# Thura’s Diary

by Thura Al-Windawi

## Reading Schedule

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What responsibility do you have to your country?
Getting Started

**What If?**

Your government has asked that young people now take more responsibility for the country’s future. The government of your country has just passed a law that states that all citizens who are 18 must join the military for two years, whether they are male or female. You are required to register by the end of your 16th year. You are now 16 and had hoped to go to college as soon as you graduated.

If you do not register, your family could be fined a huge amount of money. Your parents are encouraging you to not register and have agreed to pay the fine, even though they have little money. They want you to go to college, too.

Make notes about how this would affect you.

- Do you agree with the new law?
- How would you feel if you went against your family’s wishes?
- Is serving your country more important than your individual goals?

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**Connect to The Exchange Question** Discuss how this situation could relate to The Exchange Question: What responsibility do you have to your country? Summarize your discussion.
Introduction

Read the Introduction on pages 7–8 in Thura’s Diary. The Introduction will help you understand key concepts in the book. Knowing them will help you discuss and write about the book.

The Introduction includes information about

- the United States’ “Shock and Awe” bombing campaign in Iraq
- the political climate of Iraq in 2003
- why the author wrote the book

After you read the Introduction, answer these questions to check your understanding.

1. What was “Shock and Awe”? Why did the U.S. use it?

2. When and why did Saddam Hussein’s rule officially end?

3. Why did the author keep a diary during the war?
Introduction: Key Concepts

Word Web

Study the Word Web for government. What words does government make you think of? Write a sentence using the word government.

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Word Web

Key Concepts
citizen
conflict
dictator
government
support

elections

officials

country

laws

On a separate sheet of paper, create a similar Word Web for each of the Key Concept words. Write a sentence for each one.
Respond to Pages 15–40

1. **Personal Response** Thura wrote in a diary to cope with the war around her. When have you kept a journal or diary? Why do you think writing helps some people cope with their problems?

2. **Analogy** An analogy compares similar details about things that are different. Reread pages 23–25. Why did Thura think the reaction of Iraqi citizens to the war was like “the Titanic”? Use the word *citizen* in your response.

3. **Author’s Purpose** Thura tells events from her point of view through diary entries. Why do you think the author chose to write this way?

4. **Generate Questions** Write a question about this section for someone else reading this book. Exchange questions with them. Do you agree with their answer?
5. Problem and Solution  Thura’s family prepared for the American invasion of Iraq. Use the **Goal and Outcome Chart** to list what the Al-Windawi family had to do before they moved to a safer place.

**Goal and Outcome Chart**

**Goal**

- prepare for the invasion and bombing

**Outcome**

- moved in with Granny for six days

What difficult decision did the Al-Windawi family make as they prepared to move to a safer environment at their grandmother’s home?

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Respond to Pages 41–62

1. Personal Response  Thura disagreed with the governments of her country and the U.S. Also, she and her family left their home because it was not safe. Which of these two situations do you relate to more?

2. Cause and Effect  Reread page 51. What effect did the Iraqi and Iranian governments have on innocent people? What was Thura’s reaction? Use the word government in your response.

3. Narrator’s Point of View  Thura wrote about wartime Iraq from her point of view. How would this selection be different if a news reporter wrote an article about the war?

4. Generate Questions  Write a question about this section for someone else reading this book. Exchange questions with them. Do you agree with their answer?
5. Problem and Solution  On pages 41–62, the war worsened and made life very risky for the people living in Baghdad. List the details that support this main idea in the Main Idea Diagram.

Main Idea Diagram

Main Idea: Baghdad was unsafe.

Details:

Details:

Details:

How did the Al-Windawis solve this problem?

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Respond to Pages 63–85

1. **Personal Response** Thura adapted to new ways of life in the country. She learned to bake bread and milk cows. Describe a time in your life that you surprised yourself by adapting to a new situation.

2. **Cause and Effect** Think about how the war affected people’s lives. How did conflict show the best and the worst in people? Give examples from the text. Use the word *conflict* in your response.

3. **Character’s Point of View** Reread page 70. What does the little boy playing by the river symbolize to Thura? What important lesson does seeing him playing teach her?

4. **Generate Questions** Write a question about this section for someone else reading this book. Exchange questions with them. Do you agree with their answer?
5. Conclusions  On pages 63–85, Thura and her family temporarily moved to Al-Jadida, a rural area outside of Baghdad. Use the **Venn Diagram** to list how Baghdad and Al-Jadida were alike and how they were different.

**Venn Diagram**

Baghdad  Both  Al-Jadida

How would Thura’s life have been different had she not had a safe place to go during the bombing?

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Respond to Pages 86–108

1. **Personal Response** Thura met journalists from different countries who were interested in her diary. If you were Thura, how would you feel about sharing your personal feelings with the world?

2. **Problem and Solution** The aftermath of the war brought more hard times for Iraqis. How did the people that Thura knew support each other during the hard times? Use the word *support* in your response.

3. **Logic** Thura says that some Iraqis were “destroying the meaning of ‘freedom.’” What facts does she use to support this statement? Do you agree with her logic?

4. **Generate Questions** Write a question about this section for someone else reading this book. Exchange questions with them. Do you agree with their answer?
5. **Evidence and Conclusions** List events on pages 86–108 that led to Thura’s diary being published. Use the **Idea Web** to answer the question.

**Idea Web**

**Events that Led to Thura’s Diary Being Published**

What evidence from the book shows you Thura would make a good journalist?

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Respond to Pages 109–127

1. **Personal Response** On page 110, Thura describes her home life as unbearable and sleeps to avoid dealing with it. How would you react to this situation?

2. **Perspectives** If your school, country, or community was ruled by a dictator, how would you react? Use the word dictator in your response.

3. **Fact and Opinion** On page 126, Thura wrote that she was “a girl born in the wrong place at the wrong time.” Is this a fact or an opinion? Why?

4. **Generate Questions** Write a question about this section for someone else reading this book. Exchange questions with them. Do you agree with their answer?
5. **Cause and Effect** On pages 109–127, Thura described changes that came with the American occupation of Iraq at the end of the war. Use the **Details Web** to list some of the changes in Iraq after the war ended.

**Details Web**

![Diagram](image)

How did these changes affect some Iraqis? How did they affect Thura?

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Respond to Pages 128–136

1. **Personal Response** Not everyone supported Thura’s plan to attend the University of Pennsylvania. Describe a time when you needed to make a difficult decision. How did others support or not support you?

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2. **Conclusions** Why was Thura unsympathetic when she heard that the sons of the dictator of Iraq Saddam Hussein were killed? Use the word *dictator* in your answer.

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3. **Irony** Reread page 134. What is ironic about the way Saddam Hussein was captured?

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**What If?**

4. **Connect** Look at your notes on Student Journal, page 2. Think about the responsibilities you have to your family, community, school, or country. Compare this to *Thura’s Diary*. What did Thura feel were her responsibilities? How did she fulfill them?

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5. **Author’s Purpose** On pages 128–136, Thura wrote about Saddam Hussein’s capture. List details that support the main idea. Use the **Main Idea Tree** to answer the question.

**Main Idea Tree**

- Iraqis had different reactions to the capture of Hussein.

By writing about the Iraqi reaction to Hussein’s capture, was the author’s main purpose to persuade or inform? Explain.

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