

Songs of Dust and Water: Classroom Sheets

These are printable sheets for the lessons and activities in the teaching pack. The pack names them but does not supply them; each sheet below says which lesson or activity it belongs to and which chapters it uses. Page numbers follow the paperback, and chapter numbers are given too. Teachers may photocopy and adapt any of these sheets for their own classes.

1. Support and stretch

For any lesson. Use the starters and the word bank with students who need a way in, and the stretch questions with those who finish early.

Sentence starters

For writing:

1. *The writer shows ... when ...*
2. *The word ... suggests ..., because ...*
3. *At first ... seems ..., but by chapter ... we see ...*
4. *This scene answers an earlier one, in chapter ..., because ...*
5. *A different reading would be that ...*
6. *The novel does not say whether ..., which leaves the reader to ...*

For discussion:

7. *I agree with ... up to a point, but on page ... the book shows ...*
8. *Building on what ... said, I think the key detail is ...*

Word bank

Terms marked (fictional) belong to the novel's world. The others are words and techniques in everyday use.

Term	Meaning
Alkalo	The head of a village, who settles everyday matters and speaks for the village to the district.
Bantaba	The village meeting place, often a raised platform under a big shade tree.
Kafo	An association, often of people of the same age and sex, that turns out together for shared work.
Osusu	A rotating savings group: each member pays in a fixed sum, and each takes the whole pot in turn.
Harmattan	The dry, dusty wind that blows south from the Sahara in the dry season.
Sahel	The dry belt of land south of the Sahara, stretching from the Atlantic to the Red Sea.
Cooperative	A business owned and run by its members, who share its profits and its decisions.

Term	Meaning
Procurement	The way an organisation buys goods and services, usually through set rules and approved suppliers.
Power of attorney	The legal right to sign on someone else's behalf.
Nabari (fictional)	The regional language of government and trade in the novel.
Yaara-Jaxo (fictional)	The Water-Keeper, the person responsible for a village's well.
ñan-kale (fictional)	A public challenge settled by results rather than argument.

Stretch questions

One extension question for each activity in the pack. Each opens when the class has read the chapters that activity needs.

1. Activity 1. Choose two stakes from chapters 23–24 that pull in opposite directions. Write the speech a delegate holding both would give before dropping a stone.
2. Activity 2. Dr Arramata's test was agreed before it began; Adam's was not. Design a fair test for a disagreement in your own school, saying who judges it and what result would prove each side wrong.
3. Activity 3. Rewrite your group's weakest rule so that it would have caught Lamin without slowing honest payments. What does your new rule cost the people who keep the books?
4. Activity 4. Isatou asks for the women's work to be written down, and Fatou offers to pay for the millet. Is recording unpaid work enough, or must it also be paid? Argue both sides.
5. Activity 5. Samba says, "A signature tells you who held the pen" (p. 18). Using chapter 11, argue whether any signature can show who agreed.
6. Activity 6. Follow one object through the whole novel (the warp thread, the torch, the lamp or the notebook). What does it show about who is trusted to use their hands?
7. Activity 7. In the exercise ledger, which of Mamadou's two new rules would have caught the pattern sooner: adding payments to the same name, or moving clerks each year? Explain with figures.
8. Activity 8. The old men say their grandfathers built stone lines and "never lived to see it pay" (p. 126). Who should pay for work whose benefits arrive in fifteen years, and why?
9. Activity 9. Pick the strongest argument made by Dunia, Sulayman or Evelyn Reed. Write the best answer the novel gives to it, with page numbers, and say whether that answer is enough.
10. Activity 10. In chapter 9 Hawa writes, "I do not ask you. I know how things are" (p. 75). Compare it with her letter in chapter 1, which says "The city eats money" (p. 5). How has the way she asks for help changed, and why?

2. Hands and systems log

For Lesson 1 and Activity 6. Keep one copy on the classroom wall and one in each student's folder. Add a row whenever you meet a moment where the novel sets hands, tools and skill against screens, rules and systems. Always give the chapter and page.

Worked examples (chapter 1)

Page/chapter	Hands	Systems	Why it matters
p. 3–4, ch. 1	Ibrahim at the loom: “A weaver’s craft is in his hands” (p. 3). Talib’s hands are “useless on the loom” (p. 4).	Talib leaves for his notebook of circuit diagrams, “what he considered his real work” (p. 4).	Father and son value different kinds of skill. The broken warp thread is left hanging.
p. 7, ch. 1	Balla looks at “Adam’s clean, uncalloused hands” (p. 7).	Adam’s design is “a lattice of silver frames” (p. 6). Balla calls it a system with no roots: it “is a house built for the wind” (p. 7).	The griot looks at Adam’s hands before he looks at the figures.
p. 8, ch. 1	Only “certified hands” may work on the plant: “the warranty holds only if certified hands do the work” (p. 8).	The plant runs itself: “Nobody in Madina will ever need to touch it” (p. 8).	The village is kept away from the machine on its own land. Khresay warns that “a man who does not help build the granary will never fight to defend it” (p. 8).

