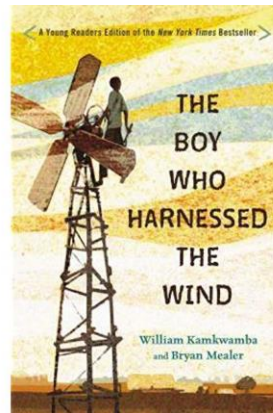


The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind

Writing Prompts



ISBN-13	978-0-06-173033-7
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Author	William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer
Publisher	HarperCollins Books
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Lexile	850L
Genre	Autobiography
Synopsis	Malawi was a land withered by drought and hunger and where modern science was a mystery. William read about windmills and dreamed about building one to bring electricity and water to his village.
Themes	Technology, Resilience, Africa

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind, Day 1



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 20

Even though we lived in a small village in Africa, we did many of the same things kids do all over the world; we just used different materials. After talking with friends I met in America, I know this is true. Children everywhere have similar ways of playing with one another. And if you look at it his way, the world isn't such a big place.

EXTEND

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Each day of this unit, you will explore an ethical issue from today's reading using one or more ethical theory.

William's family depends on agriculture. However, they use rain fed agriculture instead of irrigated agriculture. That impacts water security and agricultural productivity. Think about one or more reasons for the lack of use of irrigation, based on today's reading selection. Write a paragraph about the reason for the lack of irrigated agriculture in William's village.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind, Day 2



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 41

We entered the forest just past the graveyard near Geoffrey's house, where the blue gums grew tall. In the distance I could see the small mountain range called the Dowa Highlands that separated us from Lake Malawi, some hundred kilometers away.

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Each day of this unit, you will explore an ethical issue from today's reading using one or more ethical theory.

William's village depended on rain to water the fields. But it also suffered when the rain caused flooding. The impact of flooding on people depends on people's vulnerability – the extent to which they can protect themselves, their houses, or their fields from the flooding. Think about at least one way that William's village might be vulnerable to flooding. Write a paragraph about how flooding can harm William's village.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind, Day 3



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 51

"How do they put songs on that disc?" I'd ask.

"Who cares?" people would answer.

My neighbors in the trading center seemed happy to enjoy their cars and CD players without explanation, but not me. I was filled with the desire to understand, and the questions never stopped coming. If finding these answers was the job of a scientist, then I wanted to become one.

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Each day of this unit, you will explore an ethical issue from today's reading using one or more ethical theory.

William's family depends on fertilizer for the plants but this year the price was too high, and the government did not see it their job to help farmers. Write one paragraph about how the government's decision impacted farmers in William's community. Was the government acting in a way that produced the greatest good and reduced harm? Why or why not?

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind, Day 4



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 85

The man in front of me could hardly stay awake. His hands were trembling as if he were cold, and his breathing was heavy and loud. When the line started to move, he couldn't keep his balance and fell down. To my horror, no one helped him up—just simply stepped over him. In the next line, babies cried from hunger, and children tugged at their mother's dresses. If there's one thing I'll remember from that day in Chamama, it's the sound of crying babies.

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Each day of this unit, you will explore an ethical issue from today's reading using one or more ethical theory.

Today we read about food shortages in William's village and the surrounding villages. Write one paragraph about access to food and the conditions that impacted the food shortage. Some conditions can be environmental. Other types of conditions can be the decisions made by the government. In your paragraph, discuss:

- Did people act in the best interest of others?
- Were people being treated fairly and equally?

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind, Day 5



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 110

We ran our fingers lovingly over our country. I couldn't believe how small it was compared to the rest of the world. To think, my whole life and everything in it had taken place on this little strip of earth. On the map, the land was green and the lake appeared like a blue jewel. It was hard to guess that eleven million people lived in that tiny space, and at that very moment, nearly all of us were slowly starving.

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Each day of this unit, you will explore an ethical issue from today's reading using one or more ethical theory.

Today you read about students not being able to afford the cost of school. Write one paragraph on the importance of education. Do you think everyone has a right to an education? Explain your reason.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind, Day 6



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 135–136

For Geoffrey and me, march was like one big celebration. Each morning before work, we made a fire in the fields and ate a big breakfast of roasted maize and pumpkins. I remembered a parable that Jesus told to the disciples, the one about the sower of seeds. The seeds planted along the road get stepped on and damaged, those planted in rocky soil can't take root, and the ones planted in the thorns get tangled in the barbs. But the seeds planted on fertile soil live and prosper.

"Mister Geoffrey, we're like those seeds planted on fertile soil, not on the roadside, stepped on by everyone walking past."

"No, no, not us."

"That's right. We lived. We survived."

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Each day of this unit, you will explore an ethical issue from today's reading using one or more ethical theory.

Today write one paragraph about the virtues William and his family exhibited during the famine. Some examples of virtues are: honesty, courage, compassion, generosity, and fairness.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind, Day 7



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 150

While the rest of Malawi went hungry during December and January, we'd be picking our second crop of maize. The pump could also allow my mother a year-round garden to grow things like potatoes, mustard greens, and soy beans— both to eat and sell at the market.

I began to get excited. "No more skipping breakfast, Gilbert. No more dropping out of school!"

