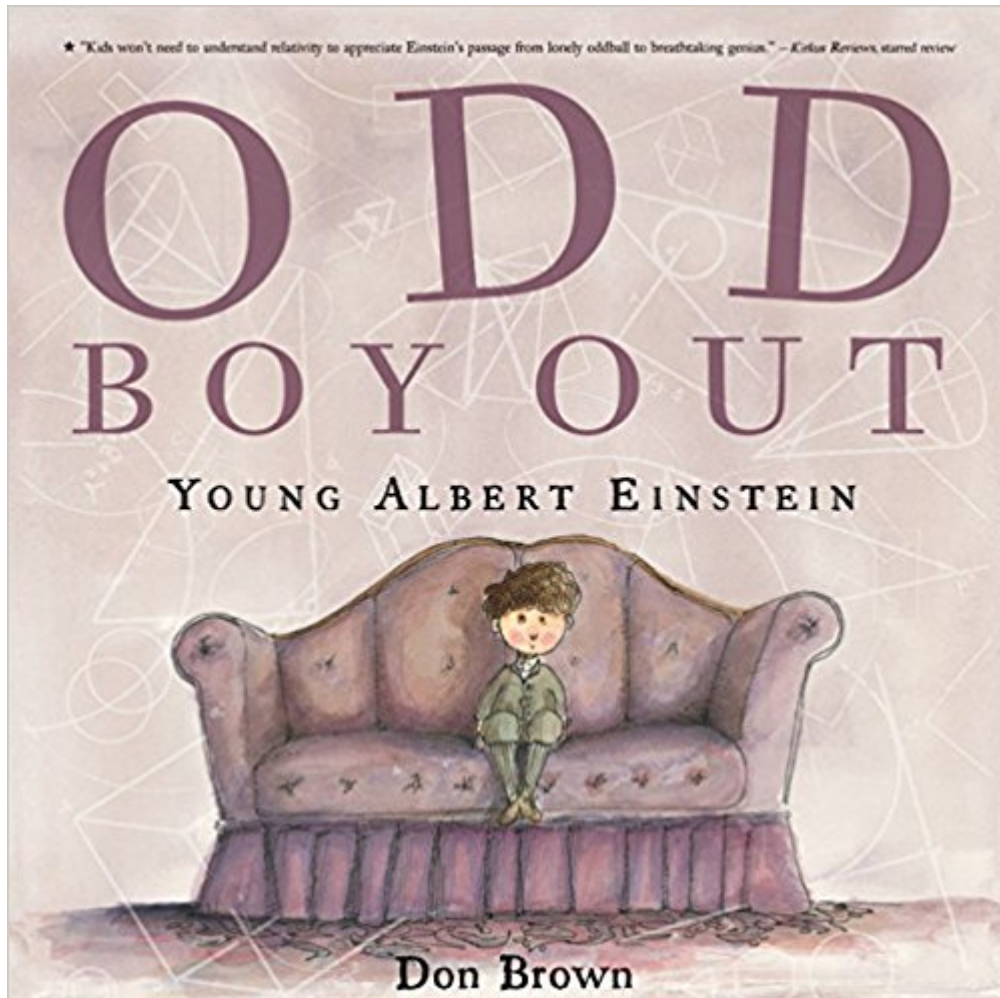




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Odd Boy Out: Young Albert Einstein



Synopsis

When he was born in 1879, Albert was a peculiarly fat baby with an unusually big and misshaped head. When he was older, he hit his sister, frustrated his teachers, and had few friends. But Albert's strange childhood also included his brilliant capacity for puzzles and problem solving: the mystery of a compass's swirling needle, the intricacies of Mozart's music, the secrets of geometry set his mind spinning with ideas. In fact, Albert Einstein's ideas were destined to change the way we know and understand the world and our place in the universe. In spare, precise text filled with graceful detail and accompanied by sometimes humorous, sometimes lonely portraits, Don Brown introduces us to the less than magnificent beginnings of an odd boy out. The result is a tender rendering of the adventures of growing up for one of the most important thinkers of the twentieth century.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 830 (What's this?)