Our log

Page/chapter	Hands	Systems	Why it matters

3. Chain of hands: event cards

For Lesson 3 (chapters 3–6). Cut out the ten cards and give each group a shuffled set. Groups put the cards in the order they happen, then share out 100 points of blame and back each share with a quotation. Cut off the teacher’s key before copying.

Card A. The borrowed motor

With the bearing in Intake-04 smoking, Adam takes the motor out of Intake-08, part of the plant's spare cooling, and fits it into Intake-04 while the plant keeps running. Talib warns that the manual forbids it, then helps him.

Chapter 5, p. 46. "The manual didn't account for sabotage"

Card B. The grey paste

Aisha drops water on Madina's dust and shows Adam that it turns into a salty paste that will block his fine filters. She offers a cheap three-layer pre-filter of sisal, charcoal and woven grass that anyone can replace.

Chapter 3, pp. 24–25. "They don't get dirty, Mr Sterling. They choke" (p. 25)

Card C. Noise

Talib, helped by Aisha, shows Adam the portal's records: a new approved firm that sells nothing the plant needs, weekly payments to Sahel Strategic Solutions marked as consulting, and the name Yusuf Dunia, who, Aisha says, is the Minister's brother. Talib begs him to shut the plant down before it burns, but Adam calls the evidence noise and sends him to run the morning checks.

Chapter 6, pp. 50–51. "Complex systems have noise in them. This is noise" (p. 51)

Card D. The envelope

Nabil, Deputy Administrator of the National Energy Fund, visits Elder Mustapha and slides a thick envelope of notes across the mat, asking for his support when the Minister comes. Mustapha's fingers shake, and he takes it.

Chapter 4, p. 36. "A token of appreciation from the Minister"

Card E. The blocked order

Adam tries to order a new motor and bearing set through the National Energy Fund portal. The portal refuses under clause 4.B of the amendment, and his urgent request is sent to a sub-committee that will not look at it for three weeks.

Chapter 5, pp. 43–44. "Expected review date: End of Month" (p. 44)

Card F. The trial ended

Aisha's pre-filter on Intake-06 keeps that intake cooler and quieter all week. Adam tells Talib the result was inconclusive and ends the trial, and the next morning the box goes into the scrap store.

Chapter 3, p. 31. "I've ended the trial"

Card G. The bypass

On the hottest afternoon of the season, Adam orders Talib to shut off the west intake and push everything through the main cooling loop. Talib protests that the manual forbids it, then does as he is told, and within minutes Intake-04 cracks and the screens go black.

Chapter 6, p. 53. "It won't overheat. Do it. Now."

Card H. The portal says no

Adam sends Talib to order sisal, charcoal and grass matting through the National Energy Fund portal, which accepts only three approved firms. None of them sells these things, and Adam turns down Aisha's offer to get them from the village.

Chapter 3, pp. 27–28. "They did not sell anything that grew" (p. 27)

Card I. The fake gaskets

After Nabil's email points Adam to "approved local vendors" (p. 45), a box of gaskets for the coolant pumps arrives from the local firm instead of the maker. They are sticky, crude copies, bought cheaply while the plant's budget was charged for the real thing.

Chapter 5, p. 45. "These are fake"

Card J. The amendment

Minister Dunia arrives with soldiers, cameras and an amendment that moves the plant's money into the National Energy Fund. Adam signs it alone, using Proxima's power of attorney, without sending it to Proxima's lawyers and without reading it to the end.

Chapter 4, p. 40. "he did not read it to the end"

Blame-share table

Shares must add up to 100. Name everyone you think had a hand in each event.

Event letter	Who	Share of blame (out of 100)	Quotation (with page)
Total		100	

Teacher's key

Story order: B, H, F, D, J, E, I, A, C, G.

Points to raise: Aisha's warning (B) and her offer to fetch the materials (H) both come before anything is stolen. Clause 4.B, signed on card J, is what blocks the order on card E. *Noise* is Adam's word for the evidence of fraud and for Talib's warning that the plant will burn (p. 51). Malik also says of the plant's hum, "It is just noise" (ch. 3, p. 23), which students may want to compare. Talib throws Adam's word back at him in chapter 8: "I showed you, and you said noise" (p. 68).

4. Write the charter: task sheet

For Lesson 7 and Activity 3, stage 1. Do this before reading chapter 16.

