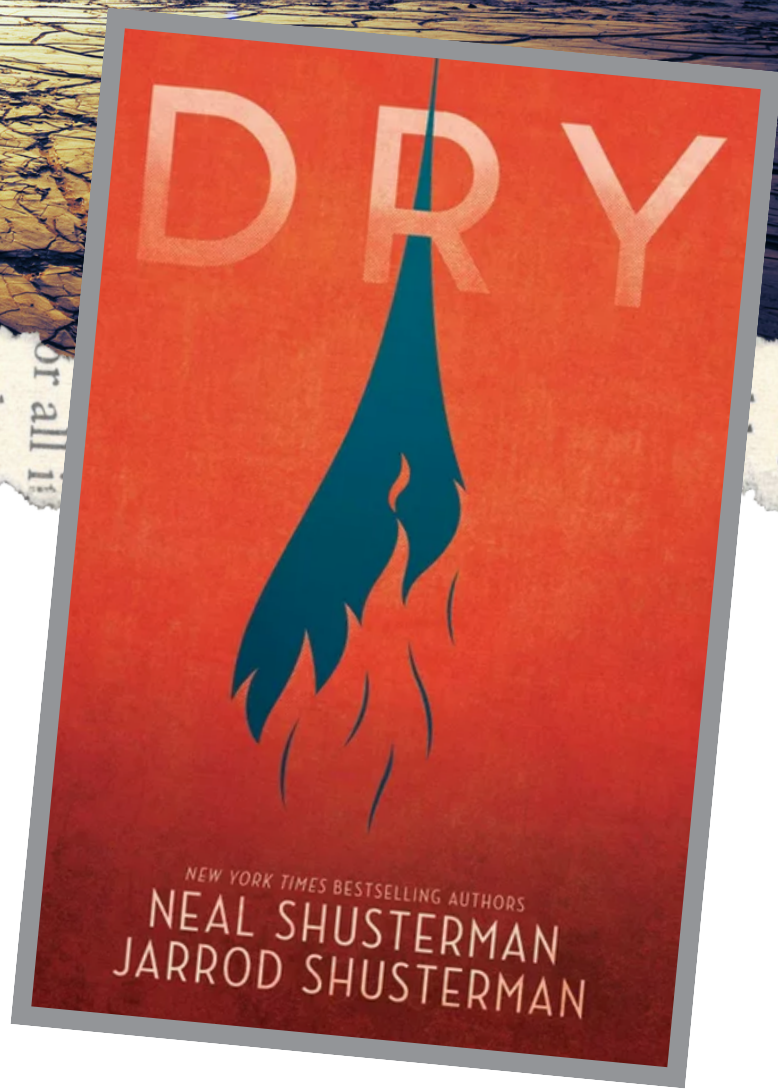




# A READING GUIDE



FROM

**Illinois**  
**A**GRICULTURE  
in the Classroom<sup>SM</sup>





# INTRO TO "DRY"

## SUMMARY OF TEXT

When the California drought escalates to catastrophic proportions, one teen is forced to make life and death decisions for her family in this harrowing story of survival. The drought, or Tap-Out, as everyone calls it, has been going on for a while. Everyone's lives have become an endless list of don'ts: don't water the lawn, don't take long showers. Until the taps run dry! Suddenly, Alyssa's quiet suburban street spirals into a warzone of desperation; neighbors and families turning against one another in the hunt for water. When her parents don't return home, and she and her brother are threatened, Alyssa has to make impossible choices if they're going to survive.

## QUESTIONS

Use these questions as discussion starters, reading checks, or just for students to follow along in whole-class or individual reading.

## EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Use these extension activities to further strengthen student understanding about agriculture. These extension activities challenge students to connect themes in the story to real life topics and information in the world of agriculture.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Visualize Historical Drought Data: <https://www.drought.gov/>

Water Resources for Kids: <https://www.epa.gov/watersense/watersense-kids>

[Journey 2050 Game](#) and [Water Video](#)

[Water Savers Game](#)

[Project WET](#)



# SECTION DISCUSSION GUIDE

## PART ONE: TAP-OUT

DAY ONE  
SATURDAY, JUNE 4TH

### QUESTIONS

#### 1) ALYSSA (PAGE 3)

- We get a glimpse of what Southern California looks like so far: farms fail, no rain, and water is being conserved. How would you prepare in an extremely severe drought? What supplies would you stock?
- We see a desperate interaction between an adult and Alyssa, a sixteen year old, in Costco over ice. Do you think interactions like this are common in desperate times? Why or why not?
- Based on interactions in the first section, how do you predict this situation will play out? How will people change?

#### SNAPSHOT: JOHN WAYNE AIRPORT (PAGE 24)

- Why do you think it is important that the author shows another story?

### EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Alyssa says "Used to be no one much knew or cared where our water came from. It was just always there." Water is something we often take for granted when you can just turn a handle or press a button and it appears. Using materials provided to you, find where your water comes from.

#### ILLINOIS MAPS

[www.isws.illinois.edu/maps](http://www.isws.illinois.edu/maps)

#### ILLINOIS INTERACTIVE MAP

[www.iaitc.co/IllinoisMunicipalWaterUse](http://www.iaitc.co/IllinoisMunicipalWaterUse)

#### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- How far are you from your central water source?
- What would happen if that source went dry? Who would be affected?



# SECTION DISCUSSION GUIDE

**DAY TWO**  
**SUNDAY, JUNE 5TH**

## QUESTIONS

### 2) KELTON (PAGE 29)

- Kelton's father categorizes humans three ways: sheep, wolves, and herders. In what ways is this analysis correct? Are there other categories that should be added?
- Near the end of the section, one of the neighbors greets the McCracken family with a gift. Why does he do this? What impact do you think this gift will have?

### 3) ALYSSA (PAGE 33)

- Sofia is choosing which paintings she can take with her while they move away for the time being. Prioritizing certain things can be difficult, especially in spur of the moment situations. What are the three most important things you have that you would take with you?
- Uncle Basil leaves Alyssa, Garrett, and their parents. Why do you think he thought of himself as a burden? How does his family view him?

### SNAPSHOT: KZLA NEWS (PAGE 43)

- Through this story we are able to see behind the scenes of a media outlet during the tap-out. In section 1 we hear that they are referring to the drought as a "flow crisis." Why might they call it this?

## EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Alyssa's family boiled their pasta in the sauce in order to save water. What are some other ways you can save water when cooking?

**IDEA:** Baking or grilling vegetables instead of boiling



# SECTION DISCUSSION GUIDE

**DAY THREE**  
**MONDAY, JUNE 6TH**

## QUESTIONS

### 4) KELTON (PAGE 48)

- Kelton relates winning the affection of a girl to hunting. Through the use of this metaphor, the audience gets a better understanding of Kelton and his thought process. What is another real-life situation you can relate to hunting?

### 5) ALYSSA (PAGE 53)

- "Maybe" is a word that is thrown around a lot in this section. What do you think will "maybe" happen as the story continues?
- During Kelton and Alyssa's conversation, Alyssa learns about martial laws. What is a martial law? Are they used often in the U.S.?

**CHECK OUT THIS VIDEO ABOUT MARTIAL LAW:** [www.youtube.be/-1L3CtY8SCO](http://www.youtube.be/-1L3CtY8SCO)

### 6) KELTON (PAGE 66)

- Kelton describes Malecki exiting: "[he] goes red in the face, embarrassed, like it wasn't too late for his humanity to suddenly come rushing back." Explain whether or not you think it is too late for his humanity to come back after this.



# SECTION DISCUSSION GUIDE

## PART TWO: THREE DAYS TO ANIMAL

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### SNAPSHOT: 1-3 (PAGE 75)

- In these snapshots we see the point of view of three individuals on three sides of the same situation. What do we learn from these different points of view? Who would you want to be and why?
- In the snapshot with the Plant Manager, we hear his side of choosing to protect his workers and their families. Do you think this was the right decision? What would you have done?

