

William's Windmill

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The drought gripped William Kamkwamba's village in an unrelenting chokehold. The fields, once green and alive, lay cracked and barren under the scorching sun. The air was heavy with the smell of dust and despair, and the villagers shuffled around with hollow eyes, their bodies frail from hunger. But in the midst of this hopelessness, William’s hands were never still. In a small corner of his family’s yard, he worked with fierce determination, surrounded by heaps of discarded bicycle parts, rusted nails, and wooden planks. His fingers were blistered from hours of twisting wires and hammering bolts, but his mind buzzed with possibilities. Pages torn from old physics books fluttered in the breeze, scrawled with diagrams and notes. “William,” the villagers scoffed as they passed. “What are you doing with that heap of junk? You’re wasting time.” But William said nothing. He tightened a screw, his heart pounding with the constant rhythm of belief. When the day finally came to raise the windmill, the entire village gathered, their skepticism as sharp as the sun overhead. William’s father stood silent, his arms crossed, but his face betrayed a flicker of something—pride, perhaps, or hope he dared not show. William wiped sweat from his brow, his breath catching as the blades caught the wind. The creaking sound of the turbine turning filled the air. Suddenly, the dim bulb he held flickered to life, casting a faint glow that cut through

the crowd's murmurs. Gasps rose as if the light had reached not just their eyes, but their hearts. Days later, water gushed from the newly connected pump, streaming into the dry soil. Children squealed with delight, splashing in the cool water. The villagers, who had once doubted, now crowded around William, their voices ringing with gratitude.

The windmill stood tall against the horizon, a beacon of hope and resilience. For William, it wasn't just about light or water—it was proof that even the smallest spark of determination could illuminate the darkest of times.

Reading Summary

- William Kamkwamba lived in a village that was suffering from a terrible drought.
- William used old bicycle parts and other junk to build a windmill to bring water to his village.
- The windmill worked and brought hope and water to the people in William's village.

Vocabulary

Term	Definition	Example Sentence
unrelenting (adjective)	Never giving up or stopping; continuing without pause.	The heat was unrelenting, making it hard to stay outside for long.
barren (adjective)	Empty and lifeless; not able to produce plants or crops.	The desert is a barren landscape with very little water or vegetation.
despair (noun)	A feeling of hopelessness and sadness; a loss of hope.	The team felt despair after losing the championship game.
skepticism (noun)	Doubt or disbelief; a tendency to question or not believe something.	The scientist approached the new theory with skepticism, wanting to see more evidence.
resilience (noun)	The ability to recover quickly from difficulties; strength in the face of challenges.	The tree showed great resilience, growing back strong after the storm.

Multiple Choice Questions

Question #1	Question #2	Question #3
What did William use to build his windmill?	How did the villagers feel about William's windmill at first?	What did the windmill bring to the village besides light?
A. He used old bicycle parts, rusty nails, and wooden planks. B. He used old car parts, metal scraps, and bricks. C. He used plastic bottles, old tires, and rope. D. He used sticks, leaves, and mud. (A)	A. They were excited and helpful. B. They were doubtful and skeptical. C. They were angry and jealous. D. They were indifferent and unconcerned. (B)	A. It brought food and money. B. It brought peace and harmony. C. It brought laughter and joy. D. It brought water and hope. (D)

Short Answer Questions

Question #4	What was the main problem facing William's village?
They were facing a drought, which caused a water shortage.	
Question #5	What did William do to help his village?
He tried to make a windmill (to generate electricity and water) using spare or unwanted parts that he found.	
Question #6	How did the villagers react to William's windmill after it started working?
The villagers crowded around William and their voices ringing with gratitude.	

Inferential Questions

Question #7	In paragraph 1, the writer describes how the drought had badly affected William's village. Give 3 details and explain how this is so.

The village field 'lay cracked and barren under the scorching sun', which shows that the drought had dried up the land, and no plants could grow in the field. 'The air was heavy with the smell of dust and despair', indicates that the drought had made the air very dirty and everyone was saddened with the lack of water. and 'the villagers shuffled around with hollow eyes, their bodies frail from hunger', which indicates how thirsty and malnourished they were as there was nothing to grow to eat.

Question #8	In Paragraph 1, why did William's mind 'buzzed with possibilities'?

This is because William had many ideas on how he could use the different parts to create a machine that would support his village.

Question #9	In Paragraph 1, William was described to have 'his heart pounding with the constant rhythm of belief.' How was William feeling from this description?

He was feeling hopeful / determined.

Language Use Questions

Question #10	In Paragraph 2, 'When the day finally came to raise the windmill, the entire village gathered, their skepticism as sharp as the sun overhead.' What is their skepticism compared to and why is it effective?

The skepticism was compared to the sun, as everyone was not hiding their lack of belief in William's ability to make the windmill, just as the sun was so plainly seen in the sky.

Open Ended Questions

Question #11	The villagers doubted William at first. Have you ever doubted yourself or someone else? What happened? How did you feel?

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