The task

Your village has a common fund from its cotton. Write no more than eight rules for spending it.

Work in groups of four. Your rules must cover all four of these:

1. Who can take money out of the fund.
2. How much they can take, and whether larger sums need more people to agree.
3. Who checks the spending, and how often.
4. What happens if a village that has borrowed from the fund cannot pay it back.

Our rules

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Self-check

Tick each one before you post your rules on the wall.

- ☐ Every rule says who does what.
- ☐ We have covered all four points above.
- ☐ No single person can take out money alone.
- ☐ A friend or relative of the person checking could not easily get round our rules.
- ☐ Each rule says what happens if it is broken.
- ☐ Someone who cannot read could understand each rule if it were read aloud.
- ☐ We have no more than eight rules.

Stage 2: test your rules (after chapter 21)

Test your group's rules against three cases from the book. Fill in the last two columns.

Case	What happened	Would our rules catch it?	Which rule
(a) The inspector's two errors (ch. 17, p. 138)	A payment from Proxima for the soil surveys was entered twice, eleven weeks apart. A payment for culvert stone had only two of the three signatures, because the third signatory was at the port.		
(b) Sirawol's loan (ch. 20, pp. 159–163)	A safety inspector sealed Sirawol's mill over its boiler certificate, so Sirawol could not repay its loan in full. Nyma says, "This village did not fail. It was stopped" (p. 163).		
(c) Lamin's nine payments (ch. 21, p. 168)	Nine payments in seven months to a carter from Sirawol who owned no cart. Each was just under the three-signature line, and each was taken "with a good reason, to a different signatory" (p. 168).		

When you have finished, read the clause Mamadou adds after Lamin: "that payments to the same name were to be added together across the year, and that no clerk was to keep the same book two years running" (p. 169). Would it have caught case (c) in your village?

5. Isatou's list: costing sheet

For Activity 4, steps 1 to 3. Read Isatou's list on p. 113 first. Then choose a real event you know, such as a school play, a family wedding or a sports day, and cost the unpaid work behind it.

Worked example: a school sports day

These are sample figures for this exercise, including the hourly rate of 10. Use your own local wage when you do your own list.

Task	People	Hours each	Total hours	Hourly rate	Value
Marking out the field	3	2	6	10	60
Making and selling refreshments	6	4	24	10	240
First aid cover	2	5	10	10	100
Setting out and clearing chairs	8	1.5	12	10	120
Washing up	4	2	8	10	80
Total			60		600

Our event: _____

Local hourly wage we are using: _____ Source: _____

Task	People	Hours each	Total hours	Hourly rate	Value
Total					

Think about it

1. Isatou says, “I want it written down who fed them while they built it, and what it cost” (p. 113). If your event were described in a school newsletter, whose work would be mentioned and whose would be left out?
2. Fatou answers, “The common fund pays for the stone,” and adds, “It can pay for the millet” (p. 113). Should the people on your list be paid, thanked, or written down? What would change if they were paid?

6. Two signatures: comparison grid

For Lesson 5 and Activity 5. Read the signing in chapter 2 (pp. 16–18) and the signing in chapter 11 (pp. 100–101). In pairs, fill in the grid with short notes and page numbers.

	Chapter 2: Madina	Chapter 11: Nafawol
Who brings the paper		
What language it is in		
Who reads it aloud		
Who is present		
Whose voice is set aside		
Who signs		
Who keeps the key or the pen		

Teacher's notes

	Chapter 2: Madina	Chapter 11: Nafawol
Who brings the paper	Adam, in "A thick leather folder" (p. 17). The Madina Agreement was already "signed in Bakoro the week before" (p. 17).	Adam, "in a cardboard folder tied with tape" (p. 100), nine days after the demonstration.
What language it is in	The book does not say. "Adam had no Nabari" (p. 17), and the Ministry has told him Mustapha's English is good enough. Samba speaks English "so that none of it would have to pass through Mustapha" (p. 17).	"It's written in the language of the courts" (p. 100). Fatou reads each sentence to herself, "then said it aloud in Nabari" (p. 100).
Who reads it aloud	Nobody. Adam sums it up as land-use and labour papers (p. 17).	Dr Arramata starts, then Fatou takes it: "Give it here" (p. 100). Her reason: "Every one of them skipped a line" (p. 100). Mamadou has clauses read again.
Who is present	Adam; Mustapha; the committee of "three old men and two old women" (p. 16), including Malik and Samba; Yero of the Magribe; the old woman of the Mashrik; Hamadi just outside the circle (p. 17).	The committee on the bantaba; "Half of Nafawol sat on the roots" (p. 100); children creeping forward.
Whose voice is set aside	Samba's, and the Mashrik widow's claim. Adam "turned a shoulder to Samba" (p. 18).	Less clear. Fatou sits "where she had no seat, and nobody moved her" (p. 100), and Kadiatou asks, "Who keeps the padlock?" (p. 101). But only the alkalo signs, and "Nobody asked who should sign" (p. 101).
Who signs	Mustapha, the registered signatory: "My signature is all that is required" (p. 18).	"Alkalo Sankung signed for Nafawol, alone, as alkalos did" (p. 101), then Adam, then Dr Arramata.
Who keeps the key or the pen	Adam's own pen, "a sleek metal thing" (p. 18). Mustapha "passed the folder and the pen back" (p. 18).	Sankung uses "the pen he kept for petitions" (p. 101). He gives the key to Fatou, and "She put it in her purse, with her coins" (p. 101).

