

John Akin's 'The Alliterative Alphabet Book' Brings Playful Language Learning to BIBF 2026

Explora Books featured *The Alliterative Alphabet Book* by John Akin, illustrated by Alexis Eastburn, at the 32nd Beijing International Book Fair (BIBF), held June 17–21 at the China National Convention Center (CNCC) in Beijing.



Vancouver, British Columbia Jul 30, 2026 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Presented during the fair's 40th-anniversary edition, the children's picture book brings together twenty-six alphabet entries in a playful collection of tongue-twisting, character-driven wordplay. This year's fair, the 32nd staging of BIBF,

brought together over 1,700 exhibitors from 82 countries and regions, with the United Arab Emirates serving as Guest of Honor. Across five days of programming, the event created opportunities for publishers, educators, and readers to encounter books designed to travel across languages, cultures, and reading traditions.

BIBF has built its identity since 1986 around introducing stories across linguistic and cultural boundaries, making it a fitting setting for a book whose entire premise depends on the sound and rhythm of English. Each entry in *The Alliterative Alphabet Book* pairs a letter with a character built from cascading alliteration: Angie Axlerod is an amazingly agile acrobat who can dazzle audiences with her aerial artistry or agitate alligators on the Apalachicola; Barney Bellowsbreath is a beguilingly brilliant baker known for producing bear claws, buttery buns, and blueberry bagels with his hot air alone; Gertrude Ginglehoffer is a gabby, giggling gossip who gregariously gossips about the whole gang until a gaggle of geese has gone by.

Words such as “impresario,” “entomology,” “fastidious,” and “gregariously” appear inside the humor rather than as formal vocabulary exercises. The result is a layered read-aloud experience that rewards both young readers and the adults sharing the book with them, turning language itself into part of the entertainment.

That approach aligned with one of the fair’s recurring conversations this year, reflected in programming on children’s publishing strategies: how books can sustain attention while supporting language development without treating the two goals separately. Akin built the book around that idea long before it reached Beijing. Drawing on years as a special education teacher, he saw how rhythm, repetition, and humor could help unfamiliar language become memorable for young learners in ways direct instruction often could not. Eastburn’s illustrations give each character a visual counterpart to the wordplay, reinforcing the jokes rather than merely illustrating them.

John Akin draws on his classroom experience to create books that make language more approachable for young readers. *The Alliterative Alphabet Book* channels that experience into a playful approach to language built around sound, character, and curiosity.

[*The Alliterative Alphabet Book*](#) is available through Amazon and other major online bookstores.

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