

Unit 1: *A Long Walk to Water*
7th Grade Language Arts
17 Class Meetings

Updated October 2025

Essential Questions

- What lengths will individuals go to in order to survive in challenging environments?
- How do various perspectives about the same topic build our understanding?

Enduring Understandings with Unit Goals

EU 1: Individual survival in challenging environments requires both physical and emotional resources.

- Analyze how the author compares characters to convey ideas about how people survive in Sudan.

EU 2: Using informational text about a historical time, place, or person enriches our understanding of a fictional portrayal of the same time period or events.

- Examine how learning about the Sudanese Civil War, Lost Boys, and worldwide water crisis enhances understanding of the novel.

EU3: Written communication and proper grammar mechanics promote fluency of communication.

- Engage in the writing process to write an essay about how Salva was able to survive in a challenging environment.

Standards

Common Core State Standards:

- **RL.7.1** Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **RL.7.2** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
- **RL.7.3** Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).
- **RL.7.6** Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.
- **RL.7.9** Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.
- **W.7.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- **W.7.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- **W.7.6** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and link to and cite sources as well as to interact and collaborate with others, including linking to and citing sources.
- **W.7.8** Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
- **W.7.9** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and

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research. a. Apply grade 7 Reading standards to literature (e.g., “Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history”).

- **SL.7.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- **SL.7.2** Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.
- **L.7.1** Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- **L.7.2** Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- **L.7.3** Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
- **L.7.4** I can determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple meaning words using many strategies.

ISAAC Vision of the Graduate Competencies

Competency 1: Write effectively for a variety of purposes.

Competency 2: Speak to diverse audiences in an accountable manner.

Competency 3: Develop the behaviors needed to interact and contribute with others on a team.

Competency 4: Analyze and solve problems independently and collaboratively.

Competency 5: Be responsible, creative, and empathetic members of the community.

Unit Content Overview

1. Reading Literature: *A Long Walk to Water*

- **Key Terms:** setting, characterization, compare/contrast, summarize, annotate, author’s purpose, conflict, theme, inference, point of view symbolism.

2. Read non-fiction texts to make connections to and give context for events in the novel.

- **Second Sudanese Civil War**
- **Lost Boys**
- **Worldwide water crisis**
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3. Vocabulary:

- **Chapters 1-9:** droned, rebels, scurried, mortars, gourd, sorghum, terrain, gingerly, solemn, wailing, prow, abundance, monotonous, arid, tamarind,

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- **Chapters 10-18:** trudged, scythed, maize, clangor, ceased, borehole, barbed, fortunate, lumbered, fatigue, notion, shanty, haze, canvas, astonishment

4. Grammar

- Subjects and Predicates; Independent and Dependent Clauses

Interdisciplinary Connection:

- Social Studies-geography, culture, history
- Art-Illustrations

Daily Learning Objectives with TWPS

Students will be able to...

- Examine important aspects of Sudan's geography, history, and culture.
 - *What responsibilities do you have at home? Do you feel your responsibilities are appropriate for someone your age? Should kids be given important responsibilities or should they be allowed to just have fun and be kids?*
- Evaluate the way a character's POV is developed throughout a text.*
 - *If violence suddenly erupted in your village, would you flee to the forest alone (safety), or would you attempt to run toward the violence and village to find your family?*
- Compare and contrast the characters of Salva and Nya.
 - *How might your life be different if you did not have access to clean running water? Think through your daily routine and explain how it would be different without water.*
- Apply close reading strategies to understand text.
 - *Does adversity make one stronger? Explain. Support with at least one example.*
- Analyze text to determine theme. **
 - *If you had a limited supply of water and encountered people on the verge of death, would you give up a little bit of your water (and possibly risk your own life) to save them? Explain.*
- Compare the refugee experiences from two different perspectives.
 - *How does your environment impact your life? Explain.*
- Classify and rate the conflicts each character faces.
 - *When you encounter difficult situations, what do you do? How do you get through? Explain.*
- Apply concepts learned in chapters 1-12 to complete question trail review activity.
 - *Do you think Salva will ever find his family again? Make a prediction. Why do you think this?*
- Analyze sentences to determine the independent/dependent clause.
 - *What does it take to be a leader? Brainstorm the qualities of a leader. Explain how Salva demonstrates at least one of those qualities as he leads the other Lost Boys.*

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- Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal and a historical account of the same time period.
 - *In Chapters 15-16, Salva experiences culture shock while traveling and adjusting to life in America. Describe a time you experienced culture shock, felt out of place, or were overwhelmed by a new environment.*
- Analyze and compare the experiences of Salva to those featured in the documentary *Just Add Water*.
 - *If you could speak to Nya or Salva now, what would you ask them? Explain.*
- Construct a written response which demonstrates understanding using evidence to support a claim. ***
 - *What elements do you need to write a strong essay?*
- Edit and revise essays based on peer feedback.
 - *How can you incorporate the feedback you received into your essay?*

Instructional Strategies/Differentiated Instruction

- Whole group instruction
- Small group instruction
- Guided notes
- Modeling
- Student-led instruction
- Anchor charts
- Think-Pair-Share
- Journaling
- Graphic Organizer
- Accountable Talk
- Homework
- Word walls with visuals
- Audiobooks

EL Differentiation Instruction:

- Verbal: Prompting, questioning, elaborating, facilitate higher level thinking skills
- Explicit modeling
- Guided and independent practice
- Small group instruction
- Strategic grouping
- Key Vocabulary
- Graphic organizers
- KWL charts
- Venn diagrams
- Sequence writing
- Reinforcing contextual definition
- Providing correct pronunciation by repeating student's response
- Predicting and inferring
- Directed reading-thinking activities (DR-TA)

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- Glossaries
- Chunk and Chew
- Sentence starters
- Word banks
- Google Translate

Assessments

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS:

- Web quest
- TWPS responses
- Exit Slips
- Accountable Talk Discussions
- Do Now
- Grammar practice
- Reading check assessments
- Graphic organizers
- Homework
- Performance Task- Salva Essay
 - Salva Essay Scoring Guide

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS:

- Vocabulary Quizzes
- Pear Assessment: Chapters 1-12 Reading Check (EU1)
- Subject/Predicate/Clauses Test
- Pear Assessment: ALWTW Unit Test (EU2)
- Performance Task: Salva Essay (EU1, EU2, EU3)
- Reading Literature IAB

Unit Task

Unit Task Name: Literary Analysis: Salva Essay

Description: In this assessment, students will respond to the following prompt: “What factors made survival possible for Salva in *A Long Walk to Water*? (EU1) After reading the novel and accounts of the experiences of the people of Southern Sudan during the Second Sudanese Civil War (EU2), write an essay that addresses the theme of survival in the novel. Support your ideas with evidence from the text you have read.” (EU3)

Evaluation: Salva Essay Scoring Guide

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Unit Resources

- *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park
- *A Long Walk to Water* Illustrated version by Jim Averback
- “The Lost Boys of Sudan” (Nicole Madden)
- “Our Amazing 12 Year Journey with the Lost Boys” (CBS: 60 Minutes Overtime)
- “Two Miles for a Drink of Water” (Kristin Lewis)
- “I Live in a Refugee Camp” (Kristin Lewis)
- “The Lost Boys of Sudan” (International Rescue Committee)
- *Life Without Clean Water* (video)
- Audiobook (Audible)
- *Just Add Water* documentary
- Internet Databases
- Worksheets
- Laptops
- SBAC Prep Online
- Pear Assessment