

Songs of Dust and Water: Teacher Information Sheet

The book

Songs of Dust and Water by M.J. Hydara. Independently published, 2026. English.

- **Kindle edition:** out now.
- **Paperback:** ISBN 9798162251088, 252 pages. Coming soon.
- **Hardcover:** ISBN 9798162534938. Coming soon.
- **Length:** about 60,000 words.
- **Structure:** 28 chapters and a one-paragraph Coda, in two parts. Part One, “The Glass House of Sahel” (chapters 1–9), is set in Madina, in Awdagha. A short bridge, “Ten years later”, leads to Part Two, “The Water-Keeper” (chapters 10–28 and the Coda), set in Nafawol, in Tekuru. Both countries belong to the novel’s world.

The website’s materials give paperback page numbers and chapter numbers, so they also work with the Kindle edition.

What it is about

The novel follows two development projects in the dry country of West Africa, ten years and six hundred kilometres apart. In the first, a foreign engineer builds a solar and water plant that the village it serves is never allowed to touch. In the second, the woman who keeps a failing well must help her village decide what it will own, and what it is willing to sell.

Reading demands and suggested ages

The prose is plain, the chapters are short and the dialogue reads aloud easily. It suits students of 15 and over, as a guide only: you know your class best. Lists of the people in each part, a glossary and a pronunciation guide are at the back of the book.

Content notes

These mention some events from later in the book.

There is no graphic violence. There is a fire; a boy breaks his arm; officials take bribes and skim contracts; one old man dies of heart failure and another in old age; there are two childbirth scenes on a hospital ward, one by torchlight. Islam is part of daily life throughout.

Subjects it can support

English Literature, Geography, Economics, Citizenship and Politics, Sociology and Development Studies. These are suggestions. Please check any use against your own course specification.

What is free on the website

- The opening of chapter 1
 - Teaching pack: a six-week scheme of 12 lessons, 10 activities, essay questions, key terms and marking tips
 - Classroom sheets: cards, worksheets, a ledger exercise with answers, and support and stretch sheets
 - Quotation bank and quiz
 - People and words: cast lists, glossary and pronunciation
 - Example essays: 28 essays in imagined student voices from 14 countries
 - Critical study for advanced readers, and a reader’s companion
 - Reading-group guide, book club page and FAQ
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Three ways to start

1. **Try one lesson.** A 50–60 minute trial lesson uses only the free opening, so you can try the book before ordering copies.
 2. **Teach Part One.** Chapters 1–9 form a complete first part. Teach them in about four lessons, using lessons 1–4 of the teaching pack.
 3. **Teach the whole novel.** Follow the six-week scheme, or run the same lessons over eight or nine weeks.
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Copying and citing

The reading and teaching materials are free to print, copy and adapt for teaching, study and reading groups, with credit (full terms). The opening extract may be read aloud, shown and printed for your own class; the novel itself is sold separately.

To cite the novel: Hydara, M.J. (2026) *Songs of Dust and Water*. Independently published. (More on citing.)
