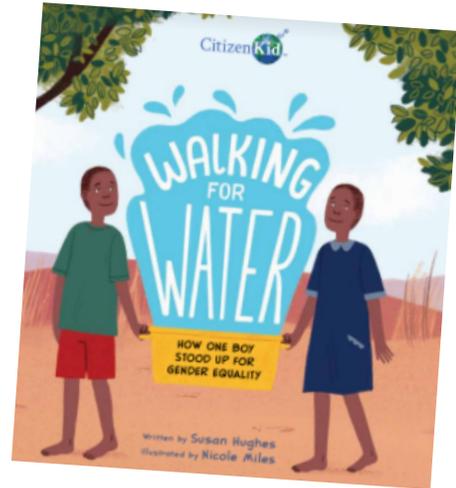


## WALKING FOR WATER TEACHING GUIDE

### ABOUT THE BOOK

This inspiring story of individual activism is based on the true story of a Malawian boy.

Victor and his twin sister Linesi, who live in a village in Malawi, are very close—but now that they have turned eight years old, Victor's sister no longer goes to school with him. Instead, Linesi, like the other older girls in their community, walks to the river to get water five times a day, to give their mother more time for farming. Victor knows this is the way it has always been. But he has begun learning about gender equality at school, and his teacher has asked the class to consider whether boys and girls are treated equally. Though he never thought about it before, Victor realizes they're not. And it's not fair to his sister. So Victor comes up with a plan to help.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Award-winning author Susan Hughes has written over thirty books --- both fiction and nonfiction --- for children of all ages. Susan has always loved writing. When she was growing up she and several friends started a writing club. They would gather with their poems and stories and read them aloud to one another. Susan studied English literature at the University of Toronto. Today, Susan lives in Toronto, Canada, in a house with a big red door. She continues to enjoy freelance editing and commissioned writing, as well as story coaching and critiquing manuscripts. And of course, she loves writing her own stories --- from picture books, middle-grade novels and graphic novels to nonfiction and young adult novels!

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### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Nicole Miles is an illustrator from The Bahamas who currently lives in the United Kingdom. Nicole has worked with a variety of clients including the New York Times, BuzzFeed, Seal Press, Simon & Schuster, Putnam, Sisters from AARP and Bravery

Magazine. Her comic Barbara (ShortBox, 2017) was nominated for an Eisner Award. Nicole loves how children's books can discuss such a huge range of topics and feelings. They can teach, inspire, validate, make people feel seen; they can be sombre, funny, weird or all of these things at once. She hopes her images will engage readers with the text while also making them feel like the worlds in the books she illustrates extend beyond the pages and continue in their imaginations.

Instagram: @nicolemillo

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### **OUTLINE OF LESSONS**

Lesson One: Whole Group Literacy | Character Study using Evidence

Lesson Two: Small Group Social Emotional | Gender Opportunities

Lesson Three: Individual Art | How Illustrations Add to a Story

Lesson Four: Individual Writing | Writing about Gender Equality

Lesson Five: Individual Social Studies | Gender Equality in our Society

The lessons in this guide span a variety of content areas and can be differentiated for students in grades 2 - 5. The discussion questions are organized from lower level (at the top) to higher order thinking questions (at the bottom). Discussion questions and activities should be chosen based on the needs of your students, their grade level, and skill sets.

### **Lesson One: Whole Group (LITERACY)**

*Character Study using text evidence*

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2

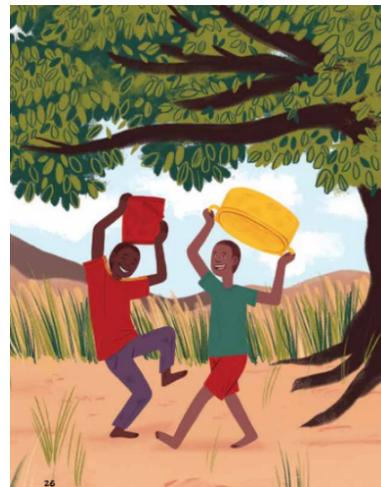
Differentiated Discussion Questions:

What character traits would you use to describe the main character?

