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CONNECTING WITH THE COMMON CORE

This book responds to the Common Core State Standards' goals of helping students develop the skills necessary to be successful in college and career. Through focused analysis, comparison, and synthesis of two texts, students will strengthen their understanding of literary conventions and build on analytical and argumentation skills. The texts selected for this book represent the high-quality, complex, and engaging new literature that is being produced in today's middle-grade publishing. These contemporary titles are easily relatable to the 21st-century child's experiences and knowledge, creating deeper connections between reader and text and giving the young reader a sense of ownership over the material.

The Common Core State Standards call for emphasis on assignments that encourage students to think critically, analyze deeply, and cite extensively from texts. Under the Common Core Standards, students are expected to progress in their level of comprehension and acquire appropriate academic vocabulary. In addition to building their reading and writing skills, students must also develop their listening and speaking skills in ways that will prepare them for the academic rigor of college.

To increase college readiness, Language Arts assignments are moving away from personal response and toward critical analysis based on information from texts. To prepare for the work they will encounter in college, students must become skilled at developing a strong claim and defending it with evidence from texts. To that end, *Using Paired Novels to Build Close Reading Skills* provides students with opportunities to interact with reading material deeply and in a variety of ways. Comparison activities strengthen students' understanding of the novels themselves, as well as the craft of writing. These activities prompt students to examine how each author approaches literary elements such as characterization, theme, and point of view, and to draw conclusions based on the similarities or differences. In order to complete the tasks in these activities, students will need to reflect on their understanding of one book before making connections to the other—a process that will naturally support comprehension skills. The activities in this resource focus on two specific novels—*A Long Walk to Water* and *Home of the Brave*—but this same approach can be similarly applied when analyzing and comparing literature in general.

The activities in this resource focus on two specific novels—*A Long Walk to Water* and *Home of the Brave*—but this same approach can be similarly applied when analyzing and comparing literature in general.

The activities in this book provide opportunities for individual and collaborative experiences. The individual activities build reading and writing skills by prompting students to develop analytical arguments and cite evidence from the texts. The collaborative activities help students develop critical speaking and listening skills in the context of literary analysis.

Ultimately, we want our children to develop a love of books and to become life-long readers. They can and should be encouraged to make personal connections to the texts and express their feelings about the stories they read. In fact, these types of connections often form the starting point for activities with more academic rigor. To provide students with freedom to interact with texts in more personal and creative ways, we have included Interactive Literature Notebook assignments as well as creative collaborative activities that are intended to enrich the reading experience and foster deeper personal enjoyment of the novels while still providing the foundation for deeper critical engagement.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Section I (Units 1–6)

The purpose of this book is to provide you with a variety of activities that connect the two novels in ways that will foster deeper critical and analytical thinking in your students. Section I contains worksheets to be completed after both novels have been read. This section is divided into five units, which are based on the following literary elements: **Characterization** (pages 8–16), **Plot** (pages 17–26), **Setting and Genre** (pages 27–34), **Theme** (pages 35–42), and **Craft and Structure** (pages 43–53). A culminating sixth unit (pages 54–63) contains longer writing assignments and projects.

Unit features include . . .

* Teacher Instructions

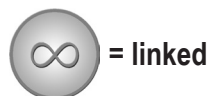
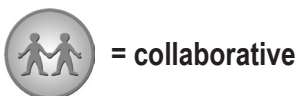
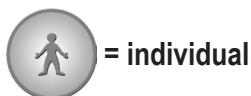
The first page of each unit provides you with an overview of the concept, the relevance to student learning, and brief descriptions and suggestions for each activity in the unit.

* Quick Guide to the Concept

The top portion of this page provides your students with an introduction to the literary concept around which the unit is built, along with a list of related vocabulary words. The bottom portion contains a list of suggestions for **Interactive Literature Notebook** entries. The Interactive Literature Notebook can be used to allow students to think creatively about the reading and make personal connections to the novels. Some of the ideas can apply to both books, while others are specific to one or the other novel. You can assign a specific topic to your students or allow them to pick from these suggestions. More detailed instructions for the Interactive Literature Notebook can be found on page 6.

