William Kamkwamba

FACT FILE

Date of birth : August 5, 1987

Place of birth : Dowa, Malawi

Nationality: Malawian

Home village: Masitala, Kasungu district

Occupation: Engineer, author, inventor,

motivational speaker

Education: African Bible College (Malawi);

African Leadership Academy (South

Africa); Dartmouth College (USA)

Social media: williamkamkwamba.typepad.com

https://twitter.com/wkamkwamba

https://www.youtube.com/user/WilliamKamkwamba

Timeline

- **2001:** A severe famine forced William to drop out of school
- **2002:** William built a windmill made from wood, an old bicycle frame, PVC pipes and other
  - nondescript objects salvaged from a scrapyard
- **2006:** Journalists and bloggers started to write about William's windmill
- **2007**: William's first TED (Technology, Entertainment and Design) conference in Arusha, Tanzania
- **2007**: Enrolled at the African Bible College in Lilongwe, Malawi
- **2008**: 1) Studied Immersion English at Regents Language Institute in Cambridge, UK
  2) First year at the African Leadership Academy in Johannesburg, South Africa
- **2009:** 1) Interviewed on the Daily Show by Jon Stewart
  2) *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind: Creating Currents of Electricity and Hope* first published
   in the US by Harper Collins Publishers. Memoir co-authored by Bryan Mealer
  3) Gave speeches at the following venues:
    -International CES (Consumer Electronics Show)
    - Africa Economic Forum at Columbia University
    - The Aspen Ideas Festival
    - TED Global conference in Oxford, UK
- **2010**: Graduated from the African Leadership Academy and enrolled at Dartmouth College in the US
- **2013**: *William and the Windmill* won the Documentary Feature Grand Jury Award at the SXSW (South
  by Southwest) Film Festival in the US
- **2014**: William graduated from Dartmouth College in the US

Reading Comprehension

William Kamkwamba: The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind

1. Read the text below carefully and answer the questions.

Before November 2006, William Kamkwamba was just an ordinary Malawian village boy. He knew nothing about Google, blogs, TED talks, the Daily Show, travelling by plane and having a well-planned future. Today, William knows all this like the back of his hand, and much more. He is a Dartmouth College graduate, an author, a motivational speaker and a real asset to his community.

What magic brought him to this place? Invention. What qualities enabled him to build a windmill from pieces of wood, a broken bicycle and a myriad of other unwanted objects? A dose of madness, huge amounts of courage, the right measure of perseverance and unlimited patience. It also took the goodwill of onlookers, journalists and bloggers in Malawi and elsewhere to bring William's story to the world. Above all, it was the belief in his creation, shared by many others, that saved William and his Masitala village from certain misery and destruction.

A series of unfortunate events brought about this transformation. It all started with a severe drought in 2001 that brought William's education to a standstill. That year's famine not only claimed many lives, but also left the surviving families struggling for basic amenities. In this context, school fees became a luxury. William dropped out of school at the age of 14 but falling into despair was out of question.

The teenager turned to books to kill boredom and keep out of trouble. It was during one of his forays into a local library in his Kasungu district that he discovered *Using Energy*, an American science textbook that described windmills. That book would change his life.

After months of research, experiments and embarrassing trips to the scrapyard where he collected most of his building materials, William's first makeshift windmill came into being. It could light four bulbs in his home and charge mobile phones, much to the wonder and disbelief of the people who originally thought that he was crazy. Later on, two more windmills would be built to provide more electricity that would light the village and power a water pump used for irrigational purposes.

November 2007 saw William attend his first TED conference in Arusha, Tanzania, where some participants noticed his potential and decided to sponsor his studies. The African Bible College in Malawi was one of the first steps that the education-starved boy took towards increasing his knowledge. The African Leadership Academy in South Africa soon followed thanks to another scholarship. William would finally end up at Dartmouth College in the United States of America in 2010.

Four years later, William obtained his engineering degree and made a pledge to continue helping his community and country through the Moving Windmills Project foundation.

William Kamkwamba continues to inspire many people around the world as evidenced by his Twitter account. His improbable windmill harnessed the wind and freed our imagination, allowing us to dream and believe that creativity is the key to transformational change.

2. General Comprehension

a. Fill in the table below with basic information from the text you have just read

Title of the text	
Name of protagonist	
Nationality	
Education	
Profession	
Main dates in the text	
The text is about	
Your opinion about the story is...	