What evidence from the story supports those character traits?

How did the main character's feelings change from beginning to end?

What evidence from the story supports the way the character changed?



How did the main characters' words and actions help solve the problem?

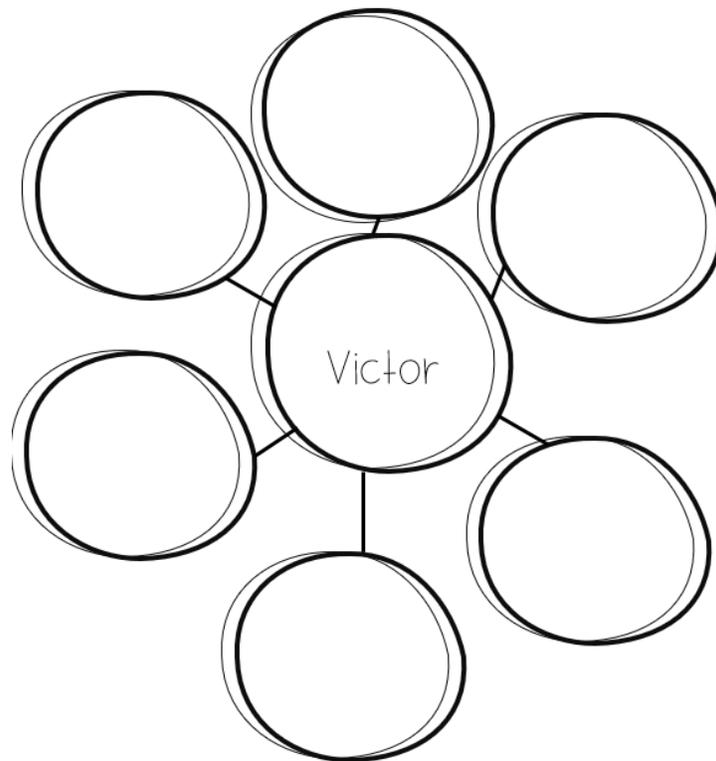
How did the main character's words and actions help reveal the author's message?

Activities:

Character Study Mind Map

- Character traits are descriptive words that we use to describe a character. Explain that there are **OUTSIDE** character traits, or words that we use to describe a character based on what we see with our eyes (examples: tall, girl, pretty, etc). There are also **INSIDE** character traits, or words that we use based on what a character thinks, does, or feels. As a whole group, brainstorm different **INSIDE** character traits that describe the main character, Victor. Use the white board or anchor chart paper to draw a mind map to track student thinking (see sample below).

## INSIDE CHARACTER TRAITS



Character Study T-chart

- First, explain that when we use character traits to describe characters, we also have to use evidence from the story to support our thinking. For example, if we think Victor is kind, we must use evidence from the story to support that he's kind. Our traits and evidence *must* match. As a whole group, discuss inside character traits and evidence from the story that supports student thinking. Use

the white board or anchor chart paper to create a character trait t-chart, showing inside character traits and evidence from the story (see sample below).

## COMPARE & CONTRAST

Character Trait	Evidence from the story
Victor shows empathy.	In the story, Victor considers his sister's thoughts and feelings. He tries to understand how she is thinking and feeling.

### Character Study Journal Entry

- Good readers consider the different perspectives or points-of-view of characters in the books they read. First, explain what perspective means (the way characters view different people and events) and why people/characters may have different perspectives (characters have different perspectives because, just like people, they have different feelings, understandings, and behave differently). In Walking for Water, we see evidence that Victor's perspective is different from other characters'. As a whole group, consider Victor's perspective - his feelings, thoughts, and actions - and discuss why it might be different from others. In addition, consider how Victor's actions change the perspectives of other characters in the story. As a group, participate in a shared writing activity. Use lined paper to write a journal entry written by Victor.



