophistication. This is not an ordinary A,B,C, picture book. Instead, it introduces the internationally recognised NATO code used by air traffic control and emergency services worldwide.

Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta, Echo, etc. display the 26 words that are universally used to represent the phonetic International Radiotelephony Spelling Alphabet. To avoid misunderstandings in communication, the letters are said and spelled as words.

For example, the town of Waihi would be said as: **Whiskey, Alpha, India, Hotel, India**. Although 'Alpha' can also be written as 'Alfa' the word still sounds the same and, regardless of spelling, the word clearly signifies the letter A.

Many of the illustrations display a quirky sense of humour. For instance, the word 'Charlie' is accompanied by a black bowler hat similar to one worn by the silent movie star, Charlie Chaplin. 'Delta' shows a paper plane in the triangular Delta wing shape, 'Kilo' pictures a generous slice of chocolate cake, while 'Mike' is illustrated with a pair of red boxing gloves, perhaps indicating the boxer, Mike Tyson? 'Juliet' and 'Romeo' are brilliant.

The artist obviously enjoyed making visual connections with the words. Unfortunately, the image for 'Delta' is shown on the cover under the title 'Alpha' - which rather confuses the message.

Published with quality paper and a hardback cover, this book warrants being left out on a table to be discovered and shared by readers of all ages.

Author / illustrator's website:

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**Reviewed by children's book author
Jean Bennett**

