



**Minnesota Storytime
Reading Guide**

Title: *V is for Viking: A Minnesota Alphabet*

Author: Kathy-jo Wargin

Illustrators: Karen Latham and Rebecca Latham

**Publisher and
Copyright Date:** Sleeping Bear Press, 2003

**Connection to
Minnesota:** Minnesota author; Minnesota illustrators; Minnesota theme

Summary: This is a nonfiction alphabet book about Minnesota. Each letter describes one or two items that relate to Minnesota. There are two sections for each letter. One is a simple rhyme appropriate for younger children. The other is a narrative that goes into further detail and is appropriate for older children.

Suggested ages: 4-6, 7-10

Tips for Reading:

- For younger children, read the rhyme portion of the text only. Point to the letter of the alphabet and to its illustration. Talk and ask questions about the illustrations.
- For older children, read the rhyme portion of the text. Talk and ask questions about the illustrations. Read the narrative when the audience appears to want to know more, or wait until a second reading to spend time on the narratives.
- Use props to illustrate some of the items, e.g. an agate; deer, gopher, loon, or wolf stuffed animal(s) or puppet(s); model of an ore boat; wild rice.

**Questions
before reading:**

- What are the things you like about Minnesota?
- Do you know anyone famous from Minnesota?
- Who were the Vikings (not the football team)?

**To Introduce
this story say:** We're going to read an alphabet book about people, places, and things in Minnesota. You probably already know a lot about Minnesota, but there might be some surprises in this book.

**Questions
After Reading:**

- What do you know now about Minnesota that you didn't know before?
- Was there anything left out about Minnesota that you think should have been included in this book?
- Have you seen or visited any of the places mentioned in the book?
- Talk about some of the topics in the book. For example:
 - What is a Bundt pan? Do you have one in your kitchen?
 - What kinds of animals are found in Minnesota?



RELATED ACTIVITIES

- Art:**
- Choose a letter of the alphabet and draw a picture of something that begins with that letter that is found in Minnesota.
 - Make a collage that illustrates several of the topics in the book.
- Geography:**
- Use a state map to locate places mentioned in the book.
- Language:**
- Play the alphabet game where children take turns with the letters of the alphabet saying: My name is _____ and I went to _____ to get _____. (Each blank must be filled in with a word beginning with the same letter.)
 - Read and discuss the questions and answers in “A Lake-ful of Minnesota Facts” at the end of the book.
- Music:**
- Play a recording of “Minnesota Rowser” and lead the child(ren) in loudly spelling out M-I-N-N-E-S-O-T-A at the end of the song.
- Writing:**
- Write a story about your favorite place in Minnesota.
- Suggestions for English Language Learners:**
- Review the English alphabet and have the children take turns naming something that begins with that letter.
 - Talk about how things in Minnesota are similar to and different from things in their native home.
- Related Books:**
- ***M is for Minnesota*** by Dori Hillestad Butler, illustrated by Janice Lee Porter (University of Minnesota Press, 1998)
 - ***M is for Minnesota*** by Debra Chial (Voyager Press, 1994)
 - ***Gathering: A Northwoods Counting Book*** by Betsy Bowen (Houghton Mifflin, 1999)
 - ***Antler, Bear, Canoe: A Northwoods Alphabet*** by Betsy Bowen (Houghton Mifflin, 2002)
 - Other titles in the State Alphabet Books series published by Sleeping Bear Press (Go to www.sleepingbearpress.com for teacher’s guides of select titles.)

