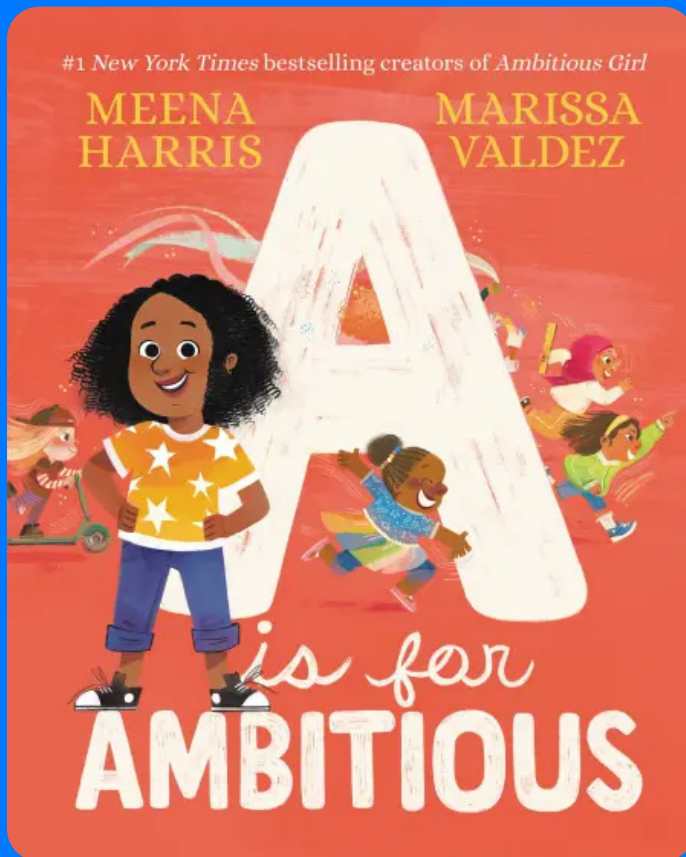




BARBARA BUSH
FOUNDATION *for*
FAMILY LITERACY



Book Guide

A is for Ambitious


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A is for Ambitious – Book Guide

About the Book

A is for ambitious—and so much more in this fun and empowering ABC picture book that reclaims and reframes words often used to undermine girls and women. With a compelling message for all children, it shows what we can achieve when we support one another and offers inspiration to kids as their hopes and dreams begin to take shape. This is a perfect read aloud about the power of words and the importance of community.

Engagement Activities

These activities are designed to offer options during a read aloud. If you are using this guide in a family literacy program, we encourage you to modify discussions and activities as needed for your families! The last page of this guide is designed for children to take home and share with their parent/caregiver to encourage at home discussions.

Reading the Book

Read and discuss the book *A is for Ambitious*. Use before, during, and after reading questions to help readers **make connections to themselves** and to **other parts of their life**. The following are examples of conversation starters. Modify all content based on age level and interest.

Before Reading

Look at the front cover. Explore the picture and title, and ask:

- Does this book remind you of anything?
- What does it mean to be “ambitious?”
- What are the children doing on the front and back cover?
- What do you think this book will be about? Have them make a guess. This is called making a **prediction**.
- What do we already know about _____? (Use this prompt as the conversation develops to help build **background knowledge**. Having a reader think about what they already know about a topic helps them make connections to new knowledge and the new topic.)

During Reading

- Look at the first few pages of the book (before the “A is for Ambitious” page.) What do you notice? Why do you think the words are written like that? How do the children’s faces change as the words get bigger on the pages and then when the words surround them?

- Let's read the book and look at all the different things the children are doing for each letter. Have you done any of these things? Would you like to do any of them?
- Let's **explore some of the words and sentences:**
 - Look at the page "L is for Loud." This page says, "I want to be heard — I am passionate and proud." What does it mean to be "heard?"
 - What words can we use to describe what is happening on this page? Encourage readers to explain why they chose specific words to describe the page.
 - Why did you choose that word? **Tell me about your thinking.**
 - Follow this pattern with a few other pages stopping when readers want to talk about what they see and notice.
- If you were in this story, what do you think you would be hearing? Seeing? Tasting? Smelling? Feeling?

