

Unit 1: *A Long Walk to Water*
Honors 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: Oral communication and proper grammar mechanics promote fluency of communication.

- Engage with peers in a Socratic Seminar discussion related to the themes within *A Long Walk to Water*.

EU 4: Routinely practiced independent reading builds habitual readers with conscious reading identities, increases reading comprehension skills, and develops vocabulary.

- Engage in consistent independent reading of student-chosen books.
- Actively participate in a supportive reading community that introduces students to a wide range of characters and experiences.

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.

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- **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 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, gist, annotate, author’s purpose, conflict, theme, inference, point of view symbolism.

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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**
- **Waterborne Illness/Diseases**

3. Vocabulary:

- **Chapters 1-6:** littered, objected, abruptly, luscious, haste, and rebelled.
- **Chapters 7-12:** broad, abundance, relentless, merciless, monotonous, and gauge.
- **Chapters 13-18:** plagued, peril, coax, isolated, riddled, and 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...

- Develop a logical argument about the things we take for granted.
 - *Do you feel that education is important? How can getting an education change your life? What are the consequences of not being educated?*
- Examine important aspects of Sudan's geography, history, and culture.
 - *What are some things in your life that are very important, but you don't give much thought to?*
- 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?*
- Apply close reading strategies to understand text.
 - *Think of different groups of people that have rivalries or conflicts in today's world. Why do you think they can't get along? Why can it be difficult to change things when there is a long history of conflict?*
- Analyze how the author compares the characters of Salva and Nya.
 - *Does adversity make one stronger? Explain. Support with at least one example.*
- Examine how waterborne illnesses affect the people of Sudan.
 - *Imagine you were sent on a plane to live in a country far away. What challenges would you face upon arriving? How would you feel? How do you think life would be different?*
- Analyze text to determine theme. **
 - *Describe a time you worked very hard for something. Did the hard work pay off? Was it worth it? How did the hard work make you feel?*

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- Critique and rank the conflicts each character faces.
 - *In the Akobo Desert, Salva wonders if he were older and stronger, would he have given water to the dying men or would he, like most of the group, have kept his water for himself? Knowing Salva's character, what do you think he would have done if he were older? Explain.*
- Analyze sentences to determine the independent/dependent clause.
 - *Imagine a refugee camp that is home to over 80,000+ refugees. What kinds of challenges or problems do you think refugees living there might face? What do you think daily life would be like?*
- Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal and a historical account of the same time period.
 - *What makes a family? Does a blood relationship determine family or is there some other criteria? What is your own definition of the word "family?"*
- Connect the experiences of Salva to those featured in the Ted Talk *Keep Walking*.
 - *What is one take away from this novel? What will stick with you? What was the message you got from the novel? Explain.*
- Interpret text evidence to support analysis of character.
 - *Do you think Sudan/South Sudan will ever be at peace? What do you think it will take to stop the war? Explain.*
- Cite evidence to support analysis of text. **
 - *What do you think you need in order to lead a successful discussion?*
- Formulate and construct responses which demonstrate understanding using multiple pieces of evidence to support the topic under discussion. **
 - *What do you need to do to be successful in today's Socratic Seminar?*

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

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- Guided and independent practice
- Small group instruction
- Strategic grouping
- Key Vocabulary
- Graphic organizers
- Venn diagrams
- Sequence writing
- Reinforcing contextual definition
- Providing correct pronunciation by repeating student's response
- Predicting and inferring
- Glossaries
- Chunk and Chew
- Sentence starters
- Word banks
- Google Translate

Assessments

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS:

- Quick Write responses
- Exit Slips
- Accountable Talk Discussions
- Grammar practice
- Reading check assessments
- Graphic organizers
- Homework
- Independent Reading Project (EU4)
- Performance Task- Socratic Seminar
 - Accountable Talk Rubric

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS:

- Reading Checks (EU1)
- Subject/Predicate/Clauses Test
- Pear Assessment: ALWTW Unit Test (EU2)
- Performance Task: Socratic Seminar Discussion (EU1, EU2, EU3)
- Reading Literature IAB

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Unit Task

Unit Task Name: Socratic Seminar

Description: Students will participate in a student-led discussion about thematic ideas related to the book *A Long Walk to Water* (EU 1). This is a student-centered and social approach to learning, which means students have greater freedom, but also more responsibility. Students will prepare their responses to four open-ended questions about the book. Each response must have textual evidence from the book or other non-fiction sources used in the unit to support their position (EU 2). Students will use Accountable Talk in their discussions with their peers (EU 3).

Evaluation: Teacher created discussion rubric

Unit Resources

- *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park
- *A Long Walk to Water* Illustrated version by Jim Averback
- “Sudanese Tribes Confront Modern War” by Karl Vick
- *Keep Walking* (Ted Talk) by Salva Dut
- “Diary of a Teenage Refugee” by Amira
- “Our Amazing 12 Year Journey with the Lost Boys” (CBS: 60 Minutes Overtime)
- “The Lost Boys of Sudan” by the International Rescue Committee
- *Life Without Clean Water* (video)
- “The Water Crisis” by water.org
- Audiobook (Audible)
- *Just Add Water* documentary
- Internet Databases
- Worksheets
- Laptops
- SBAC Prep Online
- Pear Assessment