

The High and the Flighty



About the Show

The girls hear a mysterious radio transmission—and Freddi recognizes that it's the voice of her heroine, aviation pioneer Amelia Earhart, broadcasting an urgent message on her last, ill-fated flight. The girls warp back to 1937 and try to solve the mystery of Amelia's disappearance on her attempted around-the-world flight.

Introduction

Amelia Earhart's life and career, as well as the world of early aviation, offers many opportunities for interdisciplinary learning. In addition to science, math, and geography, students can explore American history, inventions, women's history, and media studies.

Historical Background

Amelia Earhart broke new ground for women pilots, inspired women to try professions traditionally reserved for men, and forged a friendship with Eleanor Roosevelt (who wanted to take flying lessons from Amelia). Amelia consistently fought for increased opportunities for women.

Born in Atchison, Kansas, in 1897, Amelia's parents and grandparents supported her participation in activities usually reserved for boys, such as hunting and climbing trees. As a young woman, Amelia worked as a nurse's aide in a Canadian military hospital, caring for soldiers wounded in World War I. She became interested in flying after listening to the stories of recovering pilots. She took her first flying lesson in 1921 and earned her pilot's license a year later, when she was 23. When she was 25, her mother helped her buy her first airplane. It was in this plane that she set a woman's record by flying to an altitude of 14,000 feet.

Despite Amelia's accomplishments, opportunities for female pilots remained extremely limited. She began a career as a social worker

Curriculum Connections

- Amelia Earhart
- aviation
- biography
- engineering
- geography
- women's history

Subject Areas

- language arts
- math
- science
- social studies
- technology



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Historical Background *continued*

and continued to fly planes on the weekends. In 1928, Amelia was asked to accompany two male pilots on a transatlantic flight. The 20-hour, 40-minute flight made Amelia famous.

By 1930, Amelia had set three women's world speed records in aviation and was the first woman to make a solo round trip across the United States. In 1931, she married publisher George Putnam in a union she described as a "partnership" with "dual control."

In 1932, Amelia achieved her goal of becoming the first woman to pilot an airplane across the Atlantic Ocean and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. Three years later, Amelia became the first woman to fly solo across the Pacific Ocean. She then set another record, a nonstop flight from Mexico City to New Jersey.

As Amelia approached her 40th birthday, she decided to make her last and most challenging long-distance flight as the first woman pilot to fly around the world. On March 17, 1937, she and navigator Fred Noonan took off from Oakland, California. On July 2, Amelia and Fred Noonan began the most dangerous part of their trip: flying 2,556 miles over the Pacific Ocean, headed for tiny Howland Island. Despite the U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Itasca* below to guide her, Earhart's plane lost radio communication and disappeared. The U.S. Navy launched an extensive air and sea search. However, after searching 25,000 square miles of ocean, the rescue mission was called off. Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan were never seen again.

The tragedy made newspaper headlines and was the topic of endless speculation and rumors (Was Amelia a spy? Is she still alive somewhere?). Amelia's pioneering spirit and courage, as well as the mystery of her disappearance, continues to fascinate and inspire people today.

Want students to get even more excited about history?



Check out the Amelia Earhart adventure for kids at

www.timewarp trio.com/adventures/earhart/

Put It Back, Jack! and other interactive games to play.

Plentifax 487—the ultimate time traveler's guide—to find out more about Amelia Earhart!

Cool Books that kids will love.

Activity 1



You Don't Say!

Students learn about women aviators and act out a talk show-style interview with one of them.

Instructions

1. Organize the students into pairs and assign each pair a woman aviator to research from the following list: Rosella Bjornson, Jackie Cochran, Bessie Coleman, Amelia Earhart, Cornelia Fort, Nancy Harkness Love, Amy Johnson, Ruth Law, Harriet Quimby, and Blanche Stuart. Use the “You Don't Say!” handout to ensure that students find out the same type of information about each pilot.
2. Ask each pair to write a summary of each aviator's life and accomplishments.
3. Have students share with the class what they have discovered. What surprised them most about their research?
4. Ask for volunteers to role-play the aviator they profiled. Explain that the class will hold a pretend talk show. Discuss what the format of a talk show usually is and decide which one the class should use (e.g., roundtable discussion, multiple guests, one or more hosts, etc.). Give students time to create a list of questions for their “guests” based on the information they found for the handout or other interesting facts from their research.
5. Have students take turns volunteering as the host(s) or play the host yourself. Have the host(s) ask questions of the women aviator guests based on the information from the completed handouts. Discuss the results afterward. What did students learn?

