



P is for Princess

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I'm recommending this book for a number of reasons. It's another alphabet book, but this one is a sophisticated informational book that can be used for upper and lower grades. First, let me warn you that the cover will likely throw you off and make some of your male students reluctant to pick it up. That's so unfortunate. There's a good lesson to be taught based on the cover alone—You can't always judge a book by its cover! The unfortunate choice of the name of the book and the picture on the cover lead you to believe it was written to appeal to young girls. (What was the publisher thinking? Why wouldn't you want the book to appeal to the widest audience possible? Oh, well...) If you can get past the cover, you'll find a catalog of royalty—some familiar and some lesser known—along with their rich history. Some of the characters are drawn from nursery rhymes and Disney tales, but there are always interesting stories and history to learn about them. Others are historical figures from Princess Diana to clever king Xerxes of Persia. To elaborate a bit on Xerxes, he was a mighty leader who in late 400 B.C. won a major victory in his attempt to take Greece by building a floating bridge constructed of 674 boats—an amazing feat!

Writing – This is a no-brainer! Have students create alphabet books appropriate to their grade levels to share their research on various topics. You can use the book as a model of how poetry is used to grab the reader's attention and then prose is used to expand on the idea presented. You can also model how to condense research to the most important points.

Guided Reading – Teach students to use different resources to gather information to create their own alphabet books.

Word Study – Use the alphabet approach to organize key words from text. Explore the words, their etymology, and their word parts.

Content: Science/Social Studies/History/Math – All of these content areas have rich material for constructing an alphabet book based on the most important ideas and concepts presented.

Technology – Use Animoto.com to create an alphabet video. This web site is so clever and easy to use! Sign up for it as an educator.

Art – The alphabet book or video will provide a great opportunity to teach and apply art skills. The book demonstrates a variety of art styles to discuss and experiment with.