Paperback: 32 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers (June 16, 2008)

Language: English

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 32 customer reviews

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Age Range: 4 - 7 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

Customer Reviews

Grade 2-5 This well-crafted picture-book biography focuses on Einstein's hard-to-classify brilliance, which led to awesome scientific discoveries, but all too often left him a misunderstood outsider. Brown describes his subject's loving, cultured parents who were frequently nonplussed by their son's behavior and temper. He found himself the "odd boy" at school, and as the only Jewish

student, was sometimes taunted by other children. He puzzled his instructors as well; though clearly gifted in science, math, and music, he was an indifferent student in most subjects. Brown's pen-and-ink and watercolor illustrations, rendered in a palette of dusky mauve and earthy brown, portray a doubtful, somewhat unhappy-looking child, except for a picture in which he gazes fondly at a compass, a gift that astonishes him as he ponders its mysteries. In many scenes he is marginalized on the sidelines, set apart by color and shading. One dramatic spread features an adult Einstein pushing his child in a carriage, looking small against a backdrop that highlights some of the scientific puzzles that so engaged him. Through eloquent narrative and illustration, Brown offers a thoughtful introduction to an enigmatic man. This book will pique the interest of readers with little or no knowledge of Einstein.

—Marilyn Taniguchi, Beverly Hills Public Library, CA

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Gr. 3-5. Young readers won't come away from Brown's newest picture-book biography understanding the theory of relativity, but they will be heartened by the parallels between their own experiences and those of an iconic science guy. The author-illustrator of *Mack Made Movies* (2003) and other books presents the future Nobel Prize winner as a sallow, sunken-eyed little boy who lingers on the sidelines as other boys roughhouse, spends hours building a house of cards "fourteen stories high," and vexes his teachers (one tells him that "he would never get anywhere in life"). Brown's language dips into vagueness when it's time to describe the mature scientist's contributions, and the accompanying artwork is often disappointingly generic, awkwardly incorporating computer-generated elements that overwhelm the delicate ink-and-watercolor style used elsewhere. Still, this joins Frida Wishinsky's *What's the Matter with Albert?* (2002) as one of the very few picture-book biographies of Einstein available. Try giving it to older elementary students, who will get the most out of the detailed author's note and bibliography featuring many books for adults.

Jennifer Mattson

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I ordered this book for my son because he has Pervasive Developmental Disorder, he has a hard time fitting in at school and knows he's different. I wanted him to be able to relate to someone he looks up to. He likes learning about Albert Einstein and is always asking me questions about Albert Einstein, so when I found out there was a book for children who are like him I knew I had to purchase this book. It is made for younger readers, my son is 12 but he is a very immature 12 and

hates reading chapter books with no pictures so this worked out.

This book exemplifies the uncertainties and lack of confidence many young children feel about themselves. Yet, this child felt these inadequacies in his growing-up years and evolved into one of the foremost geniuses of our society. This book can offer hope for both children and their parents: the uncertainties of the early years does NOT predict what latent talents could later emerge. I state this unequivocally as a private practice psychotherapist and psychoanalyst for almost 40 years. Read this book to your children!

What ARE you going to say about Einstein that'll fit in a picture book for the 4 - 8 crowd? Quite a lot, apparently. Like many children, young Albert (and this book does focus mainly on his youth) never fit in. The other children liked sports, and watching soldiers on parades; he didn't. Other children talked and cooed at two; he didn't. Other children answered questions quickly in class, and bothered with the classes they didn't like, and socialized at parties... not so Albert. The author covers Einstein's childhood admirably (I especially recommend this book to autistic/aspie children, who may readily see aspects of themselves in his behavior. This does *not* mean I necessarily agree with the hypothesis that Einstein was on the spectrum, just that it may be a useful book for kids on the spectrum), and then rapidly sums up his adult accomplishments without going into too much detail. Quotations from Einstein on himself, or from other people about him, are used to great effect to help make his personality more vivid. One thing about this book, it's a bit awkward as a read-aloud. It's a longer book, for one, and also, it's written in the historical present. Reading about events over 100 years ago in the present tense... well, I suggest if you're going to read this book aloud that you do a quick read-through first to make sure you don't slip-up mid-sentence. That just sounds awkward. Please note that this book is definitely not going to teach your children the theory of relativity :) If you want a more science-y book for children, this isn't it.

Great learning book for kids.

A neat little story that relays the challenges that Albert Einstein encountered as a youth who didn't quite fit the mold. Takes a few liberties with the truth, but gets the point across. Delivered on Kindle with no issues.

Great for helping young gifted kids to understand that being bright doesn't mean you won't have

struggles in life.

My 9 year old grandson loves this book

This book is about young Albert Einstein's life and how people perceived him.

Even though people saw him as odd it's okay to be interested in your own things.

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