

Focusing Question:

What challenges did Salva face in *A Long Walk to Water*?

1.	Linda Sue Park’s novel, <i>A Long Walk to Water</i> tells the story of one of the thousands of Lost Boys of Sudan. These boys ran from their villages during the Second Sudanese Civil War in the 1980s and had to keep moving from country to country to escape the violence of the war. Park’s main character, Salva, is based on a real person who did survive this long journey despite the challenges of the war, the loss of his family, and the hostile environment of Southern Sudan.
5.	The first challenge Salva faced was the brutality of the Second Sudanese Civil War. He didn’t really understand what the war was about, but on an ordinary school day, it came to his village. At the sound of gunfire, his school teacher ordered the boys to “Go quickly.... Into the bush.... Not home. Don’t run home. They will be going into the villages. Stay away from the villages—run into the bush.” (6) The teacher was telling them to stay away from where the soldiers were attacking people. He hoped they could hide or escape from the danger. Salva did what the teacher asked and ran into the wilderness of the bush with the other boys. He didn’t know what happened to his family. He only knew that he couldn’t go back home where “a huge black cloud of smoke rose” as a plane flew overhead. (8) The war had thrown him, a frightened 11 year-old boy, into the bush with strangers who were also running away. The war has challenged him by making him a refugee.
10.	
15.	Once Salva ran from his village and joined a group of others, he faced another huge challenge. He was alone without his family. He was not really old enough to take care of himself so he had to rely on adults in the group of refugees. He looked for people from his village, hoping to find some family members, but none of them were there. When soldiers surrounded the refugees, they took the men and older boys but left Salva with the women and children. As he travelled with them, he worried and wondered, “Where are we going? Where is my family? When will I see them again?” (12) Because he had no family and was still a child, he was considered a burden to the others and they soon left him alone to fend for himself. He eventually did find his uncle in one of the groups, but his uncle was soon shot by soldiers, leaving Salva alone, without any family once again. To be so alone with no one to help him was a very tough challenge for Salva.
20.	
25.	In his long journeys, first to Ethiopia and then then to Kenya, Salva faced another daunting challenge: the landscape of Southern Sudan. This part of Africa is made up of swampland, plains where lions live, dangerous rivers full of crocodiles, and deserts. Walking across this land, the refugees never had enough food or water. At one point, Salva’s group came upon men who were dying of thirst. Some women in his group offered water to these men, but most people did not because they were told, “If you give them your water, you will not have enough for yourself! It is useless—they will die, and you will die with them!” (56) Obviously, the parched and hostile land of Sudan was not easy to travel through for young, orphaned Salva.
30.	
35.	Despite the challenges of war, losing his family, and having to walk across Southern Sudan, Salva did survive. He was eventually adopted by an America family in Rochester, NY. As a grown man, he returned to Sudan, found his father and was reunited with his original family. He also started an organization to build wells to make life less of a struggle for other children in Sudan. His story is a remarkable one because of all that he had to overcome. His life can be an inspiration to all of us because it shows that we can overcome many things that would try to discourage and defeat us.
Park, Linda Sue. <i>A Long Walk to Water</i> . New York: Clarion Books, 2010.	



At the end of Lesson 11, you might have statements like the following:

- The author's message was listed in the first paragraph.
- The author's message was also in the last paragraph.
- The author gave examples of challenges.