



The CLASS (Collaborate, Learn and Student Success) Project

presents

The Fall 2019 Common Read Essay Contest

Deadline: Wednesday, November 27th 2019 by 5:00pm

The following prompt invites you to reflect on your reading and discussion of Kamkwamba and Mealer's *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* and to produce an essay based on one of the topics below. Your essay should develop your ideas through the analysis of Kamkwamba's memoir, the discussion of ideas developed in the book, and/or the elaboration of a personal experience of your own which you feel relates to *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* in a meaningful way. You should feel free to expand your ideas and analysis of the text in whatever way you think is appropriate.

Prize Money

1st Prize:

Full-Time Student \$150.00

Part-Time Student \$150.00

Honorary Mentions

10 Full-Time Students

10 Part-Time Students

\$25.00 Each

The following topics are offered to help you focus your essay:

- 1) Throughout the book, images described in books, in day dreams, and in real life experience, act as sparks to innovative thinking. Do you feel that this pattern reveals something true about the relationship between images, learning, and creating? How do you feel your best ideas come to you? Does imagining the future play a large part in reaching for your goals?
- 2) Consider the relationships suggested by the book with the practice of dreaming, the tireless performance of hard work, and meeting the necessities of survival and progress. Explain how hard work and having a vision have helped you move closer to your goals.
- 3) The book frequently employs the theme of gifts and gift giving—gifts we give to ourselves, gifts we give to our families or communities, gifts we give to the world. Are there differences in the respective values of these gifts? What “gifts” do you feel those around you have given you and how have they helped you succeed in life?
- 4) Kamkwamba's adventures draw distinctions between the technologically advanced West—full of distractions, excess, and waste—with the simpler world he calls home—where progress must be innovated out of the rusted debris of decayed, broken things. How would you link this juxtaposition to one of the book's central themes: the belief that necessity requires “the people” to solve their own problems and to stop waiting for governments to help them? Have you been part of or witnessed people solve problems by different means than others would think suitable?
- 5) The protagonist of *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* transforms his reputation as “crazy” into a hero who receives beneficial opportunities and is honored by his community and country. When we change our world for the better, do we also change ourselves? What have you done that made you stand out from the crowd and how did others see you differently after your experience? Explain.

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Essay Contest Guidelines

Essay Contest Guidelines:

- **Contest Link:** [Click here for contest link.](#) (You may need to create a google account if you do not have one in order to upload your essay.)
- **Submission:** Essays must be submitted using the online form only. Students must complete the online form and upload their essay through the form as well. Please do not email or mail entries. Each participant can submit *one* entry for consideration (per year).
- **Deadline:** The Fall 2019 Common Read Essay Contest is November 27, 2019. Entries received after 5:00pm EST on that day will not be considered.
- **Length:** Essays should be between 600 and 1200 words. This is a *maximum* word count; if your response to the prompt can be *clearly* and *powerfully* communicated in fewer than 1200 words, that is great.
- **Eligibility:** The contest is open to all current part-time and full-time students registered at Nassau Community College.
- **Language:** Essays should be written in English and follow acceptable conventions of print.
- **Original Work:** An instructor/tutor can provide pre-writing activities and appropriate review, editing, and support, but the ideas, content, structure and style of the actual essay **MUST** come from the student alone.
- **Uploading Documents for Submission:** To help us organize and manage the significant number of files that are submitted, please use the following guidelines when saving your document prior to submission. **Essays that are not saved with this naming format will not be considered for the contest.**
 - Please use your N# followed by your last name as your file name.
- **Winners:** A panel of reviewers will judge entries and will award two Grand Prize Winners - one full-time student and one part-time student and twenty Honorable Mentions – ten part-time students and ten full-time students. Winner and a limited number of Honorable Mentions will be invited to read their essays at the CLASS Project Showcase to be held in April 2020.
- **Prizes:** Grand Prize Winners will each receive \$150.00. Honorable Mention Winners will each receive \$25.00.
- **Evaluation Criteria:** Each submission is read by at least two reviewers. Essays will be evaluated using the following criteria:
 - **Addresses Prompt** - The essay effectively takes into account, either literally or metaphorically, the entirety of one of the shared prompts. If an essay does not make an earnest attempt to address a prompt, it will not be considered for review.
 - **Focus** - The thesis/main message is clear and supported throughout. The essay does not stray from the main message.
 - **Organization & Structure** - The essay is organized and well-structured. Author demonstrates command of grammar, spelling and mechanics.

- ***Voice/Originality*** - The essay uses a highly engaging and personal style. The author finds fresh or interesting ways to convey ideas. The author approaches the topic from a unique perspective.
- ***Evidence of Personal Reflection*** - The essay demonstrates that the author has genuinely explored the topic/question and how it relates to his or her own life. The essay reflects a depth in reflection.

Tips & Suggestions for Writing Your Essay:

1. Make the essay personal. Make a personal statement or tell a story that provides insight into your own experiences and views. Use the pronoun “I”.
2. The introductory paragraph should feature the essay’s main idea (THESIS) and mention pertinent author(s) and text(s). The essay’s main idea should then be developed in the succeeding body paragraphs through the analysis of appropriate examples, quotations, or detailed narrative. **JUST BE SURE** to explain clearly and thoroughly **HOW** your analysis/discussion develops an understanding of the text and its ideas. Your focus should be clear, but your treatment of the material is only limited by your own intelligence and ingenuity. Your concluding paragraph should summarize your key points and remind your reader about what you taught us about *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*.
3. Visit the NCC Library’s Lib Guide for *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* for inspiration. ([Link to Lib Guide](#))