With a windmill, we'd finally release ourselves from the troubles of darkness and hunger. A windmill meant more than power. It was freedom.

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Each day of this unit, you will explore an ethical issue from today's reading using one or more ethical theory.

Write one paragraph about William's concern for the common good. How does William's initiative contribute to the welfare of others?

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind, Day 8



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 172–173

In storage, our grain sacks were full once again—so man, they reached the ceiling and spilled out the doorway. Some soybeans from the garden were also ready, which meant we could enjoy regular meals. Slowly, all the weight we’d lost during the famine started coming back.

“Ay, Papa,” my mother said to my father one night, “you were looking so skinny.”

My father smiled. “And you, Mama. I see you’re finally coming back to us. But William, eh, I was worried that a strong wind would carry that boy away.”

We all laughed about it now, because it was only during good times that we could talk truthfully about the bad.

Write a short product based on today’s prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Each day of this unit, you will explore an ethical issue from today’s reading using one or more ethical theory.

Compare access to education in the United States and in Malawi. How does access to education influence the welfare of people?

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind, Day 9



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 199

Holding the socket and bulb, I climbed the tower and connected their wires to the ones from the dynamo. As I worked, more and more people arrived and I could hear their chatter:

“What do you suppose he’s doing now?” asked a farmer named Banda.

*“This is the *misala* from the scrapyards my children were talking about,” another man answered. “Think about his poor mother!”*

Peering out, I saw my parents and sisters at the back of the crowd. Their eyes wide and their jaws hung slightly open, the way some soccer fans look when clustered around a radio. Except this time, it was me who had the ball with only seconds left on the clock. My hands trembled from nerves, but I was confident. I’d prepared for this moment for months.

Write a short product based on today’s prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Each day of this unit, you will explore an ethical issue from today’s reading using one or more ethical theory.

Today we read that William’s windmill worked. Write one paragraph about how the windmill benefits his family. How might the windmill be reducing harm or hardship?

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind, Day 10



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 215

"I'm standing in the living room of the Honorable Mister Kamkwamba. Sir, this room used to be so dark and sad at this hour. Now look at you, enjoying electricity like a city person."

"Oh," my father said, smiling, "enjoying it more than a city person."

"You mean because there are no blackouts and you own ESCOM nothing?"

"Well, yes," he said. "But also, because my own son made it."

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Each day of this unit, you will explore an ethical issue from today's reading using one or more ethical lens.

The roof in William's house collapsed because of termite damaged and a cyclone. In both times, the house did not burn down when the electric wires were damaged. However, William was aware that things could end differently.

Many accidents can be prevented by foresight – the act of looking into the future and predicting what could go right or wrong. Intellectual virtues such as prudence and humility motivate us to use our foresight and take the necessary precautions.

Write 1-2 paragraphs about the ethical responsibility of every person to think critically about potential hazards and to take action to help prevent accidents.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind, Day 11



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 227

I worried that one day the windmill would no longer excite me, or it would become too difficult to maintain, and the maize rows or boozing dens would slowly swallow me up. It was easy to lose hold of your dreams.

*I battled this darkness by trying to keep a positive mindset. Every week I returned to the library just to continue learning and stay inspired. I read all the novels and spelling books and practiced my English. And I continued checking out *Explaining Physics, Using Energy, and Integrated Science* and researching other ways to help my family.*

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Each day of this unit, you will explore an ethical issue from today's reading using one or more ethical theory.

Today we read about inventions that did not work in the way William intended. Write one paragraph about the importance of learning from mistakes and the virtues of courage and persistence.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind, Day 12



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 243

I walked them through the steps of how I'd built everything using everyday materials.

"So many things around you are reusable," I told them. "Where others see garbage, I see opportunity."

I hoped I was inspiring them in some way, because if I could teach my neighbors how to build windmills, I thought, what else could we build together?

"In science we invent and create," I continued. "We make new things that can benefit our situation, if we can all invent something to make our lives better, we can change Malawi."

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Each day of this unit, you will explore an ethical issue from today's reading using one or more ethical theory.

Today we read about William's success and his return to school. The school does not have supplies for the students and is disrepair because, according to William, it has been forgotten by the government. Is it ethical for schools to receive different resources? What are the implications of the lack of resources for students?

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind, Day 13



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 264–265

There was Corneille Ewango, a biologist from Congo who'd risked his life to save endangered animals during the country's civil war...A man from Ethiopia invented a kind of refrigerator that works using water evaporation from sand. Others were doctors and scientists using creative ideas and methods to fight AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. Even Erik Hereman was there—one of the first peoples, with the help of Mike McKay, to write about my windmill on his blog Afrigadget. Erik was raised in Kenya and Sudan as the son of missionaries. What he said summed up our crowd perfectly:

"Where the world sees trash, Africa recycles. Where the world sees junk, Africa sees rebirth."

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Each day of this unit, you will explore an ethical issue from today's reading using one or more ethical theory.

Today we read about William's experience at the TED conference. While there he was introduced to technology that he says would have made his innovations and learning easier. Write one paragraph about access to technology. Should everybody have equal access to technological tools? Explain why or why not.