

A Long Walk To Water



By

Linda Sue Park

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

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About the author: Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit novelstudies.org.

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Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two chapters of the novel and is comprised of the following activities:

1. Before You Read
2. Vocabulary Building
3. Comprehension Questions
4. Language and Extension Activities

A **portfolio cover** (p.7) as well as a **Checklist** (p.6) are included so that students may track of their completed work.

Every activity need not be completed by all students.

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include Sudan, perseverance, attaining one's goals, survival, ecology and the environment, home and security.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
3. Identifying/creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *personification*.
7. Identify *singular/plural*
8. Identify *anagrams*
9. Listing compound words
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Identification of root words
13. Identify/create *similes*

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Complete Five W's Chart
4. Identify *cliffhangers*
5. Identify the climax of the novel.
6. Complete a Story Pyramid

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Identify the protagonist
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Compare characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Create a poem
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Chart
9. Complete a KWS Chart
10. Create a friendly letter.

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Create an Information Card
4. Design a cover for the novel
5. Create a comic strip

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Synopsis

Nya goes to the pond to fetch water for her family. She walks eight hours every day. Salva walks away from his war-torn village. He is a “lost boy” refugee, destined to cover Africa on foot, searching for his family and safety.

Two young people . . . two stories.

One country: Sudan.

This mesmerizing dual narrative follows two threads – one unfolding in 2008 and one in 1985 – with one hopeful message : that even in a troubled country, determined survivors may find the future they are hoping for. (The publisher)

A synopsis can be found online at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A Long Walk to Water](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Long_Walk_to_Water)

Author Biography

Linda Sue Park

Linda Sue Park is an American author of novels for young readers. Park published her first novel, *Seesaw Girl*, in 1999. She has written six children’s novels and five picture books. Park's work was recognized when she won the prestigious Newbery Medal for her novel *A Single Shard* in 2002.

The daughter of Korean immigrants, Park was born in Urbana, Illinois in 1960. From a very early age she loved to read and began writing stories and poems when she was in elementary school. Park competed on the gymnastics team at Stanford University where she graduated with a degree in English. She also obtained advanced degrees in literature from Trinity College in Ireland and from the University of London. She presently lives in Rochester, New York with her husband, and two children.



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Chapters 1-2



Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. **A Long Walk to Water** actually features dual protagonists, **Nya** a young Sudanese girl and **Salva** a young Sudanese boy caught in the middle of a tragic civil war. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. What do you think makes for an especially fascinating **protagonist**? Who was your favorite protagonist of all time?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

responsibility	delicious	independence	rhythm
hesitate	mortars	protested	collapsed

1. Munjaba was certain that if his grandfather _____ to the police he would be thrown into jail.
2. We felt our pulses quicken as the _____ of the drums washed through the forest.
3. Are you are willing to take on the _____ of looking after your sister?
4. It won't be long before the shells of the _____ reach our village.
5. We could see the judge _____ when the defendant began to weep uncontrollably.
6. The exhausted runner _____ just as she reached the finish line.
7. The sponge cake was absolutely _____.
8. Canada was granted its _____ in 1867.

Questions



1. Considering that **setting** includes both time and place, what is the setting for Salva's story in Chapter One?

2. **It's all in Details:** Part of the story deals with **Nya**. From her *sections* at the beginning of Chapters One and Two, answer the following questions:

- a) In what year does her story begin? _____
- b) How old is she? _____
- c) How long did it take her to reach her destination? _____
- d) What injury did she sustain? _____
- e) What do you think she will be collecting in her big plastic container? _____

3. Although Salva spoke Dinka at home, what language was spoken at school? Why?

4. **Salva's family.** a) What position did Salva's father hold? _____
- b) Salva had _____ brothers and _____ sisters.
- c) Instead of going to school, what did his sisters do? _____

5. When the teacher heard gunfire, what instructions did he give the boys? Why didn't he tell them to run home?

6. What had caused the war in Sudan?

7. The name of Salva's village was _____.

8. What did the rebels force the men of the camp to do?

9. Why might the ending of Chapter Two be regarded as a **cliffhanger**?

10. What do you think Salva should do now?

Language Activities



A. Anagrams

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word **WAS** can also form the word **SAW**. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:



a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters.

Word	Anagram	Clue
cows		A flat-bottomed boat.
meal		Crippled.
others		Fired again.
plane		Sometimes a _____ is used to surface a wall.
face		Small restaurant.
asleep		Pass or go by (as time).

B. Place the following words from these chapters in **alphabetical order**.

camp	1.
child	2.
equipment	3.
children	4.
crowd	5.
chin	6.
comforting	7.
barn	8.
called	9.
covered	10.

C. A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter Two is “... a jet plane veered away like a sleek evil bird.” What two things are being compared in this example?



--	--

Invent your own **similes** comparing the following items with something from your own imagination:

a) the crash of thunder

--

b) Niagara Falls

--

Look for a **simile** in the remaining chapters of the novel. If you find one return to this question and record it below.

--

D. KWS Chart ~ Sudan

Henry Rollins once said that South Sudan is *one of the most hard-put places in the world*. Yet this north African country is a beautiful nation with a long and rich history dating back thousands of years. Its name is Arabic for “the land of the Blacks”. Until 2011 (when South Sudan became an independent country) Sudan was the largest country in Africa. But most people do not know a great deal about Sudan. In each of the columns below add helpful details which would assist someone who is researching this part of world.



What I Know	What I Want To Learn	Possible Sources

Good to Know

Salva is a member of the **Dinka** people. They are the largest ethnic tribe in the southern Sudan, numbering about 4.5 million people. They refer to themselves as **Muonyjang** (or Necked people). Dinka are sometimes noted for their height and are among the tallest people in Africa. The Dinkas are a pastoral people and rely on cattle herding and growing millet for their living.



Extension Activities



A. Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A story-board can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel. Complete the story-board below illustrating the events described in this section of ***A Long Walk to Water***. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6

B. Poems About the Desert

Much of Sudan and South Sudan is comprised of the mighty **Sahara Desert** – the world's largest and most forbidding wasteland. Many poems have been written about deserts. For instance, the famous poet, Lord Byron once wrote:

*Oh that the desert were my dwelling place,
That I might forget the human race,
And hating no one, love her only.*



Here is the beginning of another poem about deserts:

*D is for desert!
D is for dry!
Don't wait for the rain,
To fall from the sky... (From Mr. R.'s World of Math and Science website)*

There are many forms of poetry available to the aspiring poet other than the rhyming poem for which the above poets were so adept at creating. An **ACROSTIC** poem is one example. In an acrostic poem the first letters of each line are aligned vertically to form a word. The word often is the subject of the poem. Here is an example:

The Moth

Multicolored.
Often mistaken for a butterfly
Tickled my nose when it landed on me
Hops from flower to flower on the breeze.

The Acrostic Poem

Now create your own Acrostic Poem on the subject of the **desert**. Your poem must have at least six lines (and doesn't need to rhyme).

Title: _____
