



EXPEDITIONARY  
LEARNING

# **Grade 7: Module 1: Unit 2: Lesson 1**

## **Introducing the Concept of Theme:**

### **Survival in A Long Walk to Water (Chapters 1–5)**



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**Long-Term Targets Addressed (Based on NYSP12 ELA CCLS)**

I can effectively engage in discussions with diverse partners about seventh-grade topics, texts, and issues. (SL.7.1)  
I can analyze the development of a theme throughout a literary text. (RL.7.2)

**Supporting Learning Targets**

- I can effectively engage in discussions with different Discussion Appointment partners.
- I can identify a central theme in *A Long Walk to Water*.

**Ongoing Assessment**

- Observation of student participation
- Student contributions to Survival anchor chart
- Exit ticket



Agenda	Teaching Notes
<p><b>1. Opening</b></p> <p>A. Entry Task: Introducing Learning Targets (5 minutes)</p> <p>B. Introducing Discussion Appointments (5 minutes)</p> <p><b>2. Work Time</b></p> <p>A. Defining the Concept of Theme and Discussing Possible Themes in <i>A Long Walk to Water</i> (20 minutes)</p> <p>B. Identifying One Central Theme in <i>A Long Walk to Water</i>: Beginning the Survival Anchor Chart (10 minutes)</p> <p><b>3. Closing and Assessment</b></p> <p>A. Exit Ticket: Revisiting Learning Targets (5 minutes)</p> <p><b>4. Homework</b></p> <p>A. Read Chapter 6 in <i>A Long Walk to Water</i> and complete Gist on Reader’s Notes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This first lesson in Unit 2 begins the scaffolding for the End of Unit 2 Assessment, a literary analysis essay on <i>A Long Walk to Water</i>. Students learn about the concept of theme, which lays the foundation for their work later in the unit on an essay related to the theme in the novel. (Several additional resources about theme are included in the supporting materials for this lesson, as a teacher reference.)</li><li>• Students will return to the concept of theme almost daily; do not worry if they are just beginning to grasp this abstract concept during this lesson.</li><li>• In addition, this lesson introduces students to a new structure to help them move toward mastery with SL.7.1. This structure, Discussion Appointments, is a natural extension of the collaboration students did in Unit 1, during which they worked fairly consistently with two different partners: A day and B day. Discussion Appointments allow students to build their speaking and listening skills as they talk with five different peers at different times.</li><li>• To understand the procedure of Discussion Appointments, preview Part B of the Opening of this lesson and refer to the Instructions for Discussion Appointments (in supporting materials). In the first nine lessons of Unit 2, the lesson plans will suggest which of the African locations students will use for their meetings. After that, it is up to the teacher to choose which appointments to designate during a given lesson.</li><li>• When you ask students to meet a Discussion Appointment in Salva’s Africa, use the African names for their appointments. Students’ Discussion Appointments sheets include a map of southern Sudan and surrounding countries. Reference to these locations is another way to help students envision where things are happening for Salva and Nya in the novel.</li><li>• Review the Instructions for Discussion Appointments in the Supporting Materials at the end of the lesson (for teacher reference; not a student handout).</li><li>• In Part B of the Opening, before students begin making their Discussion Appointments, note whether you have an uneven number of students to sign up. This means there will be one student per location who will not have an appointment. Tell students that this is no problem because you will assign anyone with no appointment on a given day to a new partner or to a pair, making a committee of three for that discussion.</li><li>• Discussion Appointments make pairing more efficient and consistent, but no system is perfect. Let the class know that there is a standing rule that any student who does not have an appointment for that</li></ul>



