



A LONG WALK TO WATER: PRE-READING DISCUSSION PROMPTS

The prompts below focus on three of the major elements of *A Long Walk to Water*—refugees, Sudan’s second civil war, and a lack of access to clean water. Share the background information and discuss each prompt before reading the novel.



Part 1: What it means to be a refugee

Refugees are people who are forced to flee their home country in order to escape war, famine, or some other life-threatening situation. These people seek refuge, or safety, in another country because their home country is no longer safe for them.

- What do you think might be difficult about being a refugee?
- If you had to flee your home and you could only bring items that you could easily carry, what would you bring?

Part 2: The impact of civil war

Salva’s story takes place in Sudan in 1985. Sudan is a large country in northeastern Africa. From 1983–2005, Sudan was involved in a civil war between military forces in the North and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army in the South. This war lasted over 20 years and caused a great deal of damage.

- How is a civil war within a country different from a war between two countries?
- How do you think a long-lasting civil war might affect a country?

Part 3: Access to water

Over 600 million people in the world do not have access to running water. Many of these people have to walk a long way to get water to drink and to use for cooking and bathing. Even then, many times the water is dirty or contaminated and can make people sick.

- In the novel, Nya, an eleven-year-old girl, walks about eight hours every day to get water for her family. How do you think this affects Nya?
- Explain how your daily life would be different if you had to spend eight hours a day getting water for your family.