



“The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind” by William Kamkwamba & Bryan Mealer

Students will be inspired to consider how pressing money concerns (scarcity) can motivate someone to make choices that bring creative solutions. The book is based on a true story. This exercise provides the opportunity for:

1. Students to identify the concepts of wants versus needs and scarcity;
2. See how our choices have both costs and benefits; and
3. Examine a process to help them make good choices with their money.

Time Limit: 35-40 minutes

Supplies Needed:

- *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer
- Wants vs. Needs cards, master on page 32 of this guide
- White board and markers or construction paper windmills as discussed in activity
- Copies of student worksheet



Portions of this lesson were taken from an educational plan written by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, www.stlouisfed.org/education_resources.

Money Choices Have Costs and Benefits

(1) Today we’ll be reading a true story about William Kamkwamba who lived in Malawi, located in Africa. William was faced with making some choices because of the hard times his family was facing. Making choices is all about weighing the costs and benefits of each decision. A COST means what we must give up to get something. A BENEFIT means something that helps us or that we like. William faced decisions about giving up something to gain something else. We make those kinds of decisions when we spend or save our money. How much money should we give up or spend to buy something? We must choose whether it is better to spend our money now or save it to use for something later.

One thing that can help us with making money choices is to know what our wants and our needs are. Before I read our story, I’d like to test you to see if you can identify a “want” or a “need.”

Take out the stack of wants versus needs cards. Hold up the first one on the stack and show it to students. Ask students to raise their hand if they think the item on the card is a want or a need. With each vote from the students, place the card in either the want or the need box. Don’t discuss their choices, just put each card in the appropriate box. (Wants - toy, dessert, pet; Needs - shoes, water, food)

One test we can do to be sure we’ve correctly identified a want or a need is to think about something called SCARCITY. SCARCITY means there’s not enough of something. We can judge whether something is a want or a need by asking ourselves, “If this thing were NOT available, could I still live—still be healthy?”

Grab the cards in the “need” box. For each card ask the students the SCARCITY question. If a card doesn’t



belong in the need box, place it in the want box. Repeat this process with the “want” box.

We can see that a WANT is something a person would enjoy, but that person could live without it. And a NEED is something a person must have to live.

(2) As I read the story about William, think about what his wants and needs are.

Read the story.

(3) *You can do the windmill illustrations either by drawing it on a white board as you speak or by making construction paper windmills of “William’s Needs” and “Money Choices” ahead of time. (See illustrations on pages 28-29.) As students answer your questions below, add the corresponding part of the windmill.*

- What were some of the things that William needed? (food, water, electricity, school fees)
- What one thing might have helped William get the things that he needed? (money)
- William choose to explore a new idea by going to the local library, learning things, and then building a windmill. Instead of doing that, what could William have chosen to do? (sulk, try to get work, just play with friends)

(4) Sometimes, we face situations in our lives where we have choices to make—times in which having or spending money plays a part. Here are some steps we can follow to help us when we have such choices to make.