Third signature: Adam and clause 4.B (chapter 4)

Add a third column to the grid for Adam signing the amendment on p. 40. Then read chapter 16 (p. 129) and note what changes.

	Chapter 4: the amendment
Who brings the paper	
What language it is in	

	Chapter 4: the amendment
Who reads it aloud	
Who is present	
Whose voice is set aside	
Who signs	
Who keeps the key or the pen	

Teacher's notes: chapter 4 and chapter 16

- **Who brings it.** Minister Dunia's aide produces it during her visit (p. 39).
- **Language.** The book does not say. Dunia speaks to Adam in English and to the crowd in Nabari.
- **Who reads it.** Nobody reads it aloud. Adam reads the payment clauses, and "he did not read it to the end" (p. 40).
- **Who is present.** Soldiers, a camera crew and the whole village: "He felt the village watching" (p. 40).
- **Whose voice is set aside.** Proxima's lawyers and Mark, his director, whom Adam knows should see it first (p. 40). Mustapha, with the envelope in his pocket, says nothing when Adam looks to him for support.
- **Who signs.** Adam alone: "Proxima's power of attorney for Awdagha was in his name" (p. 40).
- **The pen and the key.** "The pen was put into Adam's hand" (p. 40), a gold pen Dunia takes out. Clause 4.B lets the Ministry "assume direct administrative control of the Installation" (p. 40), with all its accounts and credentials.
- **The chapter 16 change.** The Coffer Fund's charter says "no sum above the price of a young bull could leave the fund without three names on it" (p. 129), and "the three must come from three different households" (p. 129). When Sankung asks whether the alkalo counts as a household, Mamadou answers, "Like any other" (p. 129). The alkalo can no longer sign alone for the village's money.

7. Ledger on the wall: exercise sheet and answers

For Lesson 10 and Activity 7. Hand out the ledger before the class looks again at Mariam's discovery on p. 168.

These figures were created for this exercise and do not come from the novel. The money is in units, and the village fund is a practice example.

The fund's rule for this exercise. Any single payment above 500 units needs three signatures. Payments of 500 units or less need two. Signatories are shown by their initials.

The exercise

1. Total the payments for each month, and then for the whole year.
2. Check your totals against a partner's.
3. Look for anything odd. You have ten minutes.

No.	Date	Payee	Purpose	Amount (units)	Signatures
1	4 Jan	Teacher's allowance	Schoolroom, January	250	2 (AJ, KB)

No.	Date	Payee	Purpose	Amount (units)	Signatures
2	11 Jan	Ngum Hardware	Padlocks and hinges, seed store	135	2 (MS, FD)
3	23 Jan	Clinic	Bandages and soap	88	2 (KB, ON)
4	6 Feb	Jatta Stone	Stone for well apron	420	2 (AJ, SC)
5	19 Feb	Market women's group	Stall shade cloth	160	2 (FD, YT)
6	2 Mar	Teacher's allowance	Schoolroom, March	250	2 (AJ, KB)
7	9 Mar	B. Sowe, carting	Carting gravel, road repair	490	2 (MS, ON)
8	27 Mar	Clinic	Malaria tests	212	2 (KB, FD)
9	5 Apr	B. Sowe, carting	Carting sand, culvert	485	2 (AJ, YT)
10	14 Apr	Fofana Seeds	Millet seed, loan to growers	375	2 (SC, ON)
11	26 Apr	B. Sowe, carting	Carting stone, road repair	495	2 (KB, SC)
12	3 May	Teacher's allowance	Schoolroom, May	250	2 (AJ, KB)
13	12 May	Roof sheets supplier	Zinc sheets, school roof	2,350	3 (AJ, FD, YT)
14	21 May	Clinic	Oral rehydration salts	64	2 (MS, SC)
15	30 May	Ngum Hardware	Spades and a wheelbarrow	310	2 (FD, ON)
16	8 Jun	B. Sowe, carting	Carting gravel, road repair	480	2 (FD, SC)
17	17 Jun	Jatta Stone	Stone for drainage channel	455	2 (MS, YT)
18	1 Jul	Teacher's allowance	Schoolroom, July	250	2 (AJ, KB)
19	10 Jul	B. Sowe, carting	Carting laterite, road edge	492	2 (MS, KB)
20	22 Jul	Clinic	Syringes and gloves	145	2 (SC, YT)
21	29 Jul	Well committee	New rope and bucket	58	2 (FD, KB)