Objectives

- to explore stereotypes about women
- to expand students' knowledge of the history of aviation

Materials

- “You Don't Say!” handout

Curriculum Standards

• NCSS

Time, Continuity, & Change: Students demonstrate an understanding that people in different times and places view the world differently.

Individual Development & Identity: Students relate such factors as physical endowment and capabilities, learning, motivation, personality, perception, and behavior to individual development.

• NCTE/IRA

Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions of human experience.

You Don't Say!

Women Aviators

Name of Pilot _____

1 Where did she grow up and what was her childhood like?

2 What first made her interested in flying?

3 What obstacles did she have to overcome in order to become a pilot?

4 What were her most important accomplishments?

5 Name three surprising things you found out about your pilot.

6 What was happening in the United States and the world during her lifetime?

Activity 2



Flight Plan

In “The High and the Flighty,” the girls come face to face with Amelia Earhart before she begins the last leg of her round the world trip. Students will enjoy learning about all of Amelia Earhart’s flights as they plot them on a map.

Instructions

1. Display a world map on a bulletin board and review it with the class.
2. Organize students into small groups. Have each group research one of Amelia Earhart’s famous flights (e.g., her first flight across the Atlantic, the “Powder Puff Derby,” her final flight).
3. Give each group a different color yarn and a supply of pushpins.
4. Have each group write a brief summary of the flight. Then have them work together to map the flight path with yarn and pushpins.
5. Have each group describe the flight, indicate its path, and explain why it was significant.



Objectives

- to learn world geography
- to trace Amelia Earhart’s flights

Materials

- large paper map of the world
- different colors of yarn
- pushpins

Curriculum Standards

- **NCSS**
People, Places, & Environments: Create, interpret, use, and distinguish various representations of the earth, such as maps, globes, and photographs.
- **NCTE/IRA**
Students use a variety of technological and informational resources to gather, evaluate, and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

Recommended Books

For Teachers

20 Hours, 40 Min: Our Flight in the Friendship by Amelia Earhart. (National Geographic, 2003)

This first-person narrative of Amelia Earhart's first famous flight brings the reader along for the ride.

Amelia Earhart: A Biography by Doris L. Rich. (Smithsonian Books, 1996)
This book provides detailed information about Earhart in the context of aviation history.

Amelia Earhart's Daughters: The Wild and Glorious Story of American Women Aviators from World War II to the Dawn of the Space Age

by Leslie Haynsworth, David Toomey, et al. (William Morrow, 1998)
Anecdotes and other details are part of this compilation of women's contributions to aviation and space flight.

Queen Bess: Daredevil Aviator by Doris L. Rich. (Smithsonian Books, 1993)
This story of Bessie Coleman, the first African American woman aviator, describes her determination and success, despite the odds against her.

The Sound of Wings: The Life of Amelia Earhart by Mary Lovell. (St. Martins, 1991)
This book describes not only Earhart's life and career, but her relationships with her husband, friends, and family.

Still Missing: Amelia Earhart and the Search for Modern Feminism by Susan Ware. (Norton, 1994)
This book examines Earhart's many different ventures and her impact as a role model and an activist.

For Students

Fiction

Amelia and Eleanor Go For A Ride: Based on a True Story by Pam Munoz Ryan. (Scholastic, 2000)
Amelia Earhart and Eleanor Roosevelt sneak out of a White House dinner to take a night flight over Washington, D.C.

Brave Harriet by Marissa Moss. (Harcourt, 2001)
Twenty-five years before Amelia Earhart's last flight, Englishwoman Harriet Quimby defies conventional beliefs and becomes the first woman to fly solo across the English Channel. For younger readers.

Nonfiction

Airborne: A Photobiography of Wilbur and Orville Wright by Mary Collins. (National Geographic, 2004)
Powerful photos document the lives of the brothers who initiated human flight.

