



TeachersFirst READING TREKS

A Long Walk to Water

Teacher Guide

Access Reading
Trek Map

Grade Level & Content Areas

Ages: 10–13

Grades: 5–8

Reading Level: 6th grade

Lexile Measure: 720L

Guided Reading Level: V

Developmental Reading

Assessment (DRA): 50

Content Areas: English/language arts, reading, literature, social studies (including geography, history, and global studies), and science (including water resources and environmental studies).

Synopsis of Book

A Long Walk to Water by Linda Sue Park is based on a true story that alternates between two characters living in Sudan at different times. One narrative follows Salva Dut, an eleven-year-old boy forced to flee his village during the Second Sudanese Civil War in 1985, facing danger, hunger, and exhaustion as he becomes one of the Lost Boys of Sudan. The second story follows Nya, a young girl in 2008 who spends hours each day walking to fetch water for her family. Their stories ultimately intersect as Salva helps bring clean water to villages like Nya's through his real-life organization Water for South Sudan, revealing the power of perseverance, hope, and community.

Standards

Common Core State Standards for K–5

Reading: Literature

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Writing

- Text Types and Purposes
- Research to Build and Present Ideas

Common Core State Standards for 6–12

Reading: Literature

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Writing

- Text Types and Purposes
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

- Theme 1: CULTURE
- Theme 2: TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE
- Theme 3: PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS
- Theme 9: GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

National Core Arts Standards for Visual Arts

- CREATING

Next Generation Science Standards

- Engineering Design
- Motion and Stability: Forces and Interactions
- Earth's Systems

Social Justice Standards

- Identity
- Justice
- Diversity
- Action

Using a TeachersFirst® Reading Trek to Explore This Book

TeachersFirst Reading Treks create a virtual field trip of resources on a piece of literature or text using the My Maps feature of Google Maps. To motivate and enrich student reading, teachers and students can reference this visual collection of web resources and images as they relate to the contents of a book.

TeachersFirst has done the hard work for you! Use the activities in this teacher guide and the accompanying [Reading Trek map](#) as you and your students explore this book. And, if you feel inspired, you (or your students) can create your own Reading Trek about this or another book!

Using This Reading Trek in Class

Below is a list of ideas for using this Reading Trek in your educational setting.

Working with the Map:

1. Introduce the book to the whole class by displaying the [Reading Trek map](#) on an interactive whiteboard and highlighting its various layers
2. Have students use Odyssey ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to retell Salva's journey as an interactive story map. At each location, they can add a short description, image, or quote that represents a hardship or milestone, such as the crossing of the Nile River or reaching the Kakuma Refugee Camp.
3. Using Storyboard That ([TeachersFirst review](#)), students can create a three-panel comic showing a key event, such as crossing the Gilo River, the discovery of a water source, or Salva's first day in America. Encourage them to include captions that show emotion and theme.
4. Invite students to use Book Creator ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to craft digital journals written from both Salva's and Nya's perspectives. Each journal entry should align with one map location and include reflections, illustrations, or short audio clips.
5. Students can use Padlet ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to post reflections, photos, or research on water scarcity and refugee experiences. Each Padlet column should represent a map location, allowing collaborative storytelling across both Salva's and Nya's worlds.

Extension Activities:

1. Students can use Padlet ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to collaborate on a virtual water connections wall. Each student adds one resource—such as an article, image, or video—about a current water crisis or solution from another part of the world. Encourage comments comparing these situations to those in the novel.
2. Have students use Canva for Education ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to design an awareness poster or social media campaign about global water access. Include a quote from *A Long Walk to Water*, a statistic about water scarcity, and an action step that individuals can take. Display student creations digitally or in a school hallway gallery.
3. Invite students to use Adobe Podcast ([TeachersFirst review](#)) or Spotify for Podcasters ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to record short podcast reflections told from the perspective of Salva, Nya, or another character. Each episode should reveal a lesson about perseverance, hope, or leadership learned through their journey.
4. Invite students to use Genially ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to design a STEM presentation that models a simple engineering solution for obtaining clean water. Encourage them to link their ideas to Salva's real-world work with [Water for South Sudan](#).
5. Ask students to use Google Drawings ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to create symbolic artwork that captures one of the novel's central themes, such as survival, color, imagery, and symbols that communicate meaning, then write a short explanation describing how their artwork reflects the message of *A Long Walk to Water*

Helpful Resources

From TeachersFirst:

- [TeachersFirst CurriConnects Book List - Maps](#)
- [TeachersFirst Review of Google My Maps](#)
- [OK2Ask: Building Background Knowledge with Reading Treks](#)
- [OK2Ask: No Passport Required: Cross-Curricular Learning Journeys with Google My Maps](#)

Other Resources:

- [A Long Walk to Water Resources](#)
- [StoryBoard That: Novel Study Guide](#)
- [Book Units Teacher: A Long Walk to Water Activities](#)
- [EduBlogs Study Guide](#)