

Soaring to New Heights

FAST-PACED FLORIDA LESSON 2

The world of transportation became more fast-paced in the early 1900s when airplanes took us to the skies! In the early years of flying, one of the only ways to earn money as a pilot was as a barnstormer – a stunt pilot who performs tricks such as loop-the-loops, walking on the wings, or even parachuting from the plane. One of these daring pilots, Bessie Coleman, overcame many obstacles to become the first African American woman to earn a pilot's license.

Born in Atlanta, Texas, in 1892, Coleman was one of 13 children. She faced many challenges growing up in the segregated South, but she never let that stop her from achieving her dreams.

In 1915, she followed her brothers to Chicago, where she worked for several years as a manicurist. After being amazed by stories she heard about flying from soldiers returning home from World War I, she decided she was going to learn how to fly! Coleman applied to flight schools around the country, but no one would teach her because of her race and gender. She didn't give up and decided to look for schools in Europe instead.



Coleman spent the next year learning French and working two jobs to save for her journey to Europe. In November 1920 she traveled across the world for her next adventure. She enrolled in flight school in northern France and took part in a seven-month flying course. On June 15, 1921, she became the first African American woman to earn a pilot's license and the first African American to earn an international pilot's license!

When she returned to America, Coleman became extremely popular as a stunt pilot. However, she didn't stop there. She saw flying as a way to empower African Americans and dreamed of opening her own flight school to train other African American pilots. She traveled the country speaking to audiences about aviation and refused to perform at air shows for segregated crowds.



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One of her speaking tours brought Bessie Coleman to Orlando. She met the Reverend Hezakiah Hill and his wife, Viola, who invited her to stay with them at their home. While here, she opened a beauty shop to help toward her savings for her flight school and buying her own plane.

On April 30, 1926, Bessie Coleman died during a practice flight for a stunt show scheduled in Jacksonville, Florida. She accomplished a great deal in just 34 years and inspired many African Americans to follow in her footsteps to become pilots. In 1992, Dr. Mae Jemison, the first African American woman to go to space, carried a picture of Coleman with her, helping her to fly further than she had ever dreamed!



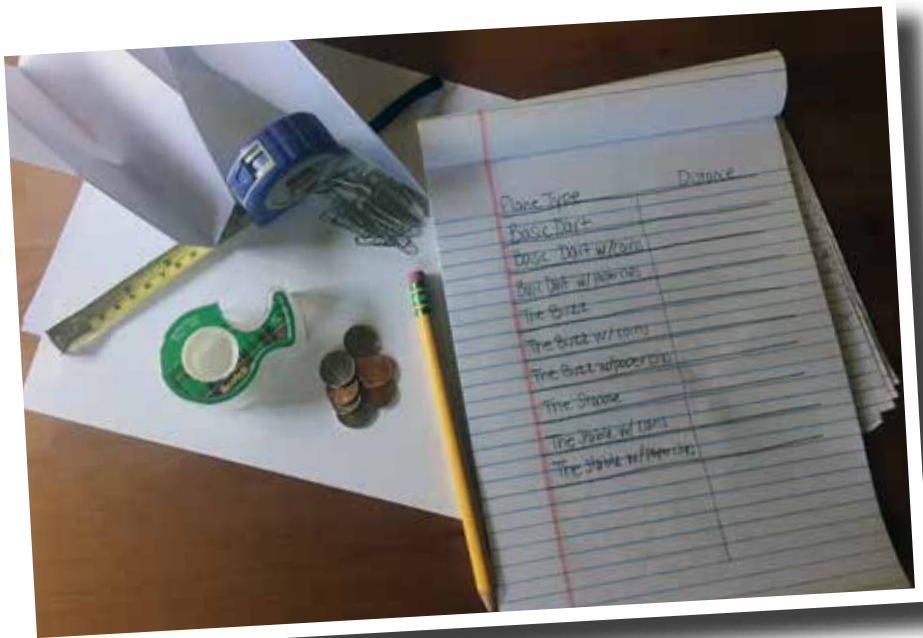
Soaring to New Heights ACTIVITY

See how far you can get a paper plane to go by trying out different designs and adding new features.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Paper
- Measuring tape
- Plane Instructions
- Paper and pencil for chart
- Paper clips
- Coins
- Tape

*Find easy paper plane instructions here: <https://www.foldnfly.com/>



Soaring to New Heights

ACTIVITY



WHAT TO DO:

1. Choose an airplane design and follow the instructions to fold your