

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind

1. Question & Research Task

I would like to say something to all the people out there like me. . .To the Africans and the poor who are struggling with your dreams. . . maybe one day you will watch this on the Internet. I say to you, trust yourself and believe. Whatever happens, don't give up.”

- William Kamkwamba from [TEDGlobal 2009](#)

William Kamkwamba’s 2010 memoir *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* tells the true story of his experiences growing up in Malawi, an African nation plagued with drought, hunger, and poverty. Kamkwamba’s story defines the English proverb “necessity is the mother of invention,” as he works to overcome challenges in his community. Today you will explore some of the difficulties facing Malawi during Kamkwamba’s childhood and predict how the efforts of one individual can improve the lives of many.

In this Slam Dunk, you will conduct brief, focused research to respond to the inquiry question:

How do obstacles lead to innovation?

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Select image above to hear a brief TED Talk by William Kamkwamba

Image Source: [TED](#)

2. Information Sources

Choose several of the information sources linked here to complete the Student Activity on Slide 3.

Beliefs and Culture	Climate and Agriculture	Government	Education	Economy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>CultureGrams: Religion</u> • <u>Murder for profit; The killing of albinos</u> • <u>CultureGrams: General Attitudes</u> • See additional cultural information on the <u>CultureGrams sidebar</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The Hunger Project: Malawi</u> • <u>In Malawi, A Greener Revolution Aligns Diet And Land</u> • <u>Malawi as microcosm</u> • <u>CultureGrams: Land and Climate</u> • <u>Seeking Africa's Green Revolution</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Encyclopedia entry</u> • <u>Why does Malawi have 1,331 candidates running for 193 seats in parliament?</u> • <u>CultureGrams: Government</u> • <u>US Relations with Malawi (from the US State Department)</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Global partnership for education</u> • <u>CultureGrams: Education</u> • <u>UNICEF School-Age Children in Malawi page</u> • <u>Post-Secondary Education System in Malawi</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>In Malawi, tiny loans offer help (video with transcript)</u> • <u>CultureGrams: Economy</u> • <u>Malawi: Malawians Reduced to Economic Refugees, Says MP Jeremiah</u> • <u>Malawi: External Shocks Challenge to Malawi's Poverty Reduction Efforts</u>

3. Student Activity

Using the information sources on [Slide 2](#) or continuing your research using other BCPS Digital Content from the [Apps Portal](#), record key details about challenges Malawi is facing or has faced. Remember that you are focusing on how these topics represented **challenges or problems** for Malawi's people.

Organize your **notes** using on of these methods/tools:

- [Fillable PDF organizer](#)
- [Google document organizer](#)
- [Jamboard](#) note cards
- Another note-taking tool suggested by your teacher

Be sure to **cite the source** where you found your information.



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Image Source: [pixabay.com](#)

4. Assessment Activity

How do obstacles lead to innovation?

Using your notes from the Student Activity, select the factor you think posed the biggest challenge for William Kamkwamba and his family in Malawi. Then, use your notes to develop a proposal to overcome this challenge. Your proposal can be presented in one of the following ways or one recommended by your teacher

