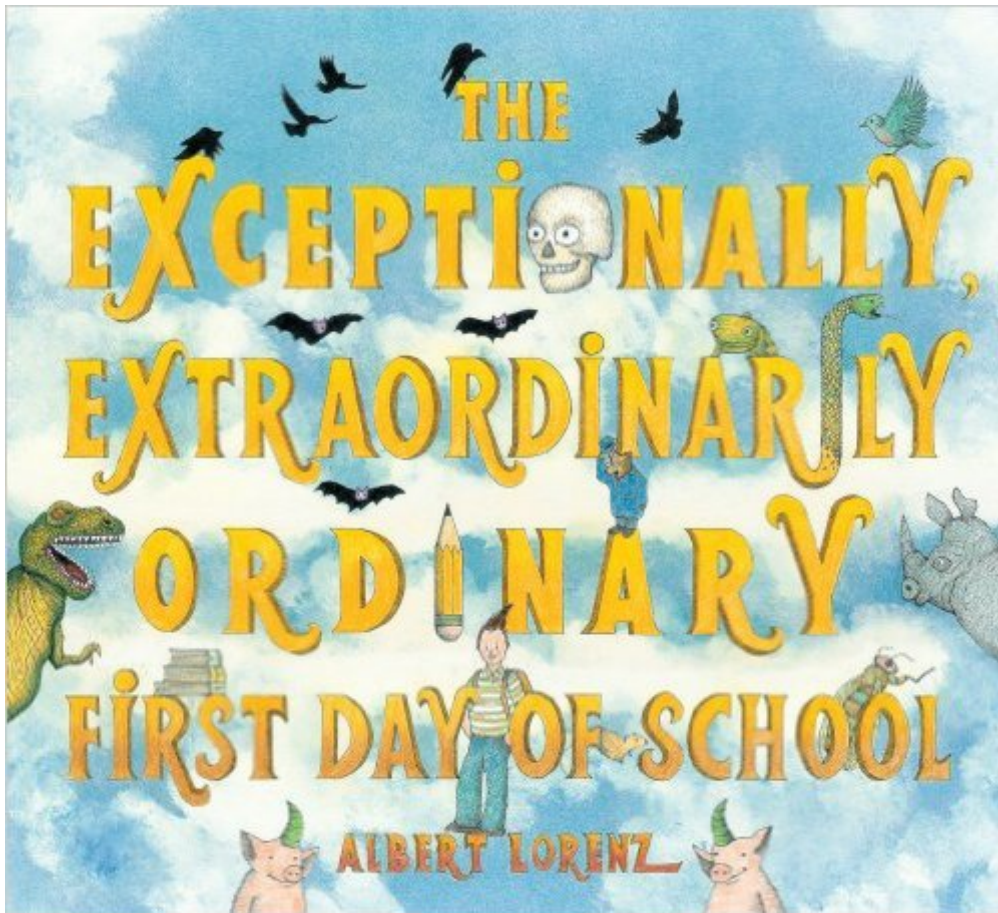


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The Exceptionally, Extraordinarily Ordinary First Day Of School



Synopsis

On the first day back to school from summer vacation, John is the new kid. When the librarian asks him if the school is any different from his last one, he begins a wildly imaginative story about what it was like. What follows are hilarious scenariosâhis old school bus was a safari jeep pulled by wild creatures, the school was a castle, and the lunch menu included worms! His imagination wins him the attention and awe of his librarian and peers, setting the tone for a compelling story about conquering the fears of being a new kid, as well as the first-day jitters that many children experience. Albert Lorenzâs over-the-top illustrations, reminiscent of the work of MAD magazineâs early artists, bring the story to life. Speech bubbles and side panels make reference to and define objects in the art (in the most humorous and irreverent way).

