

Fingerprints In The Water by Lawrence Nault

Teacher's Guide

Fingerprints In The Water: Draconim Book 3

By Lawrence Nault

Grade Level: 7–10

Subjects: English Language Arts, Environmental Science, Social Studies

Themes: Water pollution, youth activism, climate justice, grassroots leadership, intergenerational knowledge

About the Book

Fingerprints In The Water follows Kai, Amy, and their fellow dragon-bonded teens as they uncover a mounting crisis of water contamination driven by microplastics and industrial negligence. Refusing to wait for adult institutions to act, the Young Dragons organize grassroots efforts to clean waterways, gather data, and mobilize their communities. Backed by dragons—mysterious, ancient companions—they step into leadership roles that challenge power and inspire change.

This YA novel blends science-based environmental concerns with character-driven narrative, encouraging students to explore how fiction can empower real-world action.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Analyze the relationship between fiction and real-world environmental issues
 - Understand the impact of microplastics and water pollution on ecosystems and communities
 - Evaluate youth-led activism and its portrayal in literature
 - Explore themes of leadership, resilience, and intergenerational responsibility
 - Reflect on personal and collective responsibility for environmental stewardship
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Key Topics for Discussion

- Water systems and pollution: microplastics, corporate negligence, community impact
 - Grassroots vs. institutional responses
 - The symbolism of dragons and their intergenerational connection
 - Media literacy, misinformation, and environmental communication
 - Climate grief and youth resilience
 - Action vs. apathy: What drives real change?
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Essential Questions

1. How does the novel portray youth leadership differently than adult authority?
 2. What does the story suggest about the role of science in storytelling and activism?
 3. In what ways does the dragon bond symbolize more than a mythical connection?
 4. How can fiction be used as a tool for environmental awareness and advocacy?
 5. What personal or community actions might students be inspired to explore after reading?
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Classroom Activities

1. Microplastic Audit

Have students research and conduct a small-scale classroom audit of plastic use or investigate local water systems. Pair with reflection writing.

2. Literary Dragons & Symbols

Compare the dragons in *Draconim* to dragons in other literary traditions. What do they represent across cultures? How are they different here?

3. Youth Climate Heroes Research Project

Students choose a real-world young climate leader and present on their work, connecting it to characters and themes in the novel.

4. "Fingerprint" Journals

Ask students to write about the “fingerprint” they hope to leave on the world. What causes matter to them? What would their dragon fight for?

5. Media & Messaging Role Play

Simulate a press conference or protest planning session like the ones in the book. Assign roles and explore messaging, impact, and opposition.

Suggested Reading Pairings

- *The Marrow Thieves* by Cherie Dimaline (Indigenous futurism, environmental displacement)
 - *The Last Cuentista* by Donna Barba Higuera (youth agency in a world-changing crisis)
 - Articles or short documentaries on microplastics, ocean gyres, and youth climate movements
 - Poetry or prose on environmental justice from diverse voices
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Assessment Ideas

- Literary essay on symbolism (e.g., the dragons or the fingerprint spiral)
 - Personal action plan inspired by the book's themes
 - Group project designing a fictional or real-world cleanup initiative
 - Reflective response: "What does it mean to be a leader in the face of global challenges?"
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