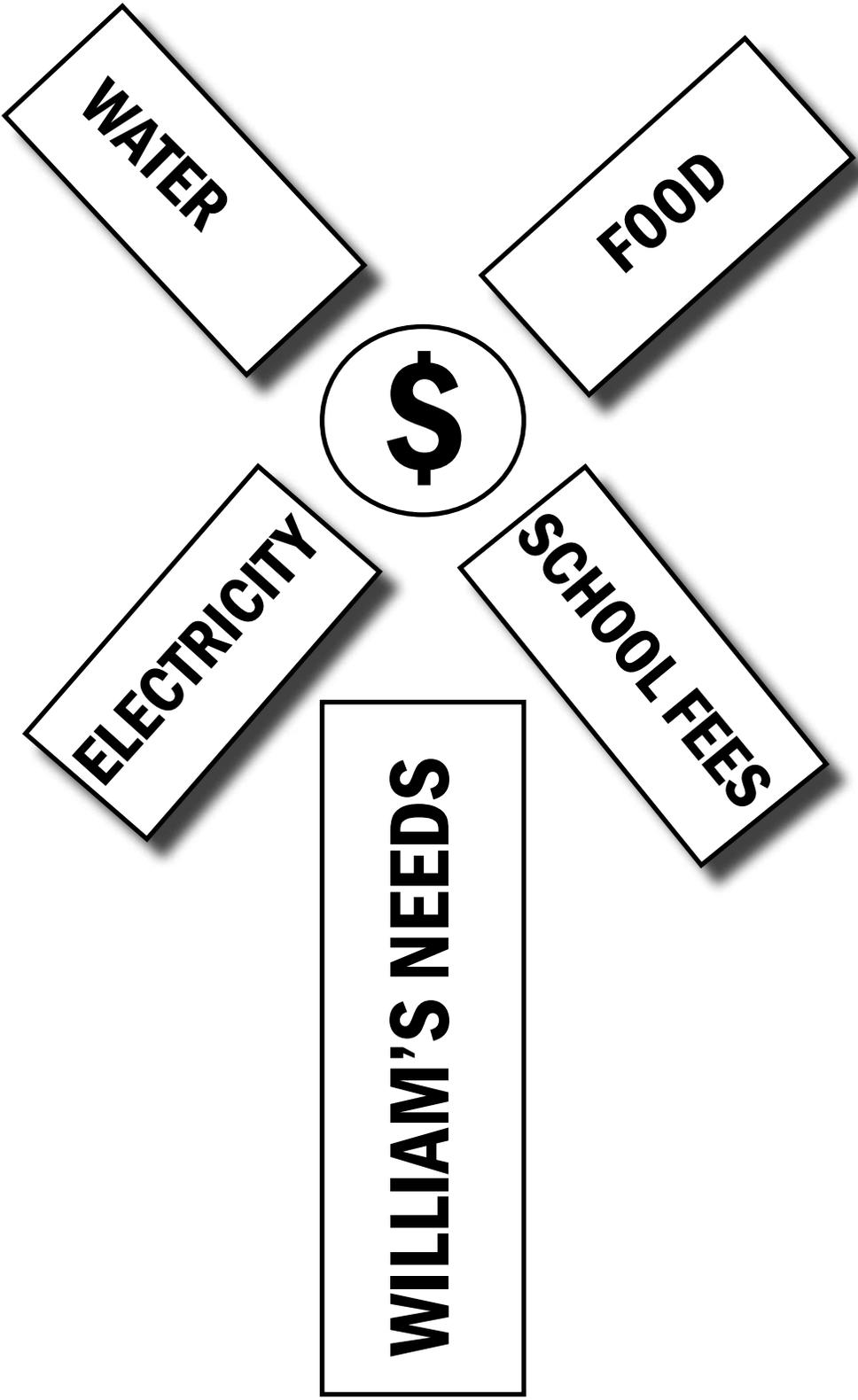
As you go through each step, add the corresponding part of the windmill.

