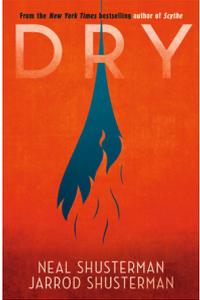




Walker Books Discussion Guide



Dry

By Neal Shusterman and Jarrod Shusterman
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*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

The drought – or the Tap-Out, as everyone calls it – has been going on for a while now. Everyone's lives have become an endless list of don'ts: don't water the lawn, don't take long showers, don't panic.

Until the taps run dry.

Suddenly, Alyssa's quiet suburban street spirals into a warzone of desperation; neighbours and families turned against each other on the hunt for water. And when her parents don't return, she and her younger brother must team up with an unlikely group in search of water. Each of them will need to make impossible choices to survive.

Author Information:

Neal Shusterman is an award-winning author whose books include the New York Times bestselling *Unwind* series and *Challenger Deep*, which won a National Book Award, as well as the *Arc of a Scythe* series. He also writes screenplays for film and television, for shows such as *Goosebumps* and *Animorphs*. He lives in Southern California with his four children. Follow him on Twitter: @NealShusterman.

How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

These notes are for:

- Secondary
- Ages 14+

Key Learning Areas:

- English

Example of:

- YA Fiction

Themes/Ideas:

- Drought
- Survival
- Catastrophe
- Bravery



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Discussion Questions and Activities:

1. The novel opens with Alyssa's mother attempting to fill the dog's bowl with water but finding the pipes have run dry. Why do you think the authors chose to open with the main complication of the plot rather than introduce the characters and setting first? How do you think the story would be different if there were a few introductory chapters before the water runs out?
2. The tap-out forces characters to reprioritise their lives. Discuss what you think Alyssa, Kelton, Jacqui and Henry's priorities were before the tap-out and how we see them change throughout the novel.
3. Why do you think the authors included the snapshots in-between chapters? Pick one of the snapshots and discuss what you think might happen to that character as the events of the story continue.
4. The perspective switches between characters throughout the story. Why do you think the authors chose to write the story this way? How do you think your understanding of each character would change if the story was completely from Alyssa's perspective?
5. Discuss Kelton's family dynamic. Why do you think Brady left? What is the cause of the tension between his parents?
6. When Kelton's father refuses to give his neighbor Malecki water, rather offering to show him how to get water out of his plants, do you think he did the right thing? Why or why not?
7. When Alyssa originally sees Kelton's gun she takes the clip from him. After the encounter with the service station attendant she gives it back to him. Why do you think she does this? Would you have reacted the same?
8. Discuss the phrase "desperate times call for desperate measures" and how it applies to this novel, giving particular thought to the scene where the neighbours try to break into Kelton's house, the confrontation with the bullies beating the Mercedes owner and Jacqui's description of what happened at the desalination machines.
9. How does Alyssa and Kelton's relationship change throughout the story? What are some key moments in the story that affect their relationship?
10. Divide your group into two and hold a debate about one of the following topics:
 - Should Alyssa have given the water from Kelton's house to the people at the community meeting?
 - Should Henry should have distributed the ÁguaViva to his neighbours rather than profiteering from it?
11. The main characters refer to people that have gone without water for too long as "water zombies". Why do you think the authors created that phrase? What connotations does the word "zombie" have?
12. Imagine the tap-out reached where you live. Brainstorm your tap-out survival plan.

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