* Unit Activities

Each unit contains **individual** and **collaborative** activities that support your students' understanding of literary elements and author's craft. Most of the activities also emphasize the use of textual evidence in the form of summarizing, paraphrasing, or quoting. In addition, some are meant to be used as **linked** assignments, with one activity laying the foundation for the next. In some cases, a collaborative activity allows students to brainstorm ideas and discuss the books together before completing a more challenging task in an individual worksheet. Alternately, an individual activity may provide students with an opportunity to reflect on the reading and then practice listening, speaking, and paraphrasing skills in a linked collaborative activity. Look for the following icons in the upper-right corner of each activity page:



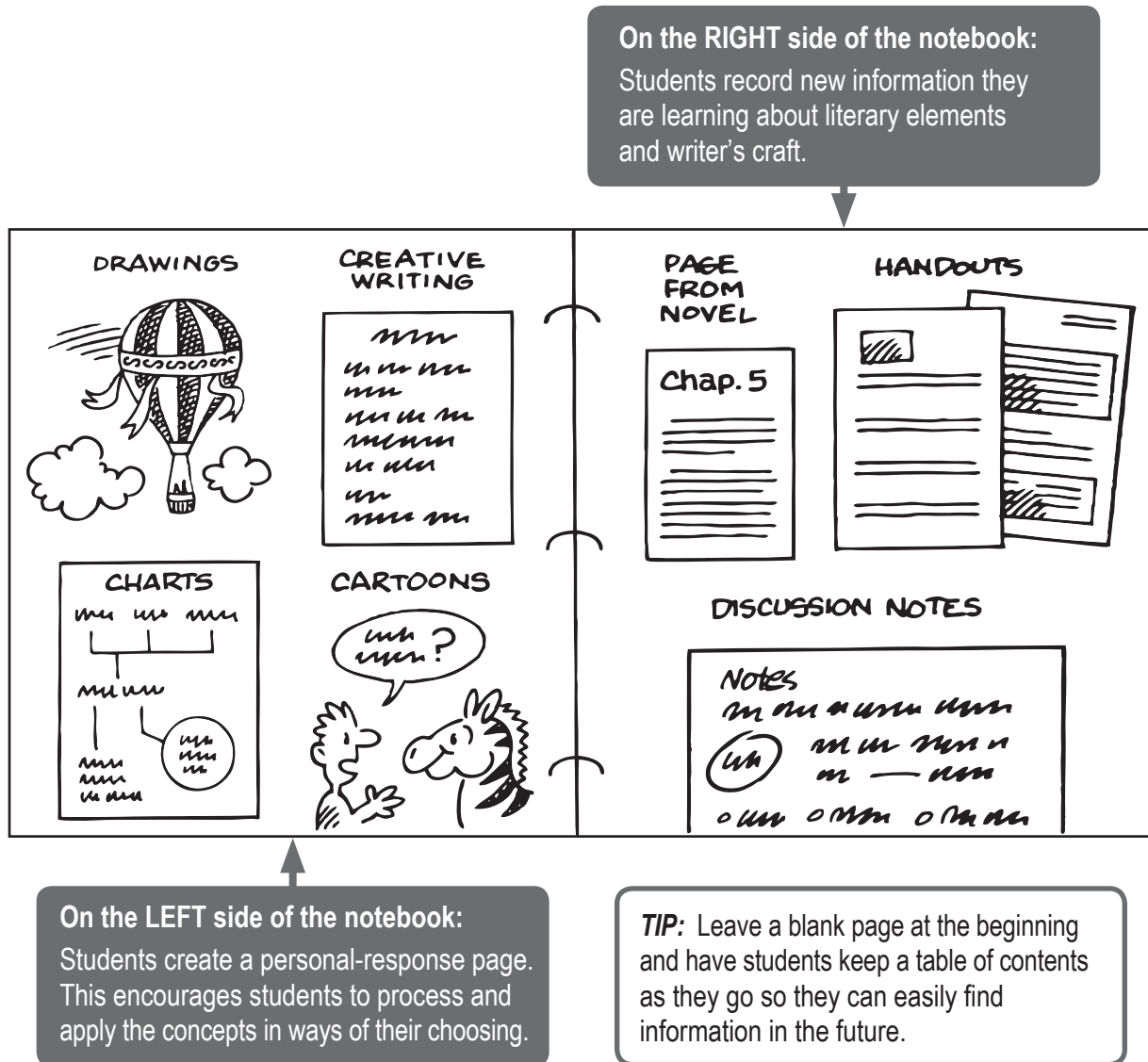
Section II (Units 7–9)

In this section, you will find activities to use during the reading of the individual books. These activities are divided into three groups: those that can be used with either novel, those intended to be used with *A Long Walk to Water*, and those intended to be used with *Home of the Brave*. These activities are meant to supplement the single-novel study activities you may already use. You may want to have students keep all of their single-novel worksheets in a folder and refer back to them when they are completing the novel-comparison activities. This will provide your students with opportunities to review the material, refresh their memories of the books, and practice using notes as a reference for a current assignment.

