

# Bringing Métis Children's Literature to Life— The Métis Alphabet Book

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Translator: Norman Fleury

**Overview of Story:** *The Métis Alphabet Book* is a unique addition to the creative genre of children's alphabet books. Joseph Jean Fauchon highlights historical figures, significant events, places of interest and other aspects of Métis identity for young readers.

## Themes in this book:

- Alphabet
- Métis cultural items, people, and events

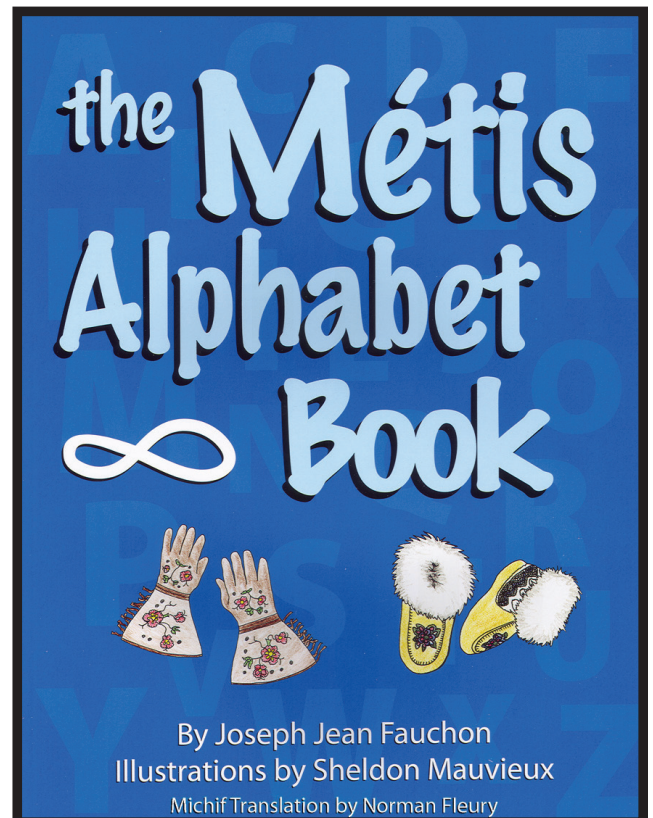
## Possible Curriculum connections:

Language Arts

- Alphabet (beginning sound)

Social Studies

- Cultural diversity
- Métis history
- Métis heroes

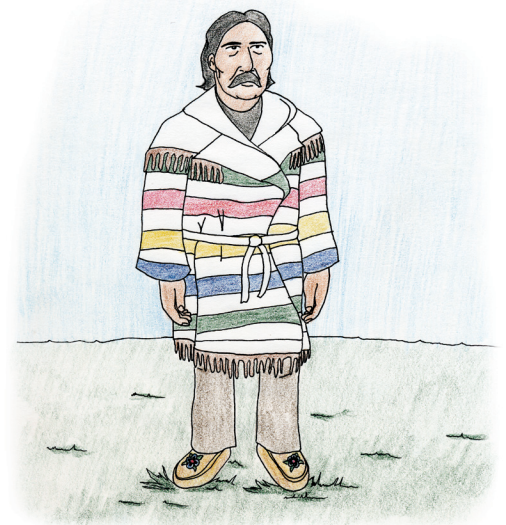


**Before Reading:** Present the book, *The Métis Alphabet Book*, to the students. List on chart paper (beforehand) all the letters of the alphabet. Brainstorm prior to reading the book ([prediction](#)), words they might find in the book and list them beside the letter they begin with on the chart. Make this a quick activity as you might not have a word for every letter.

**During Reading:** As you read, stop from time to time to prove or disprove the word given in the “before reading” brainstorm. List the new words as you go.

## After Reading:

- Select 10 poster images from *Métis Alphabet—The Sash, The Jig, Aboriginal, Batoche, The Red River Cart, Infinity Flag, Beadwork, Capote, Fiddle, and Michif*
- Create Métis Museum Centres with images, facts, and artefacts for each poster.
- Have students work in groups to investigate each item—taking turns reading/trying on/discussing.
- Have students come together as a group to present each item to the whole group.
- Afterwards, allow for group discussion on items and for a museum tour.



## Additional Lessons/Activities for *The Métis Alphabet Book*:

### Step into the Picture Lesson:

- Place the *Métis Alphabet Book Study Prints* on the floor in a circular fashion.
- Have students on a signal (with shoes off), step onto one of the cards. Once there, have the students tell the others on the card a *connection* that they have with the card or a fact about the item. E.g.: Johnny steps on the Red River Cart and Johnny tells the others “Red River Carts” were used to haul furs over long distances during the fur trade. It is like our bale wagon that we use on the farm.
- Continue in this fashion for some time.
- Take cards off the floor. Place students in small groups and give them one of the cards. Have students brainstorm/record everything they know about that card's item. (E.g.: Gauntlets—made out of leather, from the north, warm in winter, has beadwork, big, has fur, etc.)
- After they have done that, turn the card over and read more about the item. If it is something new, record it on your sheet. If it something confirmed, place a checkmark beside that statement on the page. If it is not true, cross it out.  
(This can be done as a pre- and post- reading activity for any story. Colour copy some pages; predict before reading and retell or connect after reading.)

What do we know already?	What we learned ...

### Alphabet Pictionary:

After spending time on the *Métis*, students have developed a larger vocabulary. This is a fun way to celebrate and extend their learning. Create cards (based on the words from the book) for each letter of the alphabet with the item on it. Cut apart and put in can. Have teams come forward and choose a card, draw it and have the team guess what it is. If the team cannot get it, then other teams can “steal” a point if they know it (write it on a piece of paper and display it when the turn is over).

Save one of these sheets to keep score. The team with the most boxes checked off WINS! (If you wish, another point can be gained for the team if the students can explain what was drawn and establish a fact or link to *Métis* culture.)



<b>A=Aboriginal</b>	<b>B=Beadwork</b>	<b>C=Capote</b>
<b>D=Dumont</b>	<b>E=Elders</b>	<b>F=Fiddle</b>
<b>G=Gauntlets</b>	<b>H=Hunt</b>	<b>I=Infinity flag</b>
<b>J=Jig</b>	<b>K=Kohkum</b>	<b>L=Louis Riel</b>
<b>M=Michif</b>	<b>N=New Nation</b>	<b>O=Oxen</b>
<b>P=Pemmican</b>	<b>Q=Quillwork</b>	<b>R=Red River Cart</b>
<b>S=Sash</b>	<b>T=Trapper</b>	<b>U=Unique</b>
<b>V=Voyageur</b>	<b>W&gt;Weavers</b>	<b>X=Xavier</b>
<b>Y=York Boat</b>	<b>Z=Zest</b>	



### Snowball Activity:

1. In this activity each student writes a word from *The Métis Alphabet Book* on a piece of paper.
2. After writing one word on the paper, crumple the paper up and throw it (anywhere in the room).
3. On a signal have the students go and pick one snowball up, then write one word or a phrase to describe the word. Crumple up and throw again.
4. Do this several times (four or five times). Find one paper, read all the words on the paper to describe the word. Now compose a definition or example from the words given on the page.
5. Share with others. The students could also create their own dictionary of Métis words.