No.	Date	Payee	Purpose	Amount (units)	Signatures
22	4 Aug	B. Sowe, carting	Carting stone, culvert	488	2 (ON, YT)
23	13 Aug	Pump mechanic	Borehole pump repair	1,680	3 (KB, MS, ON)
24	25 Aug	B. Sowe, carting	Carting gravel, road repair	475	2 (AJ, MS)
25	7 Sep	Teacher's allowance	Schoolroom, September	250	2 (AJ, KB)
26	15 Sep	Fofana Seeds	Groundnut seed, loan to growers	440	2 (SC, FD)
27	28 Sep	Clinic	Antibiotics	230	2 (KB, YT)
28	6 Oct	B. Sowe, carting	Carting sand, road repair	497	2 (AJ, ON)
29	16 Oct	Ngum Hardware	Cement, 6 bags	270	2 (MS, FD)
30	24 Oct	Market women's group	Scales for the market	185	2 (SC, KB)
31	3 Nov	Teacher's allowance	Schoolroom, November	250	2 (AJ, KB)
32	12 Nov	B. Sowe, carting	Carting gravel, road repair	486	2 (FD, ON)
33	20 Nov	Jatta Stone	Stone for school step	96	2 (YT, AJ)
34	27 Nov	Clinic	Bandages and soap	92	2 (MS, KB)
35	5 Dec	Ngum Hardware	Paint for school doors	118	2 (SC, ON)
36	11 Dec	Well committee	Pulley wheel	74	2 (AJ, FD)
37	18 Dec	Fofana Seeds	Onion seedlings, women's gardens	265	2 (YT, MS)
38	22 Dec	Clinic	Malaria tests	206	2 (FD, SC)
39	29 Dec	Festival committee	Drummers for the harvest feast	150	2 (KB, ON)
40	31 Dec	Jatta Stone	Stone for well apron	388	2 (MS, SC)

Answer sheet

These figures were created for this exercise and do not come from the novel.

Column total for the year: 14,854 units.

Monthly totals:

Month	Total (units)	Month	Total (units)
Jan	473	Jul	945
Feb	580	Aug	2,643
Mar	952	Sep	920
Apr	1,355	Oct	952
May	2,974	Nov	924
Jun	935	Dec	1,201

The monthly totals add up to 14,854 units. May and August are high because of the two large payments (nos. 13 and 23). Both are above the line and both carry three signatures, as the rule requires.

The pattern. Nine payments to B. Sowe, carting, in seven months (March, April, June, July, August, October and November). Every one is just under the 500-unit line, and every one is signed by a different pair of signatories.

No.	Date	Amount (units)	Under the line by	Signed by
7	9 Mar	490	10	MS, ON
9	5 Apr	485	15	AJ, YT
11	26 Apr	495	5	KB, SC
16	8 Jun	480	20	FD, SC
19	10 Jul	492	8	MS, KB
22	4 Aug	488	12	ON, YT
24	25 Aug	475	25	AJ, MS
28	6 Oct	497	3	AJ, ON
32	12 Nov	486	14	FD, ON
Total		4,388	112	

Together the nine payments come to 4,388 units, nearly nine times the line and more than either of the honest large payments. No pair of signatories saw more than one of them.

Which rule would catch it. After Lamin, Mamadou asks for a clause “that payments to the same name were to be added together across the year, and that no clerk was to keep the same book two years running” (ch. 21, p. 169). Under the first half, B. Sowe’s running total passes 500 units with the second payment (975 units by 5 April), so that payment would need three signatures. Under the second half, the clerk who entered all nine would have handed the book on.

For discussion. Added together, some honest payees also pass the line over a year, such as the teacher’s allowance (1,500 units) and Jatta Stone (1,359 units). So a total over the line is a reason to look closely, and three people then have to agree. They can ask what Mariam asks: “Why does the carter always stop just under the line?” (p. 168).

8. Water budget

For Lesson 8 and Activity 8, step 4. Use the book's own figures. The novel does not give every figure you need, so some of your answers will be estimates. Show your working.