### 7) KELTON (PAGE 82)

- Mr. and Mrs. McCracken argue about how much they have shared with the neighbors and whether they should even have been sharing at all. Who would you side with in this debate? Why do you think they are correct?
- In one scene, the TV is portraying two messages. The reporter is saying that everyone needs to remain calm, while there is a notice that FEMA has declared it a disaster zone. Why do you think the media is portraying it this way?
- At the end of the section, Kelton calls his house "a beacon of light in the darkness." How would you interpret this quote? What does he mean by this?

## EXTENSION ACTIVITY

In section 7 (page 88), Kelton describes how to get water from the freezer. "If you leave [the freezer] ajar, water will eventually condense and freeze against the walls. Then you can scrape it off and melt it." While it may seem like magic, it's science. Using the water cycle, discover how and why this happens.

IAITC RESOURCES: [www.iaitc.co/water-reader](http://www.iaitc.co/water-reader)  
[www.iaitc.co/AgMag\\_Water](http://www.iaitc.co/AgMag_Water)



# SECTION DISCUSSION GUIDE

**DAY FOUR**  
**TUESDAY, JUNE 7TH**

## QUESTIONS

### 8) ALYSSA (PAGE 94)

- They stop at a gas station that had been ransacked by people looking for supplies. What does this tell you about what might happen as the story continues? What would cause people to act in this way?

### SNAPSHOT: INTERSTATE, NORTHBOUND 6:30 A.M. (PAGE 103)

- Charity is quick to think on her feet by attempting to find a fire extinguisher. Describe Charity's character. How is she helping those around her?

### 9) ALYSSA (PAGE 108)

- What were your first thoughts when Alyssa, Garrett, and Kelton arrived at the beach?
- We learn what might have happened to Alyssa and Garrett's parents in this section. What are your predictions?
- Near the end of the section, Dalton is referred to as "deranged and dangerous." This is how the authors have described the water-zombies throughout the story. Why do you think the author used these words to describe him?

### 10-11) KELTON & ALYSSA (PAGE 117)

- Alyssa is quick to make assumptions about Jacqui in section 11. What is your impression of Alyssa so far?



# SECTION DISCUSSION GUIDE

## QUESTIONS

### 12) JACQUI (PAGE 123)

- We learn about what the scene that Alyssa and Garrett's parents were in looked like. What are your thoughts on this situation? Was there a better way FEMA could have handled it? Do you think the people involved acted rationally due to their circumstances?
- Jacqui is portrayed as a tough teenager and a sort of lone wolf. However, she uses Hello Kitty post-it notes when leaving a message. Do you think there is a significance to this?

### 13) ALYSSA (PAGE 133)

- Mistrust is often a feeling that is established through many interactions. However, Alyssa and Jacqui are automatically torn through this. Do you think this feeling is correct? What are some reasons they should or should not trust each other?
- There are allusions to urban Darwinism in this section, Three Days to Animal. How is this theory shown in the story so far?

### 14) KELTON (PAGE 139)

- At the end of the section, Mr. McCracken softens up a little. Why do you think this is? Do you think that he actually let his guard down or is it a mask? What clues in the text make you think this?

### 15) ALYSSA (PAGE 151)

- Alyssa takes water to the neighborhood meeting. Why did she do this? If you had water to spare would you have shared it with the neighborhood too? Why or why not?
- Mr. McCracken says, "You share nothing, or you share everything. There's no in between!" Give an example from the story proving this to be true.





# SECTION DISCUSSION GUIDE

## QUESTIONS

### 16) KELTON (PAGE 163)

- After the 'Martial Law' announcement was made, Kelton predicts everything will fall apart. Which one of the two ways do you predict it will go?
  - Is there any other way?