Agenda	Teaching Notes (continued)
	<p>location or cannot find an appointment because someone is absent or the student has lost his Discussion Appointments sheet should come to the teacher to be assigned a partner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Throughout Unit 2, students continue to read <i>A Long Walk to Water</i>. As they do their “first read” for homework, they keep track of plot and vocabulary in their Reader’s Notes. The Reader’s Notes have two parts: Part 1 is gist notes for each chapter (building off students’ routine from Unit 1); Part 2 is a Reader’s Dictionary. See the Unit 2 Overview, Preparation and Materials, for more explanation of how you might organize the Reader’s Notes materials; see Lesson 2 for more detailed information about how students use the Reader’s Notes.</li><li>• In this lesson, students only use the Reader’s Notes in the homework, and the task they are doing for homework is one that is familiar to them from Unit 1.</li><li>• In advance: Copy the Discussion Appointments in <i>Salva’s Africa</i>, preferably on colored paper so that students can easily locate this document in their folders or binders.</li><li>• Prepare the new Survival anchor chart (see supporting materials for a model).</li><li>• Decide how you will organize the Reader’s Notes assignment, which students complete for the first time for homework in this lesson, but which continues through Lesson 9. Review unit overview, Preparation and Materials, and look ahead to Lesson 2 to see the specific ways that the Reader’s Notes will be used.</li><li>• If you decide to make a packet for the Reader’s Notes for Chapters 6-10 (recommended and included as a stand alone document with the unit overview), prepare that packet for this lesson. If you are not using a packet, the Reader’s Notes for Chapter 6 can be found as a stand-alone sheet at the end of this lesson.</li><li>• Review Reader’s Notes for Chapter 6</li><li>• See Work Time, Part A. Consider preparing some examples of theme from texts or movies your students may be familiar with.</li><li>• Post the supporting learning targets on the board or chart paper.</li></ul>



Lesson Vocabulary	Materials
<p>theme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A Long Walk to Water</i> (book; one per student)</li> <li>• Instructions for Discussion Appointments (for Teacher Reference)</li> <li>• Discussion Appointments in Salva’s Africa (one per student)</li> <li>• Themes in Literature (one per student)</li> <li>• Survival anchor chart (new; teacher-created; see model in Supporting Materials)</li> <li>• Survival anchor chart (Students’ Notes) (one per student)</li> <li>• Markers</li> <li>• Exit ticket (one per student)</li> <li>• Reader’s Notes, Chapter 6 (one per student)</li> </ul>

Opening	Meeting Students’ Needs
<p><b>A. Entry Task: Introducing Learning Targets (5 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As students enter the classroom, ask them to copy down the two learning targets that are on the board or displayed on a document camera. They should write these learning targets at the top of a sheet of paper that they will use during this class.</li> <li>• Once they have the learning targets copied, ask them to circle the key words in the targets and underline any words they are unsure of. Tell them it is OK if a word has both a circle and an underline.</li> <li>• Read the learning targets aloud to the students.</li> <li>• Cold call a few students to get their key words and circle them on the board. Confirm their choices of key words as being important or question why they think a word might be significant. Then ask students to give any vocabulary they do not know. Underline those words.</li> <li>• Students are likely to say they are unsure about Discussion Appointments. Say: “This is going to be a way that you meet with partners during this unit, and we will be setting those up in a few minutes.”</li> <li>• Students may also single out <i>theme</i> as a word to clarify. You can ask if anyone knows what a theme is, and if you get a definition, you can acknowledge it. Then say: “We will be looking at themes today during Work Time, and that will help everyone become clear on the word.” Do not linger on a definition at this point.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning targets are a research-based strategy that helps all students, but helps challenged learners the most.</li> <li>• Discussing and clarifying the language of learning targets helps build academic vocabulary.</li> </ul>



Opening (continued)	Meeting Students' Needs
<p><b>B. Introducing Discussion Appointments (5 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell students you are going to explain the new protocol for meeting with peers during Unit 2. Distribute the <b>Discussion Appointments in Salva’s Africa handout</b>. Tell students that this will be a way for them to have partner discussions with more than the two partners they had during Unit 1. Being able to talk to a lot of classmates will give them more ideas for discussing and writing about <i>A Long Walk to Water</i>. Reinforce that discussion is one strong way to deepen their understanding of a text.</li> <li>• Give the following directions for making Discussion Appointments:</li> <li>• You will sign up for five appointments with five different partners.</li> <li>• For each location on the map, you may have only one appointment.</li> <li>• If someone asks you for an appointment and that location is available, you need to accept the appointment.</li> <li>• In the blank next to each location, write the name of your appointment partner.</li> <li>• Once you have made all five appointments, return to your seat.</li> <li>• Give students 3 minutes to make their Discussion Appointments. Consider setting a timer to help them stay focused and do this task quickly. Circulate to support or clarify as needed. About halfway through this sign-up process, check with the students to see who needs appointments in various locations. You can do this by asking, for example: “Raise your hand if you need an appointment in Kenya.” As students raise their hands, match them up.</li> <li>• Once they have their sheets filled out, ask students to return to their seats. Tell them that they will work with these Discussion Appointment partners regularly.</li> <li>• Remind them that if their partner is absent on a given day or they do not have a partner for a particular location, they should report to you at the front of the room and you will tell them with whom to meet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of protocols (like Discussion Appointments) allows for total participation of students. It encourages critical thinking, collaboration, and social construction of knowledge. It also helps students to practice their speaking and listening skills.</li> </ul>