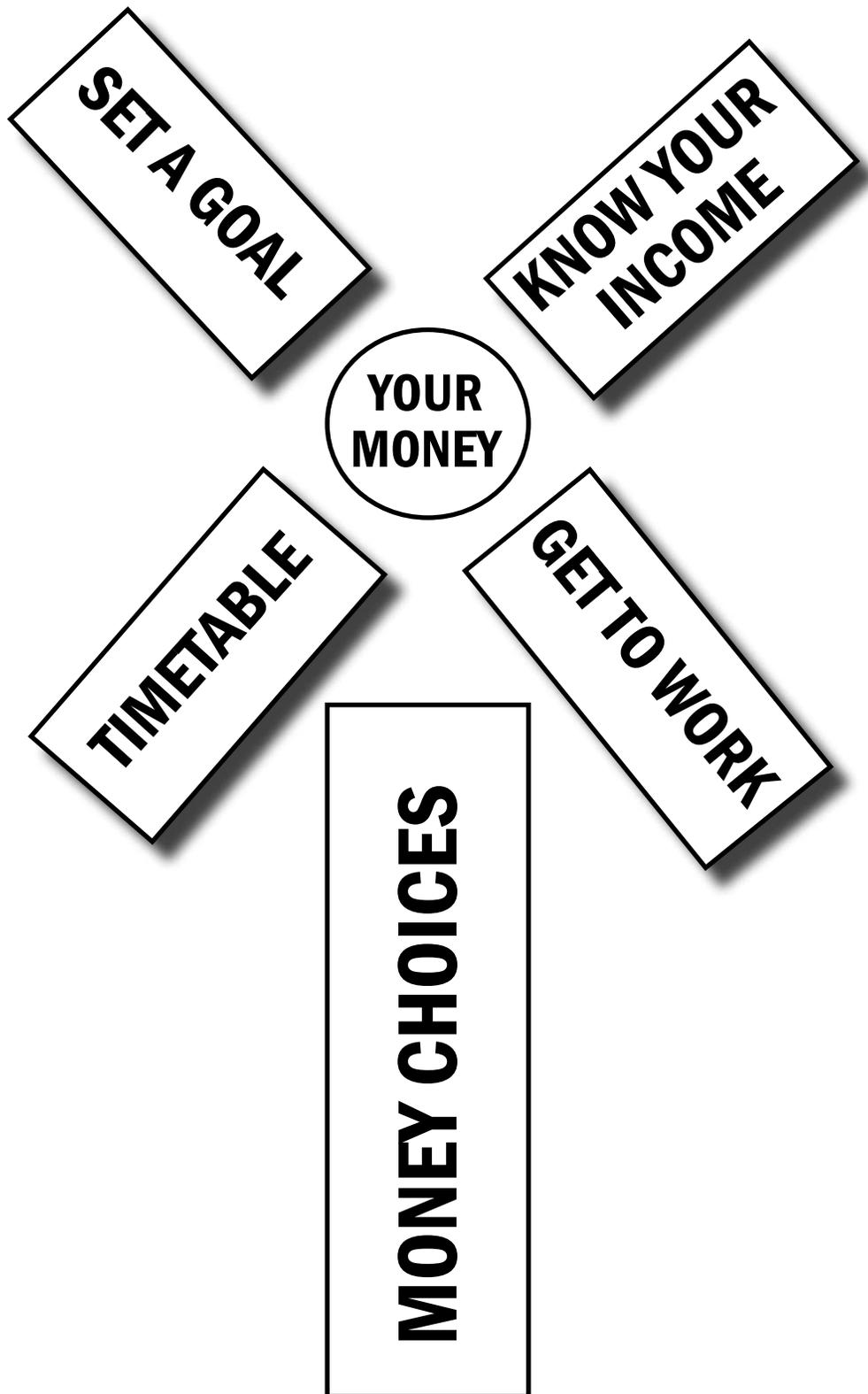
- Set a Goal: What is it you want? How much money do you need?
- Know Your Income: That means knowing how much money you have now and how much more money you will need.
- Get to Work: Take steps to earn the money you need.
- Timetable: Set times to check on your progress. How much have you earned? How much more money do you need? Will you choose to spend some of that money on something else? Set a time to check how you are doing. This will allow you to make better decisions about your money.

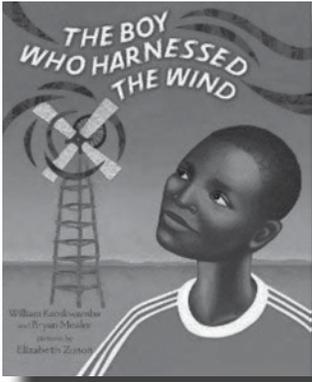
(5) *Give each student a windmill worksheet. For younger students, make a copy of the coloring sheet on page 31. Older students can fill out their worksheet at home.*

Like William, you can take steps to meet our wants and needs. Take this worksheet home and ask your parents or an adult to help you put in your own money choices.

NEXT: *Older students may enjoy reading William’s true story on the last two pages of the book.*







Money Choices Worksheet

When we make choices on whether to save or spend our money, we can follow four money choice steps to help us make good decisions. Practice making these choices by picking a goal and writing down the choices you will make to reach that goal.