### 17) JACQUI (PAGE 170)

- Kelton was knocked out by Alyssa to get him into the car. What did she use to knock him out? Would Kelton have gone with them had they not knocked him out? How do you know?
- Kelton thinks that he would have been able to put up a defense at the house. However, in section 14 he stated, "I was not prepared," when referring to the beach incident. How do you think he would have proceeded if they chose to stay with his parents?

## EXTENSION ACTIVITY

The group is headed to Uncle Basil's house at the end of Day 4. Uncle Basil was an almond farmer before the drought took out his entire farm and left him with nothing. Alyssa states, "almond trees use more water than almost everything." This fact is true, but not only did the drought affect his farm, it affected every crop. Go on a discovery quest to see just how much water some crops need to grow!

### LINK TO GET YOU STARTED:

- [www.ers.usda.gov/topics/farm-practices-management/irrigation-water-use/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/farm-practices-management/irrigation-water-use/)

### DID YOU KNOW?

- It takes approximately 1.1 gallons of water to produce 1 single almond.

### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- How many gallons would it take to produce one produce item?
- How do farmers get water to their crops in a drought?
- What would happen to our food supply if the U.S. simultaneously experienced a widespread drought?



# SECTION DISCUSSION GUIDE

## PART THREE: THE CHASM BETWEEN

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DAY FIVE  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8TH

### QUESTIONS

#### 18) HENRY (PAGE 185)

- We are introduced to this new narrator, Henry. What are your first impressions of Henry? How old do you think he is?

#### 19) ALYSSA (PAGE 190)

- Making it to Uncle Basil was all they wanted, but once there, it was worse than they could've imagined. What do you think would have happened if Uncle Basil would've stayed with Alyssa's family?

#### 20) JACQUI (PAGE 200)

- Kelton steps up and takes a stand against 'Roycroft.' How have Kelton's survival skills adapted through his experiences?

#### 21) HENRY (PAGE 211)

- Henry is leaving the comfort of his home for the first time since the tap-out began. Because of this we get a more descriptive idea of what the community looks like. What damage does he witness? Are you surprised with the damage done? Why or why not?
- Henry states, "if we don't adhere to the convention of calling shotgun, what rule of law is left to us?" What does this statement reveal about how Henry is feeling? How did you come to this conclusion?



# SECTION DISCUSSION GUIDE

## QUESTIONS

### SNAPSHOT:1-2 (PAGE 222)

- In these two snapshots we see the desperation of everyone to get water. Would you ever camp out outside of a store to get something you really wanted, even if there was a chance you wouldn't get it? Why or why not?

### 22) HENRY (PAGE 231)

- Kelton refers to the motions of the people as being "herded and corralled like sheep." Based on Mr. McCracken's theory at the beginning of the story, are Kelton, Alyssa, Jacqui, Garrett, and Henry all sheep? Explain your reasoning.

### 23) ALYSSA (PAGE 237)

- The group has now arrived at one of the evac centers. Describe in two sentences, in your own words, what the group sees.

### 24-25) HENRY & ALYSSA (PAGE 241)

- Why did Henry so desperately want to leave? Do you think this was a good decision? Why or why not?
- We learned more about Henry in section 24 and 25. What are your impressions now? Why do you think he lied?

### SNAPSHOT:13 RIDGECREST, DOVE CANYON (PAGE 250)

- We are let in on Herb (Uncle Basil) and what he is truly going through in this snapshot. It is clear that Jacqui left the pill bottle. Were you expecting her to, why or why not? What does this say about Jacqui?



# SECTION DISCUSSION GUIDE

## QUESTIONS

### 26) KELTON (PAGE 253)

- Kelton reiterated the fact that all these people started out as strangers or acquaintances. In a crisis like this do you think that it is better for the world to come together or divide into groups? Why makes you come to this conclusion?
- A “chasm” is defined as the deep gorge or division between something. In this section, Kelton says, “It feels to me like the world has torn in two and we’re traveling the seam of that tear. The chasm between what was, and what will be.” Do you think this is true in their situation, why or why not? In what ways is this an effective way to illustrate this conflict?
- In this section, Kelton was also more terrified of the fact there may be humans in the culvert than the idea of animals. Why does Kelton feel this way? Are his feelings validated by his surroundings? What clues does the text give us?

