

Journeys in Film (Lesson 1)

This lesson focuses on the award-winning book and film *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*. This is based on a true story about a 13-year-old boy who engineers a windmill to generate electricity to save his village from famine. It is an incredibly inspiring and eye-opening book and film which will offer students a window into the life of children living in Malawi.

This lesson can be approached in two ways. Parents can opt to rent the film for their students on Netflix or have their students read the YA novel. This piece would be completed alongside the activities below. There is a pre-viewing/reading activity, a during viewing/reading activity, and a post-viewing/reading activity. There is also the option of the students viewing the film or reading the book, and then either having a discussion about the story or writing a reflection about how the story made them feel. This can be as simple or complex based on your student's needs.

Link to the film available on Netflix:

Note: [Click here for a review for the film.](#)

- [The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind](#) Film

Link to the YA novel:

Note: there is a copy of this book at the Nevada County Library that your student could check out.

- [The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind](#) Book

PRE-VIEWING/READING

- What do you know about Malawi? Find it on the map, then research its history. What tribes and languages existed before colonization? Who first came to colonize the country? What language, customs, religion, did they bring with them? Where did it get its name? When did it get its independence? What was involved in becoming independent? Find a picture of the country that invites viewers to want to know more.

DURING VIEWING/READING

- There are many words throughout the text in Chichewa, a native language of Malawi. Keep a journal or list of important words and phrases. Draw pictures or symbols to help you remember them. How does your ability to understand the text increase as you become familiar with common words and phrases from William's language?

POST-VIEWING/READING

- They say, "Necessity is the mother of invention." Several times throughout the film/book, William proves that where there is a problem, he can find a way to solve it; where there is a need, he can find a way to meet it. What is a problem in your community that applied science, or invention might be able to solve? Consider all it took William to come up with a creative solution to his complex problem

involving health and sanitation, the environment, economics, and education. Then, think about your problem. What are the causes? What are possible solutions? Consider one of the following options to take action toward solving the problem you've identified:

A) Write a letter to a government official who has the power to make or change laws affecting the issue you've identified.

B) Research other places in the world, past or present, that have struggled with your same issue.

How did they solve it? Could you do the same? Who could you look to for inspiration or guidance?

C) Reflect on ways your community could improve one area addressed in this film/book: healthcare, environment/agriculture, economics, or education. What could you invent that might make life better for yourself and those around you, not just now, but for many years to come?