The figures in the book

- Nafawol is “two hundred households, about eighteen hundred people” (ch. 10, p. 89).
- Dr Arramata expects “Twenty thousand litres on a good night, and the borehole gives the rest” (ch. 12, p. 103).
- The harvester's water is for “Drinking and cooking for every compound, and not a litre for the fields” (p. 103).
- By the second dry season it “had settled at a little under seventy per cent of its design yield” (ch. 16, p. 125).
- “In the hottest months the borehole pump ran longer to make up the difference” (p. 125).

Questions

1. At full output, how many litres of harvester water does each person get per day? Treat one good night's output as one day's supply.
2. At seventy per cent, how many litres per person per day?
3. How many extra litres a day must the borehole find when the harvester drops from full output to seventy per cent? About how much is that over a year?
4. Look up the World Health Organization's guidance on how much water a person needs each day for drinking and cooking. Write down the figure and where you found it. Then work out how much water the borehole must supply each day for the whole village at seventy per cent.
5. List two things the novel does not tell us that would change your answers.
6. Why does Dr Arramata lower a tape into the borehole every Friday (p. 125)?

Teacher's key

- **Q1.** $20,000 \div 1,800 = 11.1$, so about 11 litres per person per day.
- **Q2.** Seventy per cent of 20,000 is 14,000 litres. $14,000 \div 1,800 = 7.8$, so a little under 8 litres per person per day (the book says “a little under” seventy per cent, p. 125).
- **Q3.** $20,000 - 14,000 = 6,000$ litres a day, or about 3 litres per person. Over a year that is about 2.2 million litres ($6,000 \times 365 = 2,190,000$).
- **Q4.** Borehole share = $(1,800 \times \text{the class's figure}) - 14,000$ litres a day. For example only, if the figure were 12 litres a person: $21,600 - 14,000 = 7,600$ litres a day. This 12 is not an official figure; use the one the class finds. If the answer comes out below zero, the harvester alone covers drinking and cooking at seventy per cent; ask the class what else a village needs water for.
- **Q5.** Possible answers: the novel does not say that twenty thousand litres is the design yield (this sheet assumes it); not every night is a good night, and in the dry months “the air gives up its water grudgingly” (p. 88); the population may have grown since the first year; we are not told how much the borehole pumps.
- **Q6.** To see whether the deep water is going down as the pump runs longer. Dr Arramata wants to take as little of it as she can.

9. Hot-seat briefing cards

For Activity 9. Give the card to the student in role a lesson ahead. The rest of the class prepares one fair question and one hard question in pairs.

Card 1: Minister Dunia (round 1, chapters 4 and 8)

Who you are. Minister of Energy in Awdagha. You run the National Energy Fund. You were born in the north, in a place smaller than Madina.

What you want. To keep Bakoro lit after half the capital went dark and two babies were born by torchlight. To bring the Madina plant's money into the National Energy Fund, and build a grid that reaches the north. "I will not explain that to the President. I will fix it" (p. 35).

Your strongest argument, in your own words. - "every foreign project in this country is an island with its own flag" (p. 35). - "Before I was twenty I had counted eleven plaques in my district" (p. 61). None of them worked by the time you were twenty, and "Nobody was responsible" (p. 61). - "Your Mr Sterling is an island. So is every fund like his. I am trying to build a country" (p. 61). - "The difference is that my margin builds a grid, and the foreigner's builds a plaque" (p. 61). - On Mustapha: "Who put the pen in his hand? Not me" (p. 61). "A minister, at least, can be removed" (p. 61).

The class will challenge you on: 1. Your brother's bank. You told Ebou, "Nabil will see to the procurement. The usual firms" (p. 35), and Ebou "knew which of the usual firms her brother's bank held the accounts for" (p. 35), and Talib's records show the name Yusuf Dunia (p. 51). 2. Nabil's envelope to Mustapha, "A token of appreciation from the Minister" (p. 36), and a hearing that blamed Adam alone.

Stay true to the text. The book never shows you ordering the fire or the fake parts. When Nabil offers to take you through the procurement folder, "She told him there was no need" (p. 35). You offered Aisha a real post with a real budget. Do not admit to more than the book shows, and do not deny what it does show. Aisha later says, "She didn't need it to burn" (p. 74).

Card 2: Minister Sulayman (round 2, chapters 17 and 20)

Who you are. Minister of Rural Development in Tekuru. You have held the post for nine years, which in Tekuru is a long time.

What you want. A ministry review of the Coffer Fund. Until it is finished, the Fund's signatories are to come to Port Walada and "sign temporary administrative control over to my office" (p. 135). You offer them "a simpler route" (p. 137): "The Fund remains yours while under ministerial supervision" (p. 137).

