



-The Inventive Mind-

Celebrating 100 Years of Powered Flight

EducationLINK

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On December 17th, 1903, Orville and Wilbur Wright performed the first controlled, powered flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. This year marks the centennial of that first flight and a celebration of the progress that has been made in the field of aviation in the past 100 years. The Wright Brothers were creative thinkers whose hard work and ingenuity resulted in the creation of what soon became the modern aircraft. The state of Alaska has a rich history of great inventors just like the Wright Brothers. The centennial of flight is an opportunity for you to try out the following activities with your students in celebration of inventors, Alaskan inventions and the creative process.

Activity: Ask your students to scan the Anchorage Daily News to find articles on the Wright Brothers. Clip the articles and make a scrapbook of aviation-related articles to study later. Have them research certain elements of the Wright Brothers' experience and share with the class.

Activity: North America is the birthplace of several great inventions, which include the birch bark canoe, the kayak, and snowshoes. Find articles in the Anchorage Daily News that contain information about the inventions created right here in our area. How has this

particular invention changed our way of life? Who was the inventor? How would life be different without this particular invention?

Activity: Inventors are sometimes considered "heroes". Discuss with your students the characteristics of a hero. Look through the Anchorage Daily News to find articles about people whom they consider to be a hero. What did this person do or say to make them a hero? What can people learn from this person? What would the world look like if we had more heroes?

Activity: Ask your students to scan the Anchorage Daily News to find issues or problems that Anchorage or Alaska is faced with. Have them brainstorm ways to resolve these issues or have them come up with inventive ideas that would help alleviate the problems.

Activity: The Centennial of flight not only celebrates the creation of the airplane, but of other forms of flight, too. Ask your students to study the following History of Flight Timeline. Using the timeline, have them answer the following questions:

How has the advancement and development of air travel affected our communications with other countries? How has our way of life been changed as a result of aviation technology? What are some of the ways the invention of the airplane has contributed to the act of war in the world and politics? What are some advantages and disadvantages to these contributions? What kinds of things can be done to resolve the disadvantages or problems that have arisen due to the development of aviation technology?

Dec. 17, 1903: The Wright Flyer, piloted by Orville Wright, becomes airborne for 12 seconds and travels 121 feet over Kitty Hawk,

N.C., as the first manned powered flight.

Jan. 19, 1910: First bombing experiment by an Army officer, in which three 2-pound sandbags were dropped to hit a target.

Sept. 23, 1911: First airmail in the USA is carried and delivered.

June 7, 1912: First machine gun mounted to a plane.

May 20-21, 1927: Charles Lindbergh flies his plane, Spirit of St. Louis, from New York to Paris. It's the first solo, non-stop trans-Atlantic flight.

Oct. 25, 1930: Commercial air service begins between New York and Los Angeles.

May 21, 1932: Amelia Earhart becomes the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic.

May 6, 1937: The Hindenburg explodes while attempting to land in Lakehurst, N.J.; 36 people die.

July 8, 1940: The Boeing Stratoliner is the first with a pressurized cabin. Aircraft can now fly at an altitude up to 20,000 feet.

March 7, 1942: The Tuskegee Airmen, the first African-American flying unit, earn their wings.

Aug. 6, 1945: B-29 bomber, the Enola Gay, drops the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan.

June 17, 1947: First around-the-world commercial air service from the USA takes off on Pan American Airways from New York to San Francisco via Ireland, England, Turkey, Pakistan, India, Thailand, the Philippines, Guam, Wake Island, Midway Island and Oahu.

Oct. 14, 1947: Capt. Charles "Chuck" Yeager breaks the sound barrier in the rocket-powered Bell X-1.

Oct. 20, 1953: TWA completes the first non-stop flight from Los Angeles to New York in eight hours.

Oct. 4, 1957: The Russians launch Sputnik I, the first artificial satellite.

Jan. 31, 1958: The U.S. launches Explorer I, the first U.S. satellite.

April 12, 1961: Yuri Gagarin of the Soviet Union becomes the first man in space and the first person to orbit Earth.

Feb. 20, 1962: John Glenn becomes the first American to orbit Earth.

July 20, 1969: Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walk on the moon.

April 17, 1971: Federal Express opens and guarantees overnight delivery anywhere in the USA.

1973: Security screening is required in U.S. airports after a rash of airline hijackings.

Jan. 29, 1973: Emily Howell Warner becomes the first permanent female pilot for a U.S. passenger airline, Frontier Airlines.

April 12, 1981: NASA launches the space shuttle Columbia. It is the first shuttle to fly into orbit.

June 18, 1983: Sally Ride becomes the first American woman to travel into space.

Jan. 28, 1986: Schoolteacher Christa McAuliffe and six other astronauts are killed when the space shuttle Challenger explodes seconds after liftoff. It will be more than a year until NASA launches another space shuttle.

1995: Southwest Airlines becomes first major carrier to offer ticketless travel.

Sept. 11, 2001: Terrorists hijack and crash four planes into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

Feb. 1, 2003: Space shuttle Columbia breaks apart on its return from its 16-day mission; the crew of seven is killed.



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