

## Compare and Contrast Model Essay

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

How has the author of *A Long Walk to Water* used or altered history in the novel?

Texts used: “One Day I Had to Run” by John Deng Langbany and *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park

Similarities	Evidence: <i>A Long Walk to Water</i>	Evidence: Informational text
<b>Many of the major events are described similarly in both texts</b> chased from the refugee camp in Ethiopia to cross the Gilo river	On pages 74 and 75, Salva describes how the soldiers fired their guns into the air and chased the people away from the camp toward the Gilo river.	In the informational text, John Deng Langbany also describes how they were chased to the edge of the Gilo river by people shooting at them.
treated poorly at Kakuma by the local people	On page 84, Salva describes how the local people “would often sneak in and steal from the refugees. Sometimes fights broke out, and people were hurt or killed.”	John Deng Langbany says that, “In Kakuma, the native people treated us badly because they didn’t know us.”
challenging big group journey from Sudan to Ethiopia	In chapters 1–11, Salva describes the horrors of the journey from Sudan to Ethiopia in detail.	John Deng Langbany briefly describes how he “ran with thousands of other young children in a very hard journey we made it across the desert all the way to Ethiopia.”

Differences	Evidence: <i>A Long Walk to Water</i>	Evidence: Informational Text	Possible Reasons for Difference?
How the experience at the Gilo river was described	<p>On page 75 when describing his concerns about crossing the river, he focuses on the current and the crocodiles. He explains, “It was the rainy season. Swollen by the rains, the Gilo’s current would be merciless.”</p> <p>On page 77 when describing being on the riverbank ready to cross, he tells the story of a man who was taken by a crocodile. “Then Salva saw the telltale flick of a crocodile’s tail as it flopped into the water near the young man. Moments later, the man’s head jerked oddly—once, twice.”</p>	When John Deng Langbany describes being chased from the refugee camp, he describes how he couldn’t swim so he watched people being killed and cried as he saw them get shot. He doesn’t mention the crocodiles at all.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The author of <i>A Long Walk to Water</i> wasn’t there, and while she listened to Salva’s stories to write the book, she wasn’t there to know what to emphasize.</li> <li>2. John Deng Langbany and Salva are two different boys perhaps of different ages who, as a result, may have experienced the event differently based on their own fears.</li> </ol>
The balance of time spent on describing the journey from Sudan to Ethiopia	In chapters 1–11, Salva describes the horrors of the journey from Sudan to Ethiopia in detail.	John Deng Langbany briefly describes how he “ran with thousands of other young children in a very hard journey we made it across the desert all the way to Ethiopia.”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. John Deng Langbany was five years old and therefore may not remember much about the journey as much as the places he stayed at, while Salva was eleven and probably remembers a lot more of the journey.</li> </ol>

### Using History in *A Long Walk to Water*

The Second Sudanese Civil War was a tragedy for millions. Thousands of boys fled the fighting and walked through three countries searching for safety. They were called the “Lost Boys.” Their story is unforgettable and has been told many ways. *A Long Walk to Water*, a novel by Linda Sue Park, tells the story of Salva. In the author’s note, Park explains, “some of the details in this story have been fictionalized, but the major events depicted are based on Salva’s own experiences.” John Deng Langbany’s article “One Day I Had to Run” is about a similar journey. His article is nonfiction. Comparing the two texts shows how Park used historical events in the novel. Many of the same major events are described in both texts. However, the authors focus their attention differently in the two accounts.

The novel and Langbany’s article discuss similar events. For example, both texts describe the journey from Sudan to the United States. Both also describe the walk from Sudan to the first refugee camp in Ethiopia. In chapters 1–11 of *A Long Walk to Water*, Salva describes the horrors of the long journey in detail. He includes hunger, thirst, and people dying. Langbany also describes “a very hard journey” across the desert to Ethiopia. Both texts also discuss how they were treated at Kakuma. In *A Long Walk to Water*, Salva says that the local people “would often sneak in and steal from the refugees” (84). Similarly, Langbany recalls that “the native people treated us badly because they didn’t know us.” Park clearly based her novel on real events.

While Park hasn’t changed history, she does focus her attention differently from Langbany. For example, most of *A Long Walk to Water* describes the journey from Sudan to Ethiopia. Only chapter 13 is about the journey from Ethiopia to Kenya. However, Langbany focuses nearly half of his article on this part of the journey. Another difference is the description of when the boys are forced to swim the Gilo River. In *A Long Walk to Water*, Salva describes the current and the crocodiles as the most serious threats they faced. In contrast, Langbany focuses on the threat

of being shot. The events are the same. But the dangers are described differently. Park focuses on how harsh nature can be. Langbany focuses on the danger from humans.

Although the article and the novel focus on different parts of the journey, they discuss similar events. There are probably many reasons for the differences in focus. One reason may be that Langbany and Salva were different ages during the time described. This means that they had different views. Even if they went through the same events, they would have experienced them differently. Regardless, it is clear that Park found meaning in historical events. In her novel, she uses the experiences of real people like Salva to offer an inspiring message of hope and perseverance.