### 27) ALYSSA (PAGE 270)

- Kelton has a variety of survival skills that have been necessary for the group’s success. What are two survival skills that you have that you could utilize in a situation like this?

### 28) HENRY (PAGE 283)

- The Water Angels have found a way to work together without turning on one another like the other groups we have seen. Why do you think they are able to keep it together? How do you know that?
- Do you think that Jacqui is correct in her observation that the Water Angels will turn against one another? Why or why not?

### 29) ALYSSA (PAGE 292)

- Henry uses information he received from Garrett to turn Alyssa on Kelton. Do you think that Henry’s actions are valid? Should he have told Alyssa? Why do you feel this way?



# SECTION DISCUSSION GUIDE

## PART FOUR: BUG-OUT

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DAY SIX  
THURSDAY, JUNE 9TH

### QUESTIONS

#### 30) KELTON (PAGE 301)

- They have arrived at the bug-out or as Kelton refers to it, Castle McCracken. They have built up suspense around the bug-out and what it may contain. What are you expecting them to find in this 'castle?'

#### 31) JACQUI (PAGE 307)

- Is what they saw in the bug-out what you were expecting? Why might Brady have come here instead of going to the McCracken's residence first? What do you think would have happened if Mr. McCracken got here when he was supposed to?

#### 32) ALYSSA (PAGE 309)

- Now that the box labeled Agua Viva is opened, the group realizes there is no water. Why do you think Henry played this ruse the entire time? Do you think he will feel sorry now that the bug-out has no water? Explain using evidence from the text.

#### 33-34) HENRY & KELTON (PAGE 312)

- Kelton has changed since the beginning of the story. Name three things that would have been different in this situation had it happened three days earlier. What evidence from the text supports your claims?



# SECTION DISCUSSION GUIDE

## QUESTIONS

### 35) ALYSSA (PAGE 317)

- Currently the group is struggling with who to trust the most. Who would you trust the most and why?

### 36) KELTON (PAGE 320)

- Kelton apologizes for his actions in the 8th grade even though he knows that it is not enough. Why do you think he does this?

## PART FIVE: HELL AND HIGH WATER

### 37-40) JACQUI, HENRY, KELTON & GARRETT (PAGE 327)

- In these four sections, we get a glimpse into the minds of Jacqui, Henry, Kelton and Garrett. Do you think their thoughts in a time like this are relevant? Who do you think you would relate to based on what they are thinking? Why?

### 41) ALYSSA (PAGE 332)

- Henry claims that if he had met Alyssa in normal circumstances, they would be friends. Based on their personalities give one example of why he is correct and one example of why he is wrong.

### 42-43) KELTON & HENRY (PAGE 334)

- Without knowing how Henry's negotiations work out, do you think that it was a good idea for him to confront the two men? Why or why not?



# SECTION DISCUSSION GUIDE

## QUESTIONS

### 44) ALYSSA (PAGE 339)

- Are you surprised that Henry only saved himself? Why do you think he felt that was his only option rather than to help the rest of the group who got him this far?

### 45) JACQUI (PAGE 343)

- Kelton put up a fight against the two men. Why do you think he was able to kill them in cold blood? Do his actions here relate to his brother, why or why not?

### 46-48) ALYSSA & KELTON (PAGE 346)

- Alyssa steals water from an old woman to save her brother. Do you think this was the right decision? Was there any other solution? How do you know?

### 49) JACQUI (PAGE 351)

- The water cooler is gone. In one sentence, convey what is going through Kelton and Jacqui's heads as they watch the water go to waste.

