



Reader's Journal: *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*
Gwen Romero, Wasatch Range Writing Project

Summary:

Students create a journal including summaries, reflections, and graphics to process the events/details in a work of literature.

- Central questions*:
 - How do writers develop central ideas to evoke images and compel readers to continue reading?
 - How do autobiographical writers develop a narrative arc? How are people influenced by the world around them?

*Questions will be discussed explicitly in the Socratic Seminar lesson.

Objectives:

- Develop critical thinking skills through analyzing, synthesizing, and conceptualizing information.
- Identify main ideas and supporting details.
- Analyze a writer's craft in narrative format.

Context:

ELA Grades 6 through 12: RL1, RL2, RL5, RL6, W7

Materials:

- Copies of William Kamkwamba's *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* for whole class. Note: This memoir is available in both the original format (better for average high school readers) and a young readers edition (better for grades 6 through 8 and struggling readers).
- Assignment template, included below (print copies or upload for digital copies). Note: Based on the level of your class, determine how many chapters you will read each day, including in class and as homework, and how much detail students should include in each response.
- **In-class:** Pens/pencils, colored pencils.
- **Online:** Upload template to class platform.
- **Both:** Internet access for background Quick Search.



Time Span:

Approximately three weeks

Procedures:

Day 1:

1. Distribute Reader's Journal and divide students into groups of four.
2. Preview Task 1 and have the members of each group pick a topic to Search and Share—each student searches one topic and shares the information with the rest of the group. Allow approximately 15 minutes.
3. Call on students to share with the whole class; give everyone the opportunity to complete notes in Task 1.
4. Discuss the context of this work and this writer's background experiences that contrast with our experiences.
5. Review *memoir* and *autobiography*; clarify that this work is a memoir.
6. Distribute and introduce the book; preview Task 2 of the reader's journal with the class.
7. Begin reading the Prologue and Chapter One with the class. Have students mark their places when you reach the end of the first chapter or have 5 minutes remaining of class time.
8. Together, identify main ideas so far; help students separate main ideas from supporting ideas. Model writing clear, concise details, including specific names. Students should finish Chapter One and Entry 1 before the next class.*

***Note:** Adjust timeline based on level of average readers in the class and whether you are on a daily schedule or block.

Days 2 through ____*:

1. Have students share entries, leading into class discussion. Online/virtual students may be partnered with another online student via your school's online discussion platform option (Groups or Discussion in Canvas, Meet in Google Classroom, etc.)
2. Have students add response in Discussion 1.
3. Continue daily with journal sharing and discussion until finished with book

***Notes:**

- Actual number of days depends on the average reading level of your class and your schedule: for grades 6 through 8 or struggling readers, you may want to read a chapter per day; for grades 9 through 12, you may want to read multiple chapters, especially if you are on a block schedule.
- I check journals half-way through the unit and at the end of the unit to encourage students to stay current on entries. Journals are graded on the quality and depth of responses to the literature; the quality of the graphic—thoughtful, appropriate, and aesthetics; and the additional notes from class discussion. For struggling readers, I give sections of the journal at a time, not the whole journal at once.
- I also give quizzes on the reading, usually every two or three chapters.



Follow-up and Extensions:

(See additional lessons.)

Socratic Seminar

Mini-research project (cross-curricular)

T.E.D. style talk (cross-curricular)

Rationale:

Students need to practice processing their own responses to informational and literary works in addition to their need to practice reading for specific information and paying attention to details and writing as a craft. Also, graphic organizers are user friendly for both students in developing skills and teachers in easily assessing skills.

Contact information: gromero@morgansd.org



Your name:

Reader's Journal: William Kamkwamba—*The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*

First journal check: _____ (date)

Final journal check: _____ (date)

Each class day, I must read _____ chapter(s)

Task 1: Background Quick Search

Assign a member of your group to *Search* each topic below (Google, Yahoo, etc.) and to *Share* the information with the group. Make sure that you have specific details for each topic by the end of this activity.

<p>Who is William Kamkwamba? Include essential details about his background/life. Also, show your group a photo of Kamkwamba.</p>	<p>What's up with Malawi? Where is it? What are some essential historical and cultural details—versus our country. Show your group Malawi on a world map.</p>
<p>What is a drought? How does a desert differ from a drought? What makes a drought a natural disaster? How do droughts affect people—minor and major impacts? Show your group a relevant photo.</p>	<p>What are 3 different types of windmills? What key components do all 3 share? What is the purpose of each? Show your group a photo of each type.</p>



Task 2: Journal Entries.

First, explain the difference between the following genres:

autobiography

memoir

Which genre is the book we are about to read, and why does that matter?

Assignment: Complete the Entry for each chapter/section; be ready to share your responses. Remember to be precise (names, descriptions, etc.) and concise (direct, active voice, not wordy). We will do the Discussion together in class.

Entry 1: Prologue and Chapter One, “When Magic Ruled the World”

<p>Your thoughts: What was interesting, compelling, or unique, and why?</p>	<p>Add a graphic: photo, image, key words, etc. Be prepared to explain/defend your choice.</p>
<p>Main ideas/events/details:</p>	<p>Discussion: Add notes/thoughts/your response to class discussion about this section.</p>

What does the title of Chapter One, “When Magic Ruled the World,” suggest about Kamkwamba’s perception of his childhood? And, how does it “set up” the rest of the memoir?



Entry 2: Chapters 2 & 3

Your thoughts:	Add a graphic:
Main ideas/events/details:	Discussion:

Entry 3: Chapters 4 & 5

Your thoughts:	Add a graphic:
Main ideas/events/details:	Discussion:



Entry 4: Chapters 6 & 7

Your thoughts:	Add a graphic:
Main ideas/events/details:	Discussion:

Entry 5: Chapters 8 & 9

Your thoughts:	Add a graphic:
Main ideas/events/details:	Discussion:

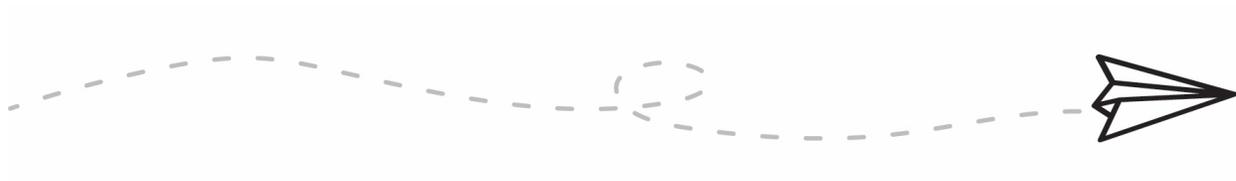


Entry 6: Chapters 10 & 11

Your thoughts:	Add a graphic:
Main ideas/events/details:	Discussion:

Entry 7: Chapters 12 & 13

Your thoughts:	Add a graphic:
Main ideas/events/details:	Discussion:



Entry 8: Chapters 14 and 15 and Epilogue

Your thoughts:	Add a graphic:
Main ideas/events/details:	Discussion:

Your thoughts/response to the book as a whole.

Key details you think everyone should notice.