Work Time	Meeting Students' Needs
<p><b>A. Defining the Concept of Theme and Discussing Possible Themes in A Long Walk to Water (20 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define theme in this unit as a statement that the author is making in the novel about how the world works in some way. Distribute the <b>Themes in Literature</b> handout.</li> <li>• Ask a student to read the “What is theme?” section on the handout. Have students turn to a partner and discuss:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider giving students an example of themes from other novels, movies, plays, or stories you know they are familiar with. This</li> </ul>



Work Time (continued)	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>* “Think of a book you have read or a movie you have seen in which the author or filmmaker is trying to convey a message about the world. What is the theme of the book or movie? How can you tell?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask two pairs to explain <i>theme</i> and give any examples they have. Tell students not to worry if they are just moving toward an accurate definition at this point; the next activity will help make it much clearer. They will also work with this concept throughout the unit.</li><li>• Explain that a theme is conveyed in a book but is bigger than the book alone; reiterate that theme is a message the author is trying to give readers. Often similar themes show up in many different stories, poems, dramas, or novels. Tell students that in a moment, they will get to think more about some possible themes.</li><li>• Ask students to bring their Themes in Literature handout and go find their “Juba” Discussion Appointments. Once they are with their appointment, they should find a place to sit, and then listen for directions for their partner discussion.</li><li>• Refocus the whole group and give directions:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. With your “Juba” partner, read the 12 themes on your Themes in Literature handout and discuss each.</li><li>2. Think about what you have read so far in <i>A Long Walk to Water</i> and decide which three of these themes might be the author’s message in this book.</li><li>3. Be sure that you can explain your reasons for the three possible themes you choose.</li><li>4. You have 5 minutes to select three possible themes and be ready to explain them to the class.</li></ol></li><li>• Give students 5 minutes to work. Circulate to listen and to gauge students’ initial understanding of the concept of theme. It is fine if they do not understand all twelve themes on the handout; remember, this is early work with a fairly abstract concept.</li><li>• Ask students to remain with their partner, but focus whole group. Cold call several pairs to share the themes they think might fit the book. Give specific positive feedback about comments you heard students make during their partner conversation. (For example: “I liked hearing Sam and Alice discussing whether number 1 or number 5 was the best theme for <i>A Long Walk to Water</i> by giving examples from the book.”) Congratulate them for good thinking when they select themes that could work for the novel.</li><li>• Ask students to stay with their Juba partner for another activity</li></ul>	<p>will vary from class to class based on the background of your students. For example, many seventh graders have read or seen the movie <i>Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone</i> but you cannot assume that all students would relate to this example. Examine the Themes in Literature handout and determine a few examples you believe your students can connect with.</p>



Work Time (continued)	Meeting Students' Needs
<p><b>B. Identifying One Central Theme in A Long Walk to Water: Beginning the Survival Anchor Chart (10 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tell students that since there are so many possible themes for this book, the class is going to focus on just one: Individuals are able to survive in challenging environments in remarkable ways. Remind them of their Reader's Notes on the novel so far and the fact that they already have a lot of knowledge about how Nya and Salva face challenges to survive.</li><li>• Start the <b>Survival anchor chart</b> (see supporting materials for a model). Ask students to Think-Pair-Share:</li><li>• * "Talk with your partner to answer this question: What are some challenges that these two characters have faced so far in the novel?"</li><li>• Ask students to write their ideas on the same sheet of paper they wrote the learning targets on.</li><li>• Listen for students to share possible examples (e.g., Salva had to run from the attack in his village; Nya has to walk many miles to get water).</li><li>• Before the whole group share, distribute <b>Survival anchor chart (Students' Notes)</b>. Explain to students that since they will often need to refer to this anchor chart while doing homework, they will keep their own version of the anchor chart. Whenever the class adds to the anchor chart, they should update their Survival anchor chart (student's notes).</li><li>• During the whole group share, list on the anchor chart the challenges that the students offer and prompt the students to add these ideas to the Survival anchor chart (student's notes). Tell students that they will be adding to this chart as they continue to read the novel, and ask them to keep their Survival anchor chart (student's notes) in a place where they will be able to use it in class and for homework.</li><li>• Ask students to thank their partners and return to their seats.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anchor charts provide a visual cue to students about what to do when you ask them to work independently. They also serve as note-catchers when the class is co-constructing ideas.</li></ul>