WHAT IS AN INTERACTIVE LITERATURE NOTEBOOK?

An Interactive Literature Notebook is a notebook that combines learning materials with personal response. For each student, his or her notebook will serve as a place to record and organize the information learned about the elements of literature. The response pages also encourage a deeper level of creativity and personal reflection toward the novels being analyzed and discussed in class.

For this resource, students may use a composition book, a spiral notebook, or a three-ring binder, depending on teacher preferences and needs. Instruct students to organize their notebooks as follows:



Interactive Literature Notebooks help your students hone the organizational skills they will need to be successful learners in high school and college by developing their competence in note-taking and record-keeping. These notebooks are excellent tools for visual as well as linguistic learners, and they give all students experience in connecting visual and multimedia components with text.

CONTEMPORARY CLASSICS

A Long Walk to Water

Linda Sue Park (2010)

A Long Walk to Water is a fictionalized story based on the life of a Sudanese Lost Boy, Salva Dut, who was forced to flee his village in 1985 when soldiers attacked. The narrative alternates between Salva's experience in 1985 and the story of a Sudanese girl in 2008 who must spend her days walking for hours to bring water to her family. Linda Sue Park draws from research and interviews with Salva Dut to create a heartbreaking fictionalized account of his harrowing journey. The majority of the action in the novel takes place in 1985–1986, making the genre historical fiction, albeit recent history. Although Nya's brief sections take place in 2008–2009, and Salva's story continues into 2009, the primary focus of the novel is the depiction of the horrors and struggles Salva faces on his journey to the refugee camps. The two narratives ultimately connect in an uplifting, hopeful ending that will inspire young readers.

Awards and Honors

- *New York Times* Best Seller
- IRA Notable Books for a Global Society 2011
- Jane Addams Children's Book Award 2011

Note: Page numbers in this guide refer to the 2010 paperback edition published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Boston/New York.

Home of the Brave

Katherine Applegate (2007)

This verse novel by Newbery Medal-winning author Katherine Applegate tells the story of a young Sudanese refugee, Kek, as he adapts to a new life in the United States. Kek is haunted by memories of the family and home he has lost, as well as the violence he witnessed. Yet he remains hopeful that he will one day reunite with his missing mother. Kek's amazement and misunderstandings of American life provide both bittersweet and humorous moments throughout the novel. He soon becomes the caretaker for a lonely old cow, who serves as a connection to and symbol of his old life and family. The first-person narration, as well as the poetic form, give readers insight into the emotions and thoughts of a refugee of war.

Awards and Honors

- *School Library Journal* Best Books of the Year 2007
- SCBWI Golden Kite Award for Best Fiction 2008
- Bank Street Josette Frank Award 2008

Note: Page numbers in this guide refer to the 2008 paperback edition published by Feiwel and Friends (an imprint of Macmillan Children's Publishing Group), New York.

Passages quoted in this resource are from *Home of the Brave* ©2007 by Katherine Applegate. Reprinted by permission of Feiwel and Friends, an imprint of Macmillan Children's Publishing Group. All Rights Reserved.

Name: _____



A FAMILY OF FRIENDS

At the beginning of both novels, Salva and Kek have been separated from their families. Look through the following chapters for quotations that show these characters' thoughts about their families. For each quotation, provide the page numbers.

| <i>A Long Walk to Water</i> | <i>Home of the Brave</i> |
|---|---|
| Chapter Two (pages 8–13) Chapter Three (pages 14–19) | "Questions" (pages 8–9) "TV Machine" (pages 39–42) |

1. How are Salva and Kek's thoughts similar?

2. Look back at the conversation Salva and Uncle have on page 60 of *A Long Walk to Water*. Why is Salva upset that his uncle wants to return to Sudan to fight?