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 3.2 out of 5 stars See all reviews (17 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #274,806 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #102 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > First Day of School #157 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Moving #715 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > New Experiences

Age Range: 6 - 9 years

Grade Level: 1 - 4

Customer Reviews

Have you ever been a new kid at a new school? It is the first day back at school, and Mrs. Dewey, the librarian, welcomes everyone, including the new kid John. She asks him to tell the others about his old school, and he has some imaginative stories. He rode to school in a safari jeep pulled by wild creatures. The school was in a castle guarded by lions. The lunch menu included creepy, crawly worms and bugs. And their field trip was to the moon. So he is looking for something more

"ordinary." His creativity wins the admiration of the librarian and his classmates, but is John just making things up, or is he telling the truth? This wacky and hilariously irreverent story, with its humorous, over-the-top, art speaks to first-day-of-school anxieties and to being the new kid. Author and illustrator Albert Lorenz noticed that his grandchildren didn't jump up and down in excitement for school to start at the end of every summer, so he talked with school librarians and teachers to get to the bottom of what is extraordinary and ordinary about school today. Each scenario is complimented by speech bubbles and side panels that are filled with fun facts and observations which, if shared with classmates, will make one the coolest person on the bus, playground, or school floor. There is one interactive page where the reader is asked to look at the picture and find some famous people from our past. Some parents might want to know that there are a few childish euphemistic terms, such as "pee," "poop," and "fart," as well as references to picking noses and eating boogers. However, if you like your stories a little on the silly side, this book is for you.

I bought this hoping it would be a good read-aloud book for my 4th and 5th grade class. Although the pictures are great, much of the story is told through dialogue, and it's hard to see the very, very detailed illustrations from any distance. It didn't work out as I'd planned to use it, but the kids still enjoy looking at it individually.

I love children's books and have read many to my own children and students. I have taught Grade 1, 2 or 3 for the past 14 years. This is the first book that I can say I really dislike. It is an odd story with bizarre pictures and there isn't one thing I like about it. I put it in my classroom library and every child that has read it says the same thing...they don't like it either. I was super disappointed...not the back to school read aloud I had hoped for.

It said that this book was good for children 4 to 8 years old so I purchased it for my class of 4 and 5 year olds. It is way over their heads in regard to what they refer to and tone and not appropriate for this age group.

Love the layout of this book! It has lots of fun content and each set of pages has definitions of words, etc. on the side of the page to give more background for children about concepts introduced. I can't wait for school to start so I can use this book!

This looks like a picture book from the outside, and it is a picture book, but it also has elements

which put it in the "early chapter book/chapter book" reading level. After reading it several times, I think the reading level and the amount of text and detail in it make it suitable for second graders on up, possibly first graders at the youngest end. It's a wonderful book, but I do agree with the reviewer who said that the age range of 4-8 years old was a bit off. You need a fair amount of time to read and absorb it all. It does a great job of blending fantasy, reality, humor, and facts. John is a boy who has had an extraordinary education (in a castle, with a field trip to the moon), and now he wants to go to an ordinary, "normal" school. His uncle has painted some really cool murals on the walls of his new school, and the librarian, Mrs. Dewey, asks him questions about his old school. His answers take us back to his extraordinary education, whether it was "real" or not. I really enjoyed the side bars with the vocabulary [e.g., frog, parrots, skeleton] which blended humor and fact. The illustrations are really cool, too: they have a lot of humorous little touches, detail, and action. On the page on which John tells us that history is his favorite class, there are historical figures [Napoleon; Genghis Khan; Abe Lincoln, etc.] mingling with the kids, and the sidebar gives you a list of them to find. Some of this reminded me of Roald Dahl, and some of the art reminded me of David Wiesner. I think children who like hybrid blends of fantasy/humor/fact/fiction will really like this.

First the good - the pictures/illustrations are fantastic! They are the saving grace of this book. They are funny and truly look like artwork. I liked the picture of the boy picking his nose in nearly every picture - gross, but a fact of life when you teach! I bought this to read to my fourth graders, and I have to say that I've read it several times over, and I just wish it had a catchy ending. I will read it to my class, but it's really not a read-aloud, as another reviewer stated. There are interesting facts on each page spread that are fun to read. My students enjoy looking at the pictures.

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