After Reading

- What was your favorite letter in *A is for Ambitious*?
- **Tell me about this book in your own words.** The book is sharing a message. What do you think the message is?
- We are going to be detectives and look for something called **text evidence!** (Information from the book that we can use to explain and support our thinking.) This means if we have an idea about the book, we are going to ask each other, "Why do you think that?" or "What makes you feel that way?" Then, we will find "proof" (evidence) in the book to **support our thinking.**
 - Let's look at the page "D is for Determined." What does it mean to be determined? The book says, "D is for Determined. When we put our minds together, everyone wins."
 - Do the children look determined? What makes us think that? What shows this in the picture? What shows this with the words in the sentence?
 - What are other words to describe someone who is determined? Does this remind you of anything in your life?
 - At this point, you may want to have readers work together either one on one or in small groups. Have them choose other letters, words, and sentences to explore. Encourage them to **support their thinking** with examples from the book and to **connect to their own lives.**
- This book is meant to inspire us. It shows us that if we support each other, we can reach our hopes and dreams. Lead a discussion using these questions:
 - What is something that you do that makes you feel happy? Why do you think that makes you feel happy?

- What are five words that best describe you? Can you use any of the words from the book?
- What do you know how to do that you could teach to others?
- Think about what you have learned from the book. What do you think is going to help you most when you grow up?
- What would you like to ask the author (or characters) of the book?
- What did you like most about this book? Why?

Explore More

The following are suggested activities to do after you read *A is for Ambitious*. **The last page in this guide is written to be sent home** with children to help support parent engagement. Modify activities based on age level and interest.

- **What's in a name?**
 - Let's get creative! Have each child spell their name on a piece of paper and think about each letter. What do the letters in their name represent to them? Encourage them to create something that tells the story of their name and who they are! Gather available craft supplies and gives options to create a picture, mini book, collage, comic strip, etc.
 - Extend this to a family literacy activity. Have children ask family members or friends about their names. What do the letters represent to this person? What words do they use to describe the letters in their name? Did they use any of the same words? How are the words this person chose the same? How are the words different?
- **What's in a letter?**
 - Let's do some writing! Have each child choose one letter/word from the book — they may feel a connection to this letter, it might be a letter in their name, or they might like the picture in the book. Have them share why they picked this letter/word and give them writing options: they could draw a picture about the letter and write a caption to go with it, write a journal entry, or write a letter (or text) to a family member or friend. You can modify this activity, so it is not a writing activity and give them other options for sharing their letter choice.
- **What's in a word?**
 - Let's work together! Create small groups and have each group pick one letter/word from the book. Make sure they do not share the word with any other groups. Have them create a skit about their word. Depending on time, they can create short scripts and props — the key is that they do not use the word in their skit — they represent it with their words and actions. Prompt them to think about the following:
 - Have them consider the word choices they use during their skits and

talk about the power of words. The words in *A is for Ambitious* are powerful. How are words powerful? What makes them powerful? How can they show this in their skit?

- *A is for Ambitious* is filled with pages of “community” and shows a strong message of working together so everyone can realize their hopes and dreams. How does the book show this? How can they show this in their skit?
- Have each group share their skit with the whole group. Can the different groups guess which word is being portrayed in the skit?

- **What’s in a dream?**

- This craft is modified for a younger age group and does not follow the traditional meaning of a Dream Catcher. Adjust the craft as appropriate for your group and their age. You will need the following materials:
 - Cardboard rings (or shape of choice) with holes punched around the edge.
 - Different colored material (yarn, string, ribbon), beads, feathers, magazines, coloring templates, colored paper, glue, scissors. (Modify this for what crafts items are available.)
- Help children thread the colored material through the holes in whatever pattern they would like. They may want to “string” a few beads onto the material.
- Help them glue feathers to the ring — again allowing them to follow the pattern they choose.
- Next, it’s time to add their dreams and goals! What dreams and goals do they have? Help them find pictures in magazines or online that represent their goals and dreams, or they can draw their own pictures! Cut out the pictures and glue them to their dream catcher.
- Have an optional share/reflection and allow everyone the opportunity to show their dreamcatcher and explain the different parts — and of course, what it represents!