3. What does Uncle tell him about the idea of "family"?

Salva and Kek both move to the United States. How do the people they meet in America become a new kind of family, like Uncle suggests? Give examples of something the American friends do to show they are like a family to the boys.

| Novel | <i>A Long Walk to Water</i> | <i>Home of the Brave</i> |
|--------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Friends | Chris and Louise | Hannah |
| What They Do | | |

4. How do these friendships help Salva and Kek?

Name(s): _____



PLOTTING PROBLEMS

The plots of both novels include many difficult and even traumatic situations Kek and Salva face. How do the characters react to these situations? Think about how these struggles affect the choices the characters make. Find three examples of difficult situations the characters face in each novel. Discuss how the character reacts to each situation.

| | Salva | Kek |
|---------------------|-------|-----|
| Situation #1 | | |
| Reaction | | |
| Page numbers | | |
| Situation #2 | | |
| Reaction | | |
| Page numbers | | |
| Situation #3 | | |
| Reaction | | |
| Page numbers | | |

Answer the following questions about how these characters react to situations.

1. Explain one way Salva and Kek's reactions to difficult circumstances are similar.

2. Explain one way Salva and Kek respond differently to difficult circumstances.

Name(s): _____



THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

A Long Walk to Water and *Home of the Brave* are about similar topics, but one is historical fiction and one is contemporary fiction because of *when* most of the story takes place. Novels that take place in the past and portray real historical events in the storytelling are called **historical fiction**. Novels that take place in our current time are called **realistic fiction** or **contemporary realistic fiction**. With a partner or small group, discuss how these authors show the time period that is part of each book's setting.

| Novel | <i>A Long Walk to Water</i> | <i>Home of the Brave</i> |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Is most of the story set in the past or present? | | |
| How much time passes from the beginning of the novel to the end? | | |
| What real historical events are described in the novel? | | |
| How are the lives of the characters affected by the real historical events? | | |
| Find one quotation that shows how the main male character feels about these events. | | |
| What is the mood or feeling of this scene? | | |

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Why is one book considered historical fiction and one contemporary fiction?

Name: _____



A NEW WORLD

Life in the United States is very different from life in the villages of South Sudan. These novels help readers understand the difficulties refugees face as they try to adapt to a completely new way of life.

A Long Walk to Water takes place mostly in Sudan. At the end of the novel, Salva is chosen to come to the United States and live with an American family. The author does not give very many details about Salva's experience in the United States. Instead, she gives readers a brief explanation of some of the things Salva experienced when he first came to the U.S.

Read the passage on pages 97–99 about Salva's first month living in New York. List four things about the United States that were surprising or difficult for Salva.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Home of the Brave begins just as Kek arrives in the United States. Kek experiences some of the same confusion and difficulties that Salva did when he first arrived. The author of this book, however, describes Kek's experiences in great detail. Pick two of the answers you gave above and explain what Kek experienced. Use a quote to support each answer.

Answer from the list above: _____

What Kek experienced: _____

Quotation that supports this answer: _____

Page number: _____

Answer from the list above: _____

What Kek experienced: _____

Quotation that supports this answer: _____

Page number: _____

Name(s): _____



DISCUSSING A NEW WORLD

With a partner, share your answers from the “A New World” worksheet. Then take turns giving opinions while the other person listens, paraphrases, and responds.

Begin by deciding the order in which each partner will speak.

Speaker 1's Name: _____ Speaker 2's Name: _____

Speaker 1

Answer the following question aloud. Give reasons to support your answer.

- Who do you think had a more difficult time adjusting to life in the United States, Kek or Salva?

Speaker 2

- Paraphrase your partner's answer to the previous question.
- Do you agree or disagree with your partner's opinion? Explain your answer to your partner.

Now switch roles.

Speaker 2

Answer the following question aloud. Give reasons to support your answer.

- The real Salva Dut moved back to Sudan in 2011. After living in the United States, what do you think would be the most difficult part of moving back to Sudan?

Speaker 1

- Paraphrase your partner's answer to the previous question.
- Do you agree or disagree with your partner's opinion? Explain your answer to your partner.

TIME TO WORK TOGETHER!

The passage in *A Long Walk to Water* also says that Salva's new family helped him learn “the millions of things he had to learn” (page 98). Work together to think of two examples of things Kek experienced that Salva probably had to learn about, too, but that are not mentioned in *A Long Walk to Water*.

1. _____

2. _____