Amelia Earhart by Lucia Raatma. (World Almanac Library, 2001)
From her childhood in Kansas to her disappearance over the Pacific Ocean, Amelia Earhart's life was filled with adventure.

Amelia Earhart: Free in the Skies by Robert Burleigh. (Harcourt, 2003)
This biography covers Earhart's career, from early on to her record-setting solo flight across the Atlantic Ocean.

Bessie Coleman: First Black Woman Pilot by Connie Plantz. (Enslow, 2001)
Bessie Coleman had to go to Europe for her pilot's license, but she returned to the United States to become the first African American woman pilot.

Fly High! The Story of Bessie Coleman by Louise Borden and Mary Kay Kroeger. (Aladdin, 2004)

This evocative picture book introduces Bessie Coleman, the first African American woman to earn a pilot's license.

Flying Machine by Andrew Nahum. (Dorling Kindersley, 1990)
Eyewitness series. The history of flight, beginning with the mythical Daedalus through Leonardo da Vinci's designs and ending with today's microlights, is described with drawings and photographs.

Katherine Stinson: The Flying Schoolgirl by Debra Winegarten. (Eaken Press, 2000)
Stinson was the first pilot to perform skywriting, the first woman to fly solo at night, and a tireless advocate of aviation.

Nobody Owns the Sky: The Story of "Brave Bessie" Coleman by Reeve Lindbergh. (Candlewick, 1996)
Reeve Lindbergh, daughter of a pioneer aviator, honors the young African American woman who pursued her dream to be a pilot.

Ruth Law Thrills a Nation by Don Brown. (Ticknor & Fields, 1993)
In 1916, Ruth Law attempted to fly from Chicago to New York in one day. She didn't achieve her goal, but she broke the record for nonstop flights in the United States. For younger readers.

Web Sites

Tomboy of the Air: Daredevil Pilot Blanche Stuart Scott by Julie Cummins. (HarperCollins, 2001)

The first woman to fly a plane in public, this is the inspiring story of another trailblazing, record-breaking woman pilot in the early 20th century.

Women with Wings by Jacqueline McLean. (The Oliver Press, Inc., 2001) Profiles series. This book highlights six women aviation pioneers and explores the role of women in aviation today. See also *Women of Adventure*, biographies of women who were groundbreakers in travel and exploration.

AMELIA EARHART BIRTHPLACE MUSEUM
www.ameliaearhartmuseum.org/

The Web site of Earhart's Kansas home, now a museum, includes information about significant women in aviation, photos of Amelia and her family, her biography, fun facts, and poetry.

AMERICAN EXPERIENCE: FLY GIRLS
www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/flygirls/

This site, to accompany the "Fly Girls" program, explores women who flew with the U.S. military during WWII, only to find themselves displaced when the war ended. Includes a kid's site and a teacher's guide.

AVIATION HISTORY ONLINE MUSEUM
www.aviation-history.com/

This online museum offers photographs, describes historical events, and links to other aviation sites.

DISCOVERY CHANNEL: FIRST IN FLIGHT
dsc.discovery.com/convergence/wright/wright.html

Explore the Wright Brothers' quarters, the 1903 flyer, and then take the controls for a re-creation of the first flight.

GEORGE PALMER PUTNAM COLLECTION OF AMELIA EARHART PAPERS

www.lib.purdue.edu/spcol/aearhart/
Housed at Purdue University, this site documents Amelia's personal life, career, and business activities.

THE FLIGHT OF AMELIA EARHART
teacher.scholastic.com/earhart

Women Who Changed History series. Students can write and submit a news story about Amelia Earhart, read an interview of pilot Sylvia Barter, and view a world history timeline. Also includes a teacher's guide.

OFFICIAL AMELIA EARHART WEB SITE
www.ameliaearhart.com/home.php

Offers photographs, quotes, facts, and recent news stories about Earhart.

WRIGHT BROTHERS' FLYING MACHINE
www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/wright/

Relive the engineering challenges that two bicycle makers overcame to become first in flight.

Please note:

Although these sites were verified at the time of publication, Web site addresses and content are frequently subject to change.