## Lesson Two: Small Group (SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL)

### Gender opportunities

#### Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.1  
 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1  
 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.1  
 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1

#### Discussion Questions:

What is gender?

What is an opportunity?

How has gender influenced YOUR opportunities?

In what ways would you change the way gender influences our opportunities?

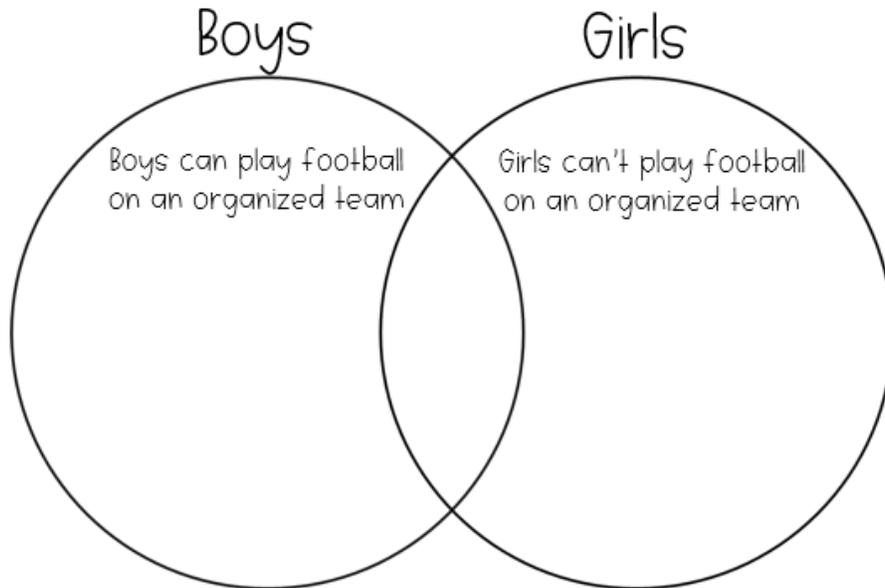
#### Activities:

##### Comparing & Contrasting Opportunities

- As a whole group, review what students have learned about gender equality after having read Walking for Water. Then, explore how gender influences opportunities. Use Victor and Lensi's experiences from the story to show how gender can influence children across the world. Brainstorm examples of ways gender affects peoples' opportunities in our country, community, or school.

Explain that when we compare and contrast we study how things are similar and different. In small groups, students will use a Venn Diagram to compare and contrast the different opportunities boys and girls have. They'll reflect on their experiences and discuss whether they find them to be fair (see sample below).

# COMPARE & CONTRAST



## Be like Victor

- In the story Walking for Water we see how much Victor cares about, and values, his sister and what he does to show his love for her. Throughout our communities, we all have a HAND in showing how we care for others, both family, friends, and others. In small groups, students should brainstorm how they can "be like Victor." Then, they'll trace their hand and write their reflections on their traced hand. Younger students may simply brainstorm examples of kindness and write or draw on their traced hand. Students can cut out the paper hands and create a class-wide display (all hands can be positioned to create a heart, a peace sign, the world, etc).

## Promoting Equality

- One way society promotes different products or ideas is through advertisements. Have students brainstorm ways they could promote positive ideas about gender equality. In small groups, students will design and create a magazine advertisement, poster, or commercial promoting gender equality at

school.



### Lesson Three: Individual Work (ART)

*How illustrations add to a story*

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.5

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.5

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.5

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.5

Differentiated Discussion Questions:

What is your favorite illustration from the story? Why?

What did you notice about the text features used in the illustrations of this story (i.e. graphic novel format, speech bubbles, multiple illustrations across spreads, etc)?

How do the illustrations help show examples of equality?

