



## THINKING LOG

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS:

Your teacher will ask you a guiding question that you will think about as your teacher reads the text aloud to you. As your teacher reads the text aloud, listen and follow along in your text. After the text has been read aloud, work with a partner to reread the text and answer the supplementary questions. Use your glossary to help you. Your teacher will review the answers with the class. You will then discuss the guiding question(s) with your teacher and the class. Finally, you will complete a written response to the guiding question(s).

GUIDING QUESTION: *How and why does Barbara Kingsolver describe places on Earth that have too little water for humans to live without struggling?*

Water is Life

By Barbara Kingsolver

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A world away from my damp hollow, the Bajo Piura Valley is a great bowl of the driest Holocene sands I've ever gotten in my shoes. Stretching from coastal, northwestern Peru into southern Ecuador, the 14,000-square-mile Piura Desert is home to many endemic forms of thorny life.

Profiles of this eco-region describe it as dry to drier, and Bajo Piura on its southern edge is what anyone would call driest. Between January and March it might get close to an inch of rain, depending on the whims of El Niño, my driver explained as we bumped over the dry bed of the Rio Piura, "but in some years, nothing at all." For hours we passed through white-crust fields ruined by years of irrigation and then into eye-burning valleys beyond the limits of endurance for anything but sparse stands of the deep-rooted *Prosopis pallida*, arguably nature's most arid-adapted tree. And remarkably, some scattered families of *Homo sapiens*.

### WORD BANK:

Ecuador

nothing at all

Piura Desert

humans

Peru

rain

### SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS:

1. *Where is Barbara Kingsolver as she begins this narrative?*

Barbara is in the \_\_\_\_\_. This desert stretches from northwestern \_\_\_\_\_ into southern \_\_\_\_\_.

2. *The Piura Desert is extremely dry. How do we know this?*

We know the Piura Desert is extremely dry because it only receives an inch of \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ each year.

3. Remarkably (surprisingly), Homo sapien families live in the Piura Desert. What are Homo sapiens?

Homo sapiens are \_\_\_\_\_, like you and me.

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They are economic refugees, looking for land that costs nothing. In Bajo Piura they find it, although living there has other costs, and fragile drylands pay their own price too, as people exacerbate desertification by cutting anything living for firewood. What brought me there, as a journalist, was an innovative reforestation project. Peruvian conservationists, partnered with the NGO Heifer International, were guiding the population into herding goats, which eat the protein-rich pods of the native mesquite and disperse its seeds over the desert. In the shade of a stick shelter, a young mother set her dented pot on a dung-fed fire and showed how she curdles goat's milk into white cheese. But milking goats is hard to work into her schedule when she, and every other woman she knows, must walk about eight hours a day to collect water.

WORD BANK:

disperse	innovative	plants	trees
economic refugees	journalist	reforestation	
firewood	land	tree	

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS:

4. Who are the Homo sapien families that live in the Piura Desert?

They are \_\_\_\_\_ (extremely poor people). They look for \_\_\_\_\_ that doesn't cost anything.

5. How do these families contribute to desertification (land becoming desert)?

The families cut any living \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_.

6. Why is Barbara in the Piura Desert?

Barbara is there as a \_\_\_\_\_ (writer). She is learning about an \_\_\_\_\_ (new and creative) \_\_\_\_\_ project that will bring \_\_\_\_\_ back to the region.

7. Families in the area raise goats. Why are goats good for reforestation?

Goats are good for reforestation because they \_\_\_\_\_ (scatter) seeds from the mesquite \_\_\_\_\_ over the desert.

8. How far must a woman living in the Piura Desert walk each day to collect water?

A woman must walk about \_\_\_\_\_ hours each day to \_\_\_\_\_ water.

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Their husbands were digging a well nearby. They worked with hand trowels, a plywood form for lining the shaft with concrete, inch by inch, and a sturdy hand-built crank for lowering a man to the bottom and sending up buckets of sand. A dozen hopeful men in stained straw hats stood back to let me inspect their work, which so far had yielded only a mountain of exhumed sand, dry as dust. I looked down that black hole, then turned and climbed the sand mound to hide my unprofessional tears. I could not fathom this kind of perseverance and wondered how long these beleaguered people would last before they'd had enough of their water woes and moved somewhere else.

WORD BANK:

beleaguered	exhumed	perseverance
crying	journalist	sand
emotional	Journalists	well

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS:

9. *What were the men doing?*  
The men were digging a \_\_\_\_\_.
10. *Did the men find water? How do you know?*  
The men \_\_\_\_\_ (did/did not) find water. The text says they \_\_\_\_\_ (dug up) only \_\_\_\_\_.
11. *Why does it mean that Barbara had to "hide [her] unprofessional tears." ~*  
Barbara was \_\_\_\_\_.
12. *Why was Barbara crying?*  
Barbara was crying because she could not understand the \_\_\_\_\_ of these \_\_\_\_\_ people.
13. *Why were Barbara's tears unprofessional?~*  
Barbara was there as a \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ are not supposed to make judgements about what they see. \_\_\_\_\_ are not supposed to be \_\_\_\_\_.

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Five years later they are still bringing up dry sand, scratching out their fate as a microcosm of life on this planet. There is nowhere else. Forty percent of the



RESPONSE TO GUIDING QUESTION(S):

*How and why does Barbara Kingsolver describe places on Earth that have too little water for humans to live without struggle?*

Response: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.







## EXIT TICKET

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS:

This graphic organizer will help you keep track of information about water for all of the readings. Each day you will write down new information from each reading.

- ◀ First, write new information you have learned about global water sustainability.
- ◀ Next, write what else you want to learn about water sustainability.

Think about what we have learned so far. What are new things you learned about *global* water sustainability?

Some people live in very dry regions because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

They have to work very hard to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What else are you wondering about water sustainability?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Appendix: Glossary

Word	Definition	Example
adapt	become adjusted to new conditions	The desert was beyond the limits of endurance for anything but sparse stands of the deep-rooted <i>Prosopis pallida</i> , arguably nature's most arid-adapted tree.
beleaguered		

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