3. Detailed Comprehension

3.1. VOCABULARY: Use a unilingual dictionary to find brief definitions of the following words or expressions

a. A windmill:...

b. An asset:...

c. Onlookers:...

d. A myriad of:...

e. Drought:..

f. Basic amenities:..

g. Boredom:..

h. Despair:..

i. Foray:...

j. Scrapyard:...

k. Disbelief:...

l. Make a pledge:...

3.2. <mark>TRUE OR FALSE</mark>: Read the text again and say if the sentences are TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)

a. William learnt how to build the windmill from a book that he found at a library.................................

b. When William first started his project, many people did not believe him.....................................

c. A well-wisher gave William the materials to build his first windmill...

d. The world discovered William's invention in an article that the teenager sent to a local newspaper...

e. Hunger pushed William to build the windmill:...

f. William had to drop out of school because his family could not afford to pay for his education..........

g. William only managed to build a single windmill...

h. In 2007, William's family was finally able to send him to school for further studies............................

i. William's impatience helped him to finish the project very quickly...

j. It was tough for William to gather the necessary materials for his windmill...

3.2. <mark>FURTHER COMPREHENSION</mark>: Show your deep understanding of the text

a. Briefly describe William's life before the discovery of his first windmill:...

....

....

b. Give two reasons why William built the windmill..

....

....

c. List the qualities related to William's personality that helped him to build the windmill:....................

....

....

....

d. Find four major changes in William's life after the windmill was discovered:....................................

....

....

....

....

e. William's village also benefited from the projects. Give two examples to illustrate this......................

....

....

f. Imagine what would have happened if William had not built the windmill.......................................

....

....

....

....

....

4. GRAMMAR (SIMPLE PAST): Understand and use Grammar in context

4.1. REGULAR and IRREGULAR SIMPLE PAST: Fill in the table using verbs from the text.

REGULAR VERBS		IRREGULAR VERBS	
Verb Stem	Simple Past	Verb Stem	Simple Past
Enable	*Enabled*	*Be*	*Was*
Save			Brought
	Triggered	Take	
Start		Become	
Claim			Left
Drop out		Come	
	Turned		Could
	Described		Thought
Collect		Will	
Obtain		See	
	Harnessed		Made

4.2. Basic rules:

a. We use the Simple Past to talk about...

b. We add.................to the verb stem to make the Regular Simple Past form

c. Irregular Simple Past forms have no ....rules. They are to be learnt by ....

d. We double the consonant after verbs with one syllable and one vowel

E.g. Stop: sto**pp**ed

- Drop: ....
- Plan: ....

> This rule does not apply to the Irregular form :
>
> E.g. Sit : **Sat**

e. We also double the consonant after verbs ending with the consonant **l**:

E.g. Excel: Excelled

- Kill:....................................

4.3. Pronunciation of Simple Past forms ending with ...ed

a. **/d/:** After verbs ending with a voiced consonant (b, v, l, r, w, n, m...) and a vowel

E.g. *Love: Loved (Lovd)*

- Save:...............................
- Enable:.............................
- Describe:..........................
- Trigger: ....

b. **/t/:** After verbs ending with voiceless consonants (p,k,s,h...)

E.g. *Stop: Stopped (Stopt)*

- Drop:...............................
- Harness:..........................

c. **/id/:** After the letters **"T"** and **"D"**

E.g. *Decide: Decided (pronounced id at the end)*

- Collect:..

5. EXTENSION: Show off your skills

5.1. SENTENCE BUILDING: Use the following words or expressions from the text to make your own sentences

a. To know something like the back of one's hand:..
....

b. A dose of madness:...
....

c. The right measure of:...
....

d. Basic amenities:...
....

e. Makeshift:..
....

f. Out of question:...
....

g. To become a luxury:..
....

h. Thanks to:..
....

i. To come into being:...
....

j. As evidenced by:...
....

5.2. WRITTEN EXPRESSION: Use the vocabulary you have learnt to write a longer text

WRITING 1: Write an article about someone you know or whom you have heard of. This person should have done something extraordinary. Be as detailed as possible by giving his age, nationality, family background, education, career and achievements. In addition, you can also explain if this person's deeds have helped his community or country. Use the Simple Past. Write 150 to 200 words and make sure to vary your vocabulary.

WRITING 2: Imagine an interview between William and a journalist in 2014. Be as detailed as possible by taking into consideration the following aspects of William's life: age, nationality, family background, education, career, achievements. Use the Simple Past. Write 150 to 200 words and make sure to vary your vocabulary.

Good luck!