How do the illustrations and words work together to create a meaningful story?

In what ways do the illustrations reveal understandings about the characters, the setting, including culture and geography, and so on?

Activities:

Sketch Glossary

- Pictures help us better understand what we read, even individual words.



Encourage students to choose up to 5 words that stood out to them as they read Walking for Water. Individually, students will create a “sketch glossary” by drawing a picture to help show the meaning of each of the 5 words they’ve chosen. Students can share their work with a partner or with the class once they finish.

#### Class book

- In the story we learn how gender can influence opportunities. Many times people assume things about others based on their gender. These assumptions are called stereotypes. When people stereotype others, they assume things about an individual based on various elements, including an individual's physical appearance. These assumptions can be right but they may be wrong. If people act on wrong assumptions, their actions may be hurtful and damaging to others. Students will use a prompt to create a class-wide book to challenge gender stereotypes. Individually, students will complete the following prompt: “Some people say only boys/girls are \_\_\_\_\_, but that is not true because I am a boy/girl and I am \_\_\_\_\_.” Students will illustrate their prompt. Finally, collect the students' work and staple or bind the papers together to create a classbook that students can read throughout the school year.

#### Wordless Gender Equality Story

- In the story Walking for Water we see that illustrations can be powerful - with or without words. The illustrations alone allow us as readers to see how characters respond to the challenges brought on by gender equality. Have students “read” the story without the words. Then, individually, students will draw a wordless story about gender equality and what it means to them.

### **Lesson Four: Individual Work (WRITING)**

#### *Writing about gender equality*

#### Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.3

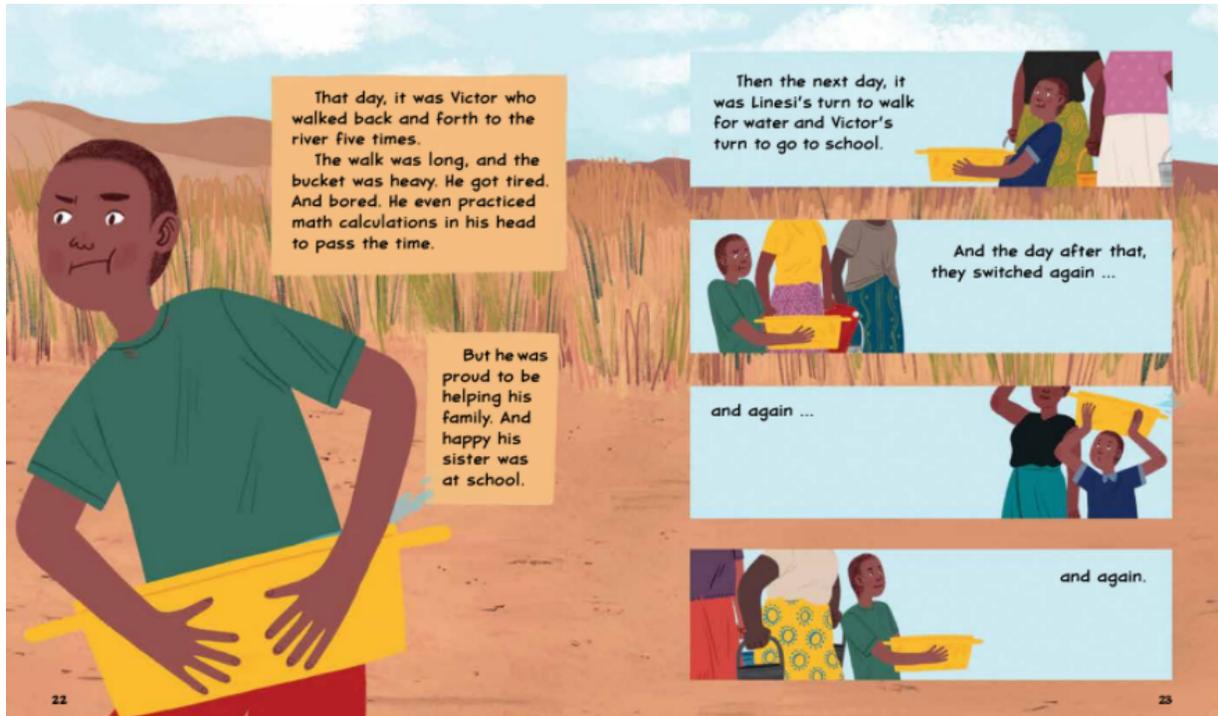
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3

