

Sample Lesson #2

Siabatou's Marathon

Each year, an arduous event called the Paris Marathon attracts thousands of the best runners in the world. Finishing the demanding 42-kilometer (26.2-mile) race is one of the highest goals a runner can pursue. Athletes train for many months to prepare for a marathon. They slowly build up their endurance. They follow a careful diet and get all the right gear, including lightweight socks, solid running shoes, and moisture-wicking clothes.

In April of 2015, about 54,000 runners officially entered the Paris Marathon. While they ran, many of the participants passed a woman who was calmly walking. She wore sandals and bright blue and green traditional African garb. On her head, she carried a 20-liter (5-gallon) water container. The participant, Siabatou Sanneh of Gambia, captured the attention of the world that day. As she slowly trod the cobblestone streets of Paris, she wore a sign with a simple message: "In Africa, women cover this distance every day to find water. Help us to reduce this distance."



In Sub-Saharan Africa, women and children spend many hours a day carrying water. This work prevents children from going to school and women from having jobs.

Before the Paris Marathon, Siabatou had never left her village; she'd never been on an airplane or used an escalator. She had never seen people pouring water over their heads or throwing it on the ground, as runners do at the hydration stations along a marathon route.

Nearly 240 million people living in Africa do not have access to safe drinking water. Siabatou was just a young girl when she began to walk nearly 8 kilometers (5 miles) at least three times a day. It was the only way to get water for washing, drinking, cooking, and growing food.

In all the decades of transporting water, Siabatou never dropped a container. But the Paris Marathon would be her last long walk for water. Because of her involvement in the Paris Marathon, people donated money. Siabatou's village now has a borehole, which is a sustainable source of clean water.

Although Siabatou did not walk the entire distance of the marathon, she created quite a stir! People said she carried the water as carefully as one would hold a newborn infant. Many newspapers and reporters called her a champion and the real winner of the race. However, Siabatou said, "I'm not a hero. You would have done the same for your people."

- RI.5.2 1. Which two are main ideas of this passage?
- _____ Millions of people who live in Africa do not have access to safe drinking water.
- _____ About 54,000 runners officially entered the Paris Marathon of 2015.
- _____ Siabatou Sanneh used the Paris Marathon to call attention to conditions in her homeland.
- _____ Siabatou Sanneh did not finish the Paris Marathon because she was carrying a 5-gallon water container on her head.
- L.5.4.A 2. Match each term with its clue. (Reread the passage for context clues.)
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| _____ arduous | A) difficult and hard to endure |
| _____ endurance | B) past tense of tread; walked in a specific way |
| _____ wicking | C) absorbing or drawing off water |
| _____ garb | D) ability to bear hardship; perseverance |
| _____ trod | E) distinctive or special clothing |
- RI.5.8 3. As a young girl, Siabatou had to walk nearly 8 kilometers three times a day to get safe drinking water. Why does the author mention this?
- A) to show that 8 kilometers is the same as 5 miles
- B) to explain what life was like for people in Siabatou's village
- C) to show how people build up endurance to prepare for a race
- D) to explain why Siabatou was able to carry water during a marathon
- L.5.5.A 4. The passage says that Siabatou created quite a stir. Which of these is the meaning of *stir* as it is used in the sentence?
- fluttering commotion mixing blend
- RI.5.8 5. The author of this passage _____ Siabatou Sanneh.
- has respect for feels sorry for disbelieves objects to
- RI.5.8 6. In the passage, underline a sentence that supports your answer to the item above.