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ICE!

Poems About Polar Life by Douglas Florian

GRADES
2-5

Themes & Subjects

- Animal Adaptation
- Biomes
- Global Warming
- Interdependence

Rhythm Rhyme Whimsy Humor
Figurative and Other Poetic Language

About the Book

This kid-pleasing collection of more than twenty poems about the polar regions and the animals that live there is both fun and informative. Douglas Florian is well-known for combining poetry, art, and science in books that have wit, imagination, and an aesthetic sensibility.

From the opening poem, which describes the poles as our "earth refrigerator" to the call to action in the closing verse about climate change, artist and poet Douglas Florian applies his prodigious talent to twenty-one poems and illustrations that raise awareness of the polar habitats and the unique animals that have adapted to a cold, windy, and frozen environment.

Titles of poems: *The Polar Regions; Antarctica; Emperor Penguin; Arctic; The Tundra; Polar Bear; Blue Whale; Krill; Arctic Fox; Musk Ox; Walrus; Arctic Hare; Seals; Snowy Owl; Narwhal; Gray Wolf; Puffin; Ptarmigan; Wolverine; Caribou; Moose; Climate Change*



For the Classroom

- What do you know about the North and South Poles? Consider the title of the book, and discuss what the two poles have in common. Read the poem “The Polar Regions.” What are the North and South Poles called? Explain why the poet calls them an “Earth’s refrigerator.”
- Look closely at the illustration of the earth (p. 5). Point out the location of the Arctic and Antarctica. Which is North, and which is South? How does the illustration reveal the primary animal life in the two poles? Explain how the animals in the two regions are equipped to live in the frigid environment.
- Discuss each poem and the accompanying informational paragraph. How does knowing the facts about the particular subject help the reader better understand the poem?
- Take a close look at “Emperor Penguin” (p. 8). What is an emperor? Point out other words in the poem that mean emperor. Identify words in the poem that describe an emperor. How does the illustration on p. 9, in a humorous way, support the concept of an emperor?
- Read the information about the blue whale (p. 16). What is an endangered species? Why is the blue whale endangered? How does this explain why hunting the blue whale was banned in 1967? Then read the poem. Explain the simile: “Wide as an airplane in its girth.” Define girth. Explain the last two lines: “The whale’s a tale of evolution—without an airplane’s air pollution.” What does evolution mean?
- Alliteration is a figure of speech often used in poetry in which the sound of a word is repeated. Take a look at the poem “Ptarmigan” (p. 39). Make note that the “p” is silent. How does Florian use alliteration in this poem? Discuss how this adds rhythm to the poem.
- Word play in poetry is a clever and witty use of words. For example, in the poem “Musk Ox” (p. 23) the word “ox-idently” is a humorous way of says “accidentally.” Identify other examples of word play used in all of the poems. Discuss how Florian also uses humor in the illustrations.
- Explain global warming, or the greenhouse effect. What can every person do to help with global warming and preserve life in the polar regions? Take a close look at the illustration on p. 45. How does it reveal our responsibility? Discuss how this collection of poems is a warning about the future of the polar regions if changes aren’t made.
- Read about Douglas Florian. “His work encourages children to see and think and laugh.” What do you see or learn from reading his poems? How do the poems make you think? Explain how Florian’s humor makes the book about polar life fun to read.

Guide created by Pat Scales, retired school librarian and independent consultant, Greenville, South Carolina.

