



THE BOY WHO HARNESSSED THE WIND

AUTHOR: WILLIAM KAMKWAMBA AND BRYAN MEALER

ILLUSTRATOR: ELIZABETH ZUNON

See a video of the book read aloud here: [The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind](#)

**** REMEMBER: HAVE FUN AND THE KIDS WILL TOO! ****

OVERVIEW

ABOUT THE BOOK

When a terrible drought struck William Kamkwamba's tiny village in Malawi, his family lost all of the season's crops, leaving them with nothing to eat and nothing to sell. William began to explore science books in his village library, looking for a solution. There, he came up with the idea that would change his family's life forever: he could build a windmill. Made out of scrap metal and old bicycle parts, William's windmill brought electricity to his home and helped his family pump the water they needed to farm the land. ([amazon.com](#))

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

William Kamkwamba is a Malawian innovator, engineer and author who was born in 1987. He gained fame in his country in 2002 when he built a wind turbine to power a few electrical appliances in his family's house in Wimbe. ([Wikipedia](#))

Bryan Mealer was born in Odessa, TX and spent his childhood in West Texas and San Antonio. He graduated with a degree in journalism from the University of Texas at Austin, and spent time as a city reporter for the Austin Chronicle. He then moved to New York City and worked as an assistant editor at Esquire magazine before moving to Nairobi, Kenya to become a freelance reporter. He later was the Associated Press staff correspondent in Kinshasa, Congo. He now lives in Providence, Rhode Island and contributes to several magazines. ([bloomsbury.com](#))

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Elizabeth Zunon grew up in Ivory Coast, in West Africa, where people speak French (and many other languages). Since her mother is American, she wanted to make sure that Elizabeth and her little brother could speak both French and English, so she read them a lot of bedtime stories in English. As a little girl, Elizabeth loved to draw, paint, make up dances and play dress-up. Elizabeth went to art school in the United States and decided to focus on Children's Book Illustration. In school, she made a lot of paintings and books that were filled with images and memories of her childhood in the Ivory Coast. She still loves thinking about life there and drawing palm trees, tropical flowers, people in busy marketplaces, and days at the beach- especially since she now lives in Upstate New York, where it gets cold and snowy. ([amazon.com](#))

THE BOY WHO HARNESSSED THE WIND

TOPICS & THEMES:

- Drought
- Inspiration
- Perseverance

Tips for every book!

POWER PHRASES:

I WONDER...

I NOTICE...

TELL ME MORE...

DIGGING DEEPER:

"Tell me more, why do you think that?"

"How do you know that?"

"Why do you think they feel like that?"

"Interesting, did you notice anything else?"

BEFORE READING

Use these before reading the story to help students activate background knowledge and make predictions:

- (cover) I wonder who this boy is. Do you have any ideas?
- Why do you think there is a windmill in the background?
- What is the purpose of a windmill?
- Why do you think there are two authors?

DURING THE STORY

Use these while reading the story to help students interpret the action and content:

- (p. 1) I wonder if William's life is different than ours. Let's read on and find out.
- (p. 6) How did the illustrator let us know that there was a drought?
- (p. 8-9) What hardships did William suffer as a result of the flood?
- (p. 10-11) How did going to the library help William? What was his dream for his people?
- (p. 12) Why do you think the authors said the windmill was a weapon?
- (p. 14) I think it's interesting that the authors used African words in the story.
- (p. 16) How do we know that William is very patient?
- (p. 19) The author compares the strange machine with a clumsy giraffe. How does that simile help you picture what was happening?
- (p. 25) I wonder what the authors meant when they say, "William knew he had just begun."

AFTER READING

Use these after reading the story to help students understand what they just read.

- Why do you think we should know William's story?
- If William gave up, what might have happened?

BRINGING THE BOOK TO LIFE!

- Has anyone you know ever done something to help your community?
- Can you think of something you can do to help your community?

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

- We all use electricity everyday. Can you think of ways that you can try to use less electricity every day? (reader: wait for an answer) If you agree, clap your hands. (Reader: repeat for several more answers.)

SMALL-GROUP IDEAS

1. DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

- If this book continued, what might happen next?
- Although William loved the library, what might have been difficult for him there?
- Is there a word you can think of that is opposite of drought?
- I wonder what William's village looks like today.
- I am going to read to you from the pages after the story to learn more about William.
- Can you find your favorite picture? Tell your reason for the selection.

Suggested Optional Activity:

- Compare and contrast where you live and to where William grew up. You may do this as a chart, a Venn Diagram or a creative picture. (Reader: give examples of each.)

2. WRITING ACTIVITY

- Pretend you are a television reporter. Write a list of questions that you would like to ask William.

3. EXTENSION ACTIVITY

- Using the questions from the writing activity, have students interview one another.

COMMON CORE LINKS

CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RL 3.1,3.2,3.3,3.4,3.6,3.7.3.8