The worksheet features a central circle containing the text 'MY MONEY CHOICES'. Surrounding this circle are four rectangular boxes, each containing a number in parentheses: (1), (2), (3), and (4). Each box has a horizontal line for writing. Below these four boxes is a larger rectangular box containing the text 'I ACHIEVED MY MONEY GOAL!'.

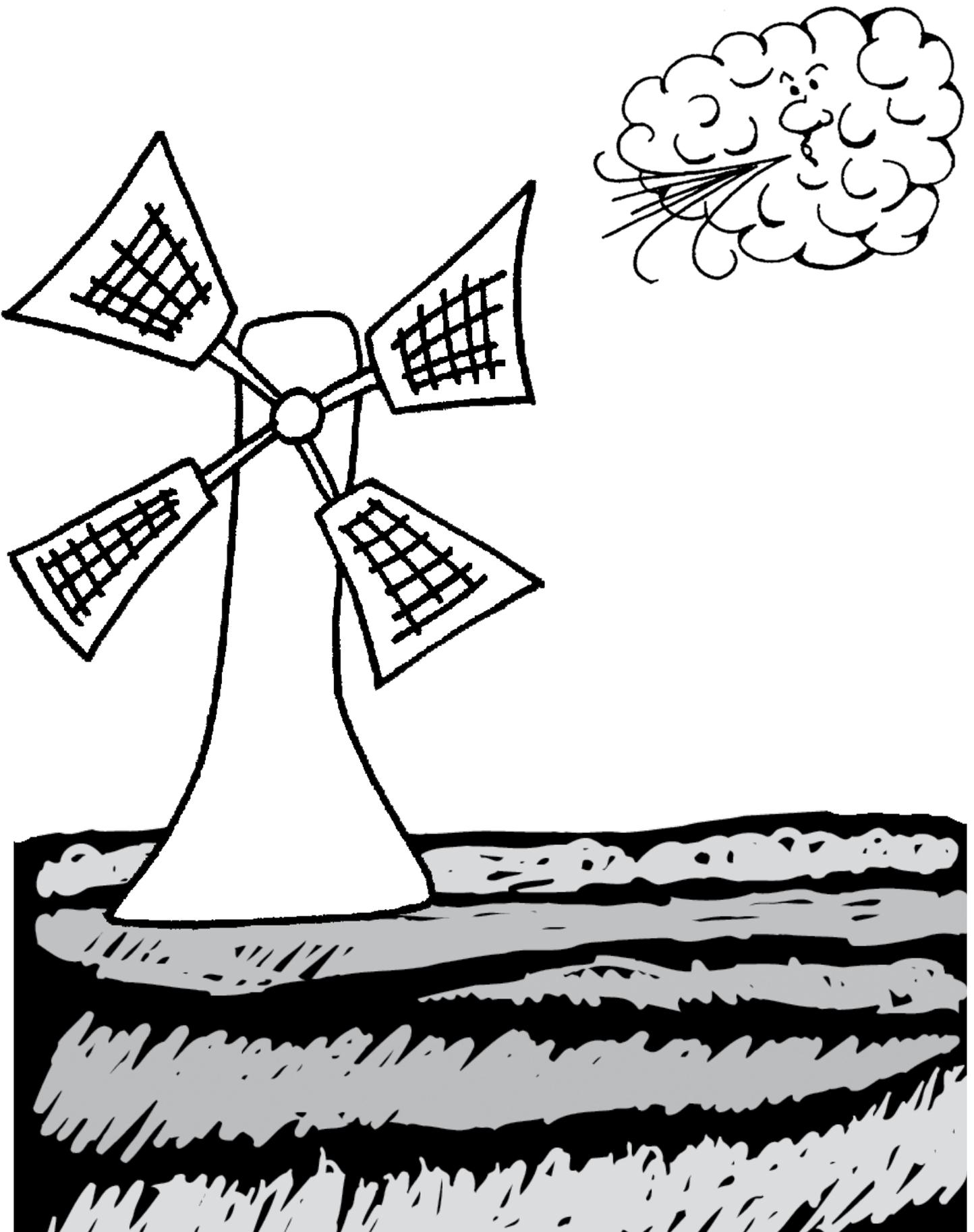
MONEY CHOICE STEPS:

