

Nurse Florence, What Is a Heatstroke?

Michael Dow

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Nurse Florence, What Is a Heatstroke? is an instructive picture book that reflects on a medical consequence of climate change.

In Michael Dow's informative picture book *Nurse Florence, What Is a Heatstroke?*, curious children learn about climate change.

In this series installment, heatstroke is introduced as a major effect of climate change to three elementary school students. Jean, Condi, and Sonia leave Ms. Smith's classroom, having learned about climate change and the future problems that will result from it. Left with a lot of questions about the health issues that may be involved, they decide to visit Nurse Florence. Nurse Florence validates their questions, asserting that increased rates of heatstroke will be a medical consequence of climate change. Then, she names the risks, symptoms, and process of diagnosing heatstroke, all while encouraging the children to think of prevention strategies.

The narrative is straightforward. Nurse Florence is direct about answering all of the girls' questions. She shows respect for their intelligence, and they respond in kind. And while the nurse does employ technical terms in her discussion of the topic, she translates them for the children, making her meanings plain. Apt examples are included too.

Still—although the book is forthcoming about the gravity of both climate change and heatstroke—there is a sense of hope threaded throughout the story. The children are encouraged to be proactive; Nurse Florence asks them how they would solve or minimize the effects of heatstroke, inviting them to think about possible solutions. In the end, Jean, Condi, and Sonia have been equipped with knowledge that they need to deal with what's to come. The closing scene shows both what they've learned and how they're going to apply it to their everyday lives while still enjoying themselves. And the book's later list of references and resources may serve as a guide for curious members of the audience to become more informed themselves.

Expressive illustrations appear throughout the book to further understanding. There's a drawing of a person sweating; there's a depiction of the inside of a human body that's suffering from heatstroke, with the affected organs standing out. The real physical effects of heatstroke are made clear. And the children's expressions capture their curiosity, apprehension, and sense of focus.

Nurse Florence, What Is a Heatstroke? is an instructive picture book that handles one side effect of climate change in a serious yet optimistic way.

CAROLINA CIUCCI (June 14, 2023)

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