Your strongest argument, in your own words. - "In nine years I have watched four community funds grow in this Republic" (p. 136). Of those, "Two were emptied by the men who ran them" (p. 136). Afterwards "I had nothing to give them but my regret" (p. 136). - "You will forgive me if a ledger on a wall does not settle the matter for me" (p. 136). - "The air, Madam Kadiatou, does not belong to Nafawol alone" (p. 136). "Carbon markets are not village markets" (p. 136).

The class will challenge you on: 1. Your motives. The narrator tells us that "A pool of money that did not pass through his office was a pool of money that bought him nothing" (p. 134). You did not consult the seyfo, who said, "A visitor who does not greet the house has not come to eat" (p. 135). 2. The boiler seal at Sirawol. Fatou says, "Sulayman cannot take the Fund" (p. 160). "So he has taken the mill" (p. 160).

Stay true to the text. You greet the alkalo properly and wait for each answer. You draw back the memorandum when they will not sign. The novel never shows you ordering the boiler seal: the inspector came from the Regional Directorate of Industrial Safety, and the rule had been on the books for nineteen years. Do not confess to it, and do not claim the book clears you.

Card 3: Evelyn Reed (round 3, chapters 23 and 24)

Who you are. TransGlobal Agriculture's representative. You know the Union's story "down to the names of its milestones" (p. 185).

What you want. A partnership: up to two billion dollars across the region, fifty thousand dollars for each registered household, new mills, a university, a hospital system and pensions, and in return TransGlobal's first right to buy what the Union grows.

Your strongest argument, in your own words. - "We are not paying for the model. We are paying for the first right to buy what you grow" (p. 186). "Anyone can copy the charter on your academy wall. Nobody else can deliver your crop" (p. 186). - The harvester is stuck at seventy per cent, and "Proxima's money ends in three years" (p. 186). - "What if hunger in this whole region could be reduced within a decade instead of across generations?" (p. 187) - To Adam: "They'll wait ten years for your method to reach them. Some of their children won't be there when it does" (p. 194). - On the clause about inventions: "I would rather lose this agreement than win it with an appendix" (p. 197).

The class will challenge you on: 1. The veto and the first right to buy. After your revision, "TransGlobal's management company still held a veto over every investment" above a sum no village had ever spent (p. 197), and its trading arm keeps "the first right to buy every bale and every litre of oil the Union produced" (p. 197). 2. Who receives the fifty thousand. Isatou's question is "Into whose hand?" (p. 190), and "Who signs for it is in the schedules they haven't sent" (p. 190).

Stay true to the text. You removed the perpetuity clause within two days and wrote of the first draft, "That was our mistake" (p. 196). You did not hide the seventy per cent. You never said how far away the hospital would be, so do not make it up now. You may say why you think the offer is fair, but do not promise anything the schedules do not contain.

10. The stone vote: role cards and record sheet

For Lesson 11 and Activity 1. Read chapters 23 and 24 first, and do not read on. Cut out the cards. Each card gives a stake drawn from the book; students argue from it but may vote however they decide.

The founders and officers

Kadiatou, the Yaara-Jaxo. You called the Union together. You speak for two minutes but do not vote. Your condition is "With whose hand on the key" (p. 187). Your picture: "A family compound built with borrowed money" with "the gate key in another man's hand" (p. 189). Your story: "When I was too small to draw a full bucket, my grandmother let me draw half of one" (p. 187). What you told Fatou: "I will not have our grandchildren's cup in another man's hand" (p. 193).

Fatou, the treasurer. You speak for two minutes but do not vote. You want the offer, and you still corrected loose talk about it: "the two billion was a ceiling for a whole region, not a cheque for twelve villages" (p. 188). Your case: "We're also one drought from eating our reserves" (p. 189), and "This is a granary we never have to open" (p. 189). You also noticed that disputes would go to courts in a Republic "that knew of no place called Senebia" (p. 197).

Alkalo Musa of Sirawol. You count the stones. Lay them out one by one in two rows, black and white, and say each colour aloud. Say nothing else until the count is done.

Evelyn Reed. Present the offer for three minutes, then answer questions. Use the terms on the board and the briefing card from Activity 9.

Adam. Answer questions of fact only. Facts you can confirm: the harvester runs at seventy per cent and "It will not do better" (p. 187); "the money ends in three years" (p. 187); after the revision, "They have taken out the part that frightened people," and "They have left in the part that matters" (p. 197). If asked what you think, say you may answer only questions of fact.

Delegate stakes

Each village sends “the one who usually spoke for the village, and the one its young people had chosen” (p. 197). The book names only a few of the delegates, so not everyone below is a delegate in the novel. Their stakes stand for the arguments delegates carried into the hall.