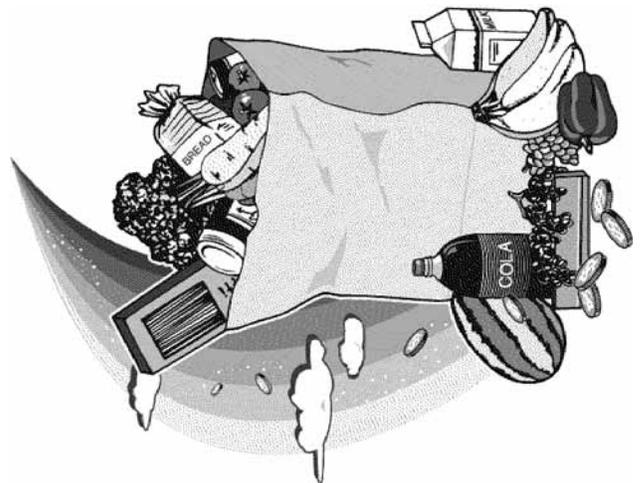
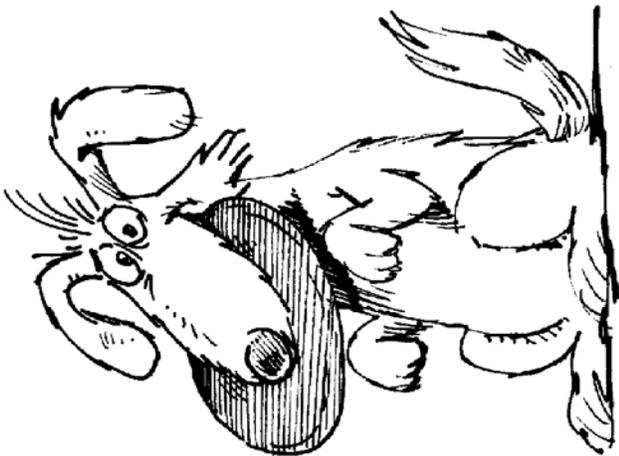
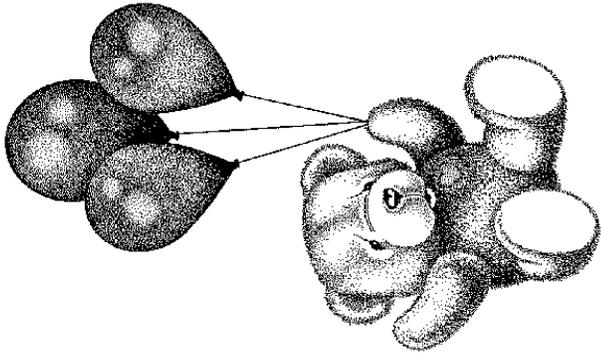
(1) Set a Goal: Write down the item or activity that is your goal. How much money will you need? Write down in line 1 what you will be working to buy.

(2) Know Your Income: That means, knowing how much money you have *now* and how much *more* money you will need. Write down the amount you need for your goal in line 2.

(3) Get to Work: What steps will you take to earn the money you need? Write down a word or two in line 3 that show what action steps you will take.

(4) Timetable: How often will you check on your progress? When you check, consider if you need to change your goal. Consider how long it will take you to reach your goal. Write down a specific date or length of time needed to reach your goal in line 4.







Just an IDEA!

William Kamkwamba is now 25 years old. He is studying at Dartmouth College. Students can learn more about William's work and the first windmill he built at the links below. The YouTube video shows William's home in Malawi and the first windmill he built.

Moving Windmills: The William Kamkwamba story
www.youtube.com/watch?v=arD374MFk4w

Video: A Conversation with William Kamkwamba '14
<http://now.dartmouth.edu/2012/01/video-a-conversation-with-william-kamkwamba-14/>

Moving Windmills Project
www.movingwindmills.org

TED - William Kamkwamba: Inventor
www.ted.com/speakers/william_kamkwamba.html