### 50-51) ALYSSA & KELTON (PAGE 352)

- Kelton crashes the car. What emotions would you be feeling if you would have been the one who crashed the car? List and explain four examples.

### 52) ALYSSA (PAGE 356)

- Alyssa says, "I think they're water-zombies now." Based on the descriptions of other 'water-zombies' do you think that this is true? Explain.



# SECTION DISCUSSION GUIDE

## QUESTIONS

### 53) JACQUI (PAGE 359)

- "The call of the void" has been a constant for Jacqui; however, it has changed. Describe how the "call" has changed throughout the story.

### 54) ALYSSA (PAGE 361)

- In this section we see Alyssa contemplate the continuance of their journey. Do you think Alyssa would have been able to go through with shooting herself, Kelton and Garrett? Would this classify as bravery or cowardice? How did you come to this conclusion?

### SNAPSHOT-55) ALYSSA (PAGE 368)

- Fire Department Bombardier 415 saved Alyssa, Garret and Kelton. In three sentences, thank the pilot from one of their points of view.
- Alyssa saves herself, Garrett and Kelton in this section by thinking outside of the box. She found a way to get water to Kelton 'unconventionally.' Name one other way she would have been able to transport the water.

## EXTENSION ACTIVITY

The group had to navigate everything from a dried-up aqueduct, forest, mountains and riverbeds in order to get to the other side of town. When reading, it is hard to envision what an aqueduct looks like or feels like. Research what the California aqueduct is and how it is used. What did you find out? How is it essential for Southern California? Does it affect the agricultural crops grown in the area?

**TO GET YOU STARTED:** [www.watereducation.org/aquapedia/california-aqueduct](http://www.watereducation.org/aquapedia/california-aqueduct)





# SECTION DISCUSSION GUIDE

## PART SIX: A NEW NORMAL

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16 DAYS LATER  
SATURDAY, JUNE 25TH

### QUESTIONS

#### SNAPSHOT: DISNEYLAND, 8:57 A.M. (PAGE 375)

- Now that we have seen the 'new normal' for Disneyland, what are your predictions for Alyssa, Kelton, Garrett, Henry and Jacqui?
  - Did they make it back to where they came from? Are their parents alive? Are their houses still standing? Did they find new hope?

#### 56) ALYSSA (PAGE 377)

- Alyssa categorizes people into four groups now: oblivious, survivors, fulfilled, and the shadows. How does this compare to Mr. McCracken's observation at the beginning of the story (section 2)?
- Alyssa and Kelton agree on this long elaborate story of how they will be friends years from now. Write your own story on how you think the character's futures will play out.
- We learn that Alyssa is Jacqui's 'emergency contact.' Why do you think that Jacqui picked Alyssa? What does this mean for their friendship?
- When you learn Henry's age at the end of the book, how does it change your opinion of him?



# FINAL DISCUSSION GUIDE

## FINAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The authors alternate between four different narrators—Alyssa, Kelton, Jacqui, and Henry—and “snapshots” that focus on other people. Why do you think they chose to use this format? What did having different perspectives add to the story?
  - Is there a "snapshot" that you would have liked to see expanded?
- The water-zombies in the story all severely test their morals. Do you think that after the "tap-out" they will be able to come back to normal life? What made you come to that conclusion?
- Throughout the story, trust is tested between every character. How did this affect the outcome of the story? If any one person was more trustworthy, how might the ending have been different?
- We now know what happened to the characters in the story. How did the outcome surprise you (or not)?
- Often characters grow throughout a novel, while others fall or simply don't change at all. How would you say the main characters changed or didn't though out the story?

## REAL WORLD CONNECTIONS

- Droughts happen each year around the United States. Due to this, there are many water conservation efforts put in place at the national, state, and local level. Take a look at your state's efforts. Is your state prepared to handle a drought?
- Take a look at the news headlines from the past few months. Are there severe droughts affecting a certain part of the country? Why might this be happening? How are they handling the drought?