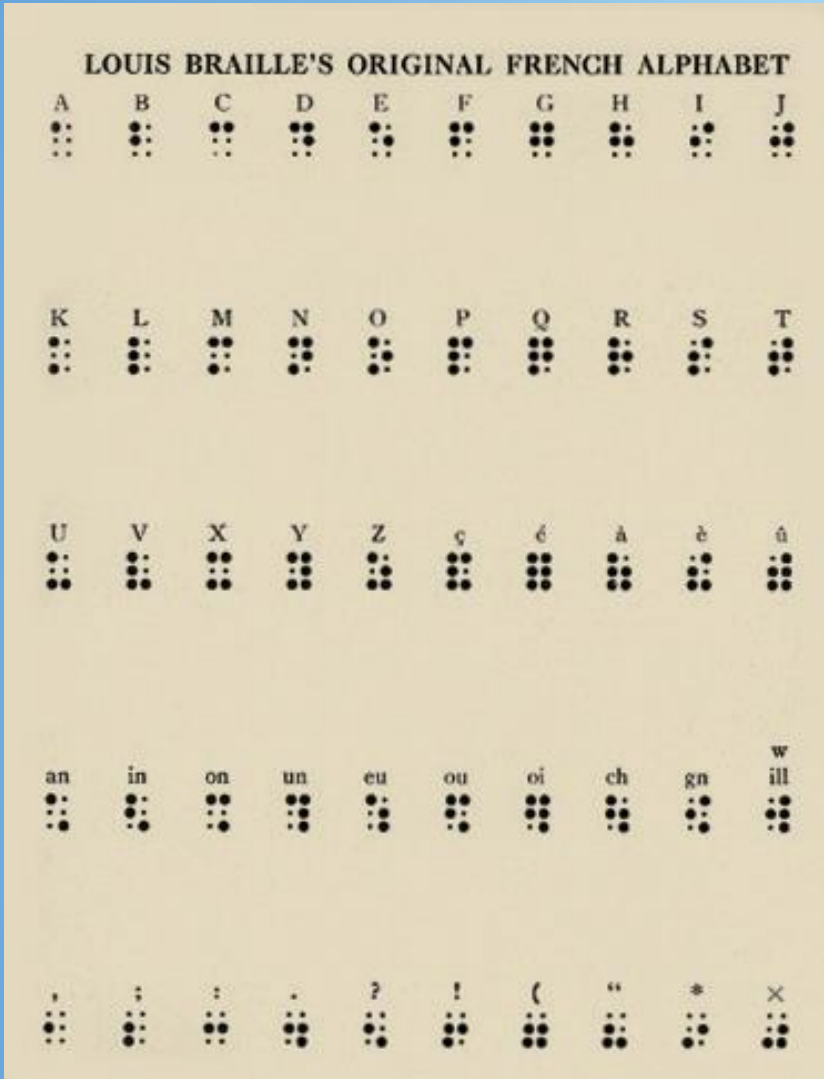
- a flow chart (try the drawing tool in Google Docs. Step-by-step instructions [linked here.](#))
- [a written proposal](#)
- [an elevator pitch](#)



Image Source: [Pixabay](#)

Your teacher may use this [Problem Solving Rubric](#) or another assessment tool to evaluate your work.

5. Enrichment Activities



After being blinded by a childhood accident, Louis Braille invented Braille as a system of writing for the visually impaired when he was only fifteen years old.

William Kamkwamba is one of many teenage innovators inspired by his environment and experiences. Check out some of the other amazing inventions by teenagers:

- [20 world-changing inventions from under 20's](#)
- [Four teenage inventors changing our world](#)
- [8 Inventions from Teenagers Who Want to Change the World](#)
- [18 under 18: Meet the Young Innovators Who Are Changing the World](#)

Most of these teenagers are just like you. They see a need in their own live, families, or communities, and invent something to help make a difference. Now it's your turn.

Think about a problem in your own life, family, or community. What could you make or do that would solve that problem? Write a well-developed paragraph explaining the problem and your proposed solution. Or you may choose to create a visual (like a diagram) explaining your problem and solution. Dream big! Who knows, you might end up the next teenage millionaire!

6. Teacher Resources

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Learning Standards Alignment

Content Learning Standards

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.2

Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.6

Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

AASL Standards Framework for Learners- Inquire: Build new knowledge by inquiring, thinking critically, identifying problems, and developing strategies for solving problems.

Think: Learners display curiosity and initiative by:

I.A.2 Recalling prior and background knowledge as context for new meaning.

Create: Learners engage with new knowledge by following a process that includes:

I.B.1 Using evidence to investigate questions. I.B.3 Generating products that illustrate learning.

Share: Learners adapt, communicate, and exchange learning products with others in a cycle that includes:

I.C.1 Interacting with content presented by others.

Grow: Learners participate in an ongoing inquiry-based process by:

I.D.2 Engaging in sustained inquiry.

Grade 10: Unit 1 Shifting Perspectives

Objective: Students will analyze information from multiple sources in order to anticipate the challenges Kamkwamba faces in *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*.

Time Frame: 1 90-minute class period

Differentiation strategies for this lesson:

- Have students use learning supports provided in BCPS Digital Content found in the [AppsPortal](#). Refer to [Digital Content Snapshot/Support pages](#) as needed.

Notes to the teacher:

- Collaborate with your school library media specialist to plan and implement this lesson.
- Provide students with login information as needed to authenticate BCPS Digital Content. Login information is on the **BCPS Digital Content** page in the [Apps Portal](#).
- Consider using the [Schoology Assignment App](#) feature to assign Google Docs for students to access, edit, and submit through Schoology.