

FLIGHTS OF FACT AND FANCY

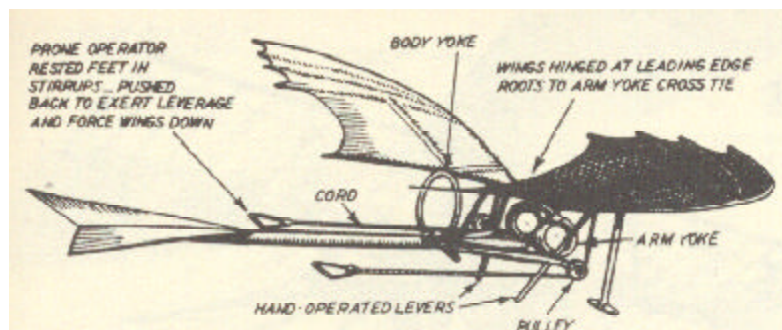
PURPOSE Students develop appreciation for poetry, review information about aviation history and look at flight from an impressionistic, romantic and historical standpoint.

TASK Students read poetry related to flight and compose their own poems (or younger students might draw a picture relating to a poem).

SUPPLIES Reference materials, poetry books, paper, pencils, art supplies.

- PROCEDURE**
1. Have each student find a poem that deals with some aspect of flight (e.g., impressions and feelings about flying, bird flight, kite-flying, airplane flight). Some examples by famous poets appear on the following pages.
 2. Have each student read the selections aloud to the class after practicing independently.
 3. Lead a discussion about the different styles of poetry and how some of the elements of these poetic styles are represented in the poems students have been reading (e.g., narrative, haiku, rhyme, meter, repetition).
 4. Have each student select a poetry form, then write a poem related to flight or flight history in that poetry form. Supply a few lines for inspiration, if appropriate.
 5. Have the students read their own poems aloud to the class.
 6. Have each student make a poster to illustrate his or her poem. The posters may be displayed on a bulletin board.

OPTIONAL Help the students compile a book of their own poetry on flight, design the front and back covers and then bind the book.



Da Vinci's Ornithopter

POEMS

Wilbur Wright and Orville Wright

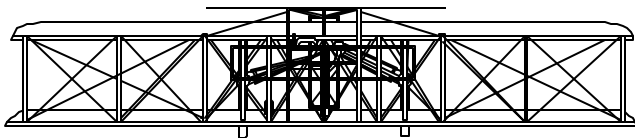
Said Orville Wright to Wilbur Wright,
"These birds are very trying.
I'm sick of hearing them cheep-cheep
About the fun of flying.
A bird has feathers, it is true.
That much I freely grant.
But must that stop us, W?"
Said Wilbur Wright, "It shan't."

And so they built a glider, first,
And then they built another.
—There never were two brothers more
Devoted to each other.
They ran a dusty little shop
For bicycle-repairing,
And bought each other soda-pop
And praised each other's daring.

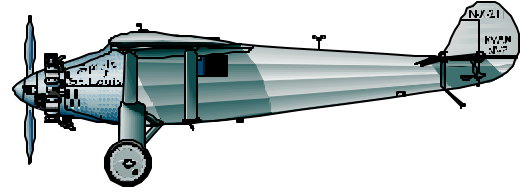
They glided here, they glided there,
They sometimes skinned their noses.
—For learning how to rule the air
Was not a bed of roses—
But each would murmur, afterward,
While patching up his bro.
"Are we discouraged, W?"
"Of course we are not, O!"

And finally, at Kitty Hawk
In Nineteen-Three (let's cheer it!),
The first real airplane really flew
With Orville there to steer it!
—And kingdoms may forget their kings
And dogs forget their bites,
But not till Man forgets his wings
Will men forget the Wrights.

Stephen Vincent Benet



Wright Flyer, 1903



Charles Lindbergh's Spirit of St. Louis, 1927

Lindbergh

He was just a young aviator, and his nerves they
were steady and true,
He took many chances and won them, so they
called him the "Flying Fool."
He said, to his friends, "I've a notion to pilot a
trail o'er the sea,
I'll fly like a bird o'er the ocean, adventure is
calling to me."
O'er the sea, o'er the sea like an eagle, alone he
was making his flight,
And his loved ones behind him were praying for
the Lord to protect him that night.

Alone in his airplane he speeded; he thought of his
mother at home;
She gave him the courage he needed to fly 'neath
the sky's starry dome.
Into the darkness he hurried, he passed through
the sleet and the rain,
But this young human bird wasn't worried, his
heart had a goal to obtain.
O'er the sea, o'er the sea like an eagle, there was
no one to give him the cheer,
But he knew, as his eyes pierced the distance, that
the goal he was seeking was near.

Thousands were waiting in Paris to see the young
pilot alight.
The cheers reached the sky when they saw him
come flying out of the night.
The news was sent back to his loved ones, the
whole world was crazy with joy,
They acclaimed him the bravest of flyers, this
darling young slip of a boy.
O'er the sea, o'er the sea like an eagle, he had
answered adventure's great call,
And his name will go down through the ages, as the
bravest hero of them all.

Clyde Spencer

Courage

Courage is the price that life exacts for granting
peace.

The soul that knows it not, knows no release
From little things;

Knows not the livid loneliness of fear
Nor mountain heights, where bitter joy can hear
The sound of wings.

How can life grant us boon of living, compensate
For dull gray ugliness and pregnant hate
Unless we dare

The soul's dominion? Each time we make a choice, we
pay

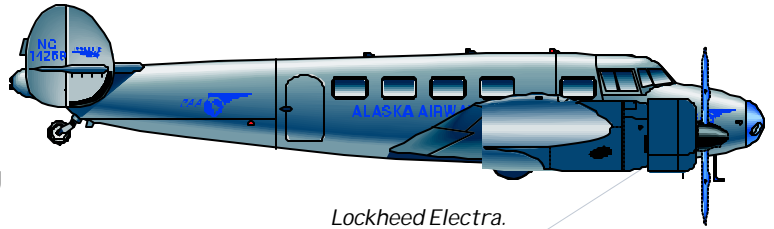
With courage to behold resistless day
And count it fair.

Amelia Earhart

Wingtip

The birds—are they worth remembering?
Is flight a wonder and one wingtip a marvel?
When will man know what birds know?

Carl Sandburg



*Lockheed Electra.
Amelia Earhart was flying an Electra when she
disappeared in 1937.*

Amelia Earhart's Last Flight

1. Like a ship out o'er the ocean
Like a speck against the sky
Amelia Earhart flying past that day,
With her partner, Captain Noonan
On the second of July
Her plane fell in the ocean far away.

2. Half an hour later
An SOS was heard
Her signal weak, but still her voice
was brave.
In shark-infested waters
Her plane went down that night
In the blue Pacific to a watery
grave.

3. Now you have heard the story
Of that awful tragedy
We pray that she may fly home safe
again.
In days to come though others
Blaze a trail across the sea
We'll ne'er forget Amelia and her
plane.

Chorus:

There's a beautiful, beautiful field,
Far away in a land that is fair,
Happy landings to you, Amelia
Earhart,
Farewell First Lady of the air.

David McNery