Dear parent/caregiver,

Today, we read a book called, *A is for Ambitious*. It's a fun, ABC picture book with an important message for all children — especially girls! We talked about powerful words, how we can support each other, and dreams and hopes. Here are some questions and an activity for you to try if you want to talk about the book together at home.

Talking About the Book with Your Child:

- What does it mean to be “ambitious?” (Book definition: big ideas, hopes, and wishes).
- Did you share any of your big ideas, hopes, and wishes when you read this book? One of my hopes/wishes is _____.
- What was your favorite part of the book?
- I heard it was a book about words and words that are powerful! What were some of the words? Did you have a favorite word? Why was it your favorite?
- Your child may have done an activity exploring the letters in their name. Ask them about it:
 - How many letters are in your name?
 - Did you pick a word for each letter in your name?
 - What words did you pick? Why did you pick these words?
- If they didn't do this activity, you can do it with them:
 - Ask your child to spell their name on a piece of paper.
 - Together, think about each letter. Can they think of describing words for each letter?
 - Help them choose words that show who they are and who they want to be. This is a great opportunity for your child to think about powerful words and positive words. (You may want to have a conversation about what makes a word powerful.)
 - Ask them to explain why they chose these words. They can draw a picture that shows the words and their big ideas, hopes, and wishes.
 - Draw a picture about your name too, so you can do this activity together.
 - Share this with family members and friends:
 - Ask them to think about the letters in their names or a word to describe themselves.
 - Create a word list.
 - Use this word list to create a poster of words and pictures about family members and friends.

Estimado padre/guardián,

Hoy leímos un libro titulado, *A is for Ambitious*. Es un divertido libro acerca del abecedario con un mensaje importante para todos los niños, ¡especialmente las niñas! Hablamos acerca de las palabras poderosas, de cómo podemos ayudarnos unos a otros y de sueños y deseos. A continuación hay algunas preguntas y una actividad que podría hacer si desea hablar en casa acerca del libro.

Converse con su hijo acerca del libro:

- ¿Qué significa ser “ambicioso”? (La definición del libro incluye: grandes ideas, esperanzas y deseos).
- ¿Compartiste alguna de tus grandes ideas, esperanzas y deseos cuando leíste el libro? Una de mis esperanzas/deseos es _____.
- ¿Cuál fue tu parte favorita del libro?
- Escuché que es un libro acerca de palabras y ¡palabras que son poderosas! ¿Cuáles fueron algunas de esas palabras? ¿Tuviste una palabra favorita? ¿Por qué fue tu favorita?
- Su hijo puede haber realizado una actividad explorando las letras de su nombre. Pregúntele al respecto:
 - ¿Cuántas letras hay en tu nombre?
 - ¿Elegiste una palabra para cada una de las letras de tu nombre?
 - ¿Qué palabras elegiste? ¿Por qué elegiste esas palabras?
- Si no realizaron esta actividad, ustedes pueden hacerla:
 - Pídale a su hijo que delectee su nombre en una hoja de papel.
 - Juntos piensen en cada letra. ¿Puede su hijo pensar en palabras descriptivas para cada letra?
 - Ayúdele a elegir palabras que muestren cómo es y lo que quiere ser. Esta es una excelente oportunidad para que su hijo piense en palabras poderosas y positivas. (Quizás quiera tener una conversación acerca de lo que hace que una palabra sea poderosa).
 - Pídale que le explique por qué eligió esas palabras. También puede hacer un dibujo que muestre las palabras y sus grandes ideas, esperanzas y deseos.
 - Haga también un dibujo de su nombre, para que juntos realicen la actividad.
 - Compartan esto con familiares y amigos:
 - Pídanles que piensen en las letras de sus nombres o una palabra que los describa a ellos mismos.
 - Creen una lista de palabras.
 - Usen esta lista de palabras para crear un póster de palabras y fotos de familiares y amigos.