Closing and Assessment	Meeting Students' Needs
<p><b>A. Exit Ticket: Revisiting Learning Targets (5 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Distribute the <b>exit ticket</b> and ask students to take a moment to do the following:</li></ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reread the two learning targets.</li><li>Select one you think you have made progress on.</li><li>Circle that target on your exit ticket.</li><li>Explain, using specific examples, how you have made progress on this target. What is your evidence?</li></ol>	
Homework	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>A. Read Chapter 6 in <i>A Long Walk to Water</i>. Fill in Gist on Reader's Notes in Reading Packet 1. These notes are like the ones you kept for Chapters 1-5. You will be using this packet to keep your notes for Chapters 6-10. You will get more instructions about how we will use a Reader's Notes packet tomorrow, but for tonight's homework, after you read Chapter 6, just fill in your gist notes.</p>	



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# Grade 7: Module 1: Unit 2: Lesson 1

## Supporting Materials



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Make one appointment at each location:



Public domain map courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries.

*Note: This map shows Sudan, South Sudan, and the surrounding countries today. When Salva was a boy, South Sudan was part of Sudan. In 2011, South Sudan became an independent country.*

In Juba, South Sudan:

In Kenya:

In Ethiopia:

In Khartoum, Sudan:

By the White Nile:

### What is theme?

The **theme** of a book is the message or the lesson that the author is trying to convey. It is different from the plot, which is the events that happen in the book.

A theme has the following characteristics:

- It is a message or lesson about life that is broadly applicable—it is true for situations beyond the story.
- It is a statement, not just a topic. That is, *friendship* is not a theme. However, *friendship can bring comfort in times of hardship* could be a theme.
- Different books or movies can have similar themes. For example, *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Hansel and Gretel* both convey the message that you should be careful about who you trust, because people may not share their true intentions. The plots of these fairy tales are quite different, but their themes are similar.

### Directions

Read through the list of common themes in literature with your partner. Decide which three might be themes in *A Long Walk to Water*. Be prepared to explain why you selected each one.

1. Nature can present many challenges to humans.
2. We cannot escape our fates.
3. Family is our most important support.
4. Love is what makes life worth living.
5. Dangerous situations can make people become leaders.
6. To be truly happy, you must do what you know is right, even if it is unpopular.
7. People often do not appreciate what they have until it is gone.
8. Water is our most important resource.
9. In wartime, ordinary rules and routines vanish.
10. Individuals are able to survive in challenging environments in remarkable ways.
11. All people have the same basic needs.
12. Sometimes we have to abandon things that are important to us in order to survive.

### Sources:

Rachel Mork, “12 Most Common Themes in Literature” [www.life123.com](http://www.life123.com);

“Literature,” [www.learner.org](http://www.learner.org);

Angela Bunyi, “Finding THE Message: Grasping Themes in Literature,” [www.scholastic.com](http://www.scholastic.com)



**Challenges and Survival Factors in A Long Walk to Water**

List the challenges that Nya and Sylva face and the factors that help them to survive.

<b>CHALLENGES</b>	<b>SURVIVAL FACTORS</b>
Salva's village was attacked	Salva's teacher told the boys to run away from the village
No clean water near where Nya's family lives	Nya walks to get water every day
Salva is alone - no family/adult to take care of him	Other people help Salva
Salva and people travelling with him don't have enough food	Salva and his group find food (honey)
	Salva makes a friend (Marial)





Exit Ticket

Directions: Look at today's learning targets and circle the one that you think you have made progress meeting. Explain how you know you have made progress on that learning target.

TODAY'S LEARNING TARGETS:

1. I can effectively engage in discussions with different Discussion Appointment partners.
2. I can identify "theme" as it applies to *A Long Walk to Water*.