#### Discussion Questions:

How do illustrations help tell a story?

What do you notice about the graphic elements in the story?

In what ways do the illustrations and graphic elements help show equality?  
How would the story change if it were a different genre? (ie non-fiction rather than picture book with graphic elements etc.)  
Other than story books, how else do we share information and tell stories?



Activities:

#### Equality Interview

- Victor and his sister Linesi show us how gender equality affects people in their community. Gender equality can affect people around the world and in different ways. Encourage students to discover how gender equality (or inequality) has played a role in the life of a friend or a loved one. Individually, students will interview a friend or family member about a time in their life when they experienced gender equality/inequality. Then, they can create a mock blog post with interview questions and answers.

#### Graphic Novel

- Walking for Water is a graphic novel. Explain that graphic novels are styles of stories that combine words and pictures in a comic-like format. Authors of graphic novels typically use speech bubbles and multiple scenes per page to tell their story. Help students explore how the speech bubbles in Walking for Water help us understand more about specific characters and their relationships with others. Help them explore how the thought bubbles give us insight into what characters are thinking and feeling. How do the panels affect

their experience of the story? Encourage students to think about a moment in their life that would work well as a graphic novel. Individually, students will create-recount a true story using features found in a graphic story (i.e.using panels, narrative, speech bubbles, thought bubbles, multiple panels across spreads etc).

### Poetry

- Poetry is an authentic and meaningful way to convey strong messages, like the theme of gender equality captured in Walking for Water. Encourage students to use a form of poetry to show what they've learned about the importance of gender equality. Individually, students will write a poem (an ACROSTIC poem, a mood piece, a shape poem, etc) to convey their feelings about gender equality. You can host a poetry slam event, where students can perform and share their pieces with their classmates.

# SHAPE POEM

A poem written in the shape of the message the author is trying to send.



## Lesson Five: Individual Work (SOCIAL STUDIES)

*Gender equality in our society*

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.2

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2

### Discussion Questions:

What is gender?

What is equality?

How does gender impact our society now?

How has gender impacted our society in the past?

How might gender impact our society in the future?

In what ways can YOU fight for gender equality?

How are equality and equity different?

### Activities:

#### The True YOU

- Victor's story in Walking for Water is based on a real boy and true events. The author's note at the back of the book explains more about this, for example, that the real events took place in a small village in the country of Malawi. Students will think about true stories from their lives where they've shown empathy like the main character Victor. Independently, students will write about one of these stories. Younger students can simply illustrate one of these stories. End the lesson by allowing students an opportunity to share their stories with classmates.



#### History Research

- The fight for gender equality in this country has been long and difficult. For instance, women have not always had the right to vote. Individually, students will research a moment or time period in history during which people fought for gender equality in their country and write an informational paragraph showing what they've learned. For younger students, complete a shared research project, where together you research a time in history where gender has influenced our country. Then, students can then write an informational paragraph describing what they've learned or draw a picture of the historical figure.

#### Biography

- The struggle for gender equality has continued to shape our country's history. Students will research people who have contributed to the fight for gender equality. Individually, students will write a short, biographical paragraph showing the significance of this person's accomplishments. For younger students, complete a shared research project, where together you research a historical figure who has positively influenced gender equality. Then, students can write an informational paragraph describing what they've learned or

draw a picture of the historical figure.