Demba’s father, Nafawol. For sixty years the land has taken “my back, my knees, my sleep, my strength” (p. 190). To you the money “is rest. It is medicine” (p. 190). “A hungry man does not eat sovereignty” (p. 190). Your son Demba asks, “Whose road is it then?” (p. 190)

A father in Sirawol. “His daughter had cleaned hotel rooms in Spain for nine years” (p. 189). In a voice message she says the fifty thousand is more than everything she has sent home: “Take it, she said, and I can come home” (p. 189).

Old Jankero, Kumbawol. You complain that in your day women did not sit on the bantaba. But you are the one who asks Kadiatou “how far away the hospital would be” (p. 189). She does not know.

Aminatu, Talawol. Your mill’s bearing failed and “nobody in Talawol could fit a new one” (p. 176). “Nine days the press stood still and the groundnuts sat in the yard” (p. 176). You need trained fitters: “Rice mud will not fit a bearing” (p. 176). Your stake comes from the council in chapter 22.

Alkalo Yaya, Kumbawol. In chapter 22 you said, “Put this money into water first” (p. 176): more channels, and “a seed store with a lock on it” (p. 176). Under the revised offer TransGlobal would still hold a veto over “Yaya’s channels, the next mill, the next school” (p. 197).

A young wife, Nafawol. No money has been paid. But at the cooking fires the book says that one of the young wives “had already spent hers twice, on a roof and on a sewing machine, and was starting on a third” (p. 190). That is you. Then Isatou asks, “Into whose hand?” (p. 190). The payment goes to each registered household, and you are not the head of yours.

Hassan, Nafawol. You read the staff schedules. “On a page headed Key local personnel to be retained he found his own name” (p. 195), “with a post beside it and a salary in dollars” (p. 195). “It was more than the lorry driver had said the port would pay” (p. 195). You rubbed the figure out and read on.

Blank delegate card

Use this for the other delegates. Build the stake only from what the book says about your village. If the book says nothing about it, keep to what it says about the floodplain villages in general, and do not invent events.

Prompt	Your notes (with pages)
Your village	
Are you the usual speaker, or the young people’s choice?	
What the book tells us about your village (try ch. 20–24)	
What your village most needs	
What the last few years have cost it	
Who signs for a household where you live?	
One quotation you will use in the debate	

Places to look: at the charter meeting, an alkalo from “a smaller, poorer village” asks, “Then what are we? Brothers, or borrowers at your door?” (p. 171); “an old alkalo from one of the river villages” speaks in a whisper (p. 172); and another asks, “Where did the first money come from?” (p. 172).

Tally sheet

Rules from the book: “White meant yes. Black meant no” (p. 198). “A tie would mean no” (p. 198). Each delegate drops one stone in the pot and the other in the covered basket, in silence.

The count, as Musa lays out each stone:

Stone	Colour	Stone	Colour	Stone	Colour
1		9		17	
2		10		18	
3		11		19	
4		12		20	
5		13		21	
6		14		22	
7		15		23	
8		16		24	

Black: ____ White: ____ Result: _____

Before anyone reads on, write two sentences: how you voted, and what you think your vote will cost.

Costs and gains (after chapters 25 and 26)

Students fill in the blank table with page numbers. The teacher’s key below lists what the book shows.

Costs	Gains

Teacher's key

Costs	Gains
The price falls at the port. "The fall had nothing to do with Senebia" (p. 203), and "There was no surplus that year" (p. 203). Fatou says, "Reed would have carried this year" (p. 205).	The Union keeps its own decisions: no outside veto over its channels, mills or schools.
Old Teranu asks for the suspension clause, but a price fall is "no act of the Republic" (p. 204). The family sell their bullocks and leave for the coast, "all nine of them, on one lorry" (p. 204).	The Union keeps its own ideas. Bintu's purifier is "finished, and still ours" (p. 212).
Mariam loses a year: "The academy sent nobody south to study that year" (p. 204). Kadiatou tells her, "It cost you a year" (p. 204).	"And the design goes out free on the Union server" (p. 212), for any village to build.
The taps are rationed as the borehole drops: "Every Friday the figure was lower" (p. 205), and the taps open for two hours after dawn and two before dark (p. 205).	The Fund still "kept the nurse paid and the school open" (p. 203).
Jankero dies with his question unanswered. His son tells Kadiatou, "It is as far as it was" (p. 206), and at the condolence he sends the girl with the water past her (p. 207).	The next year there is money for three students to go south, and "Mariam's name was still first" (p. 208).

A question for the gains column. In Year 10 the water comes back to the old channel (p. 210). It came along stone lines the crews had built "for seven dry seasons" (p. 210), long before the vote. Does it belong in the gains column at all?

The verdict. The novel never settles it. Kadiatou will not say the vote was right: "I will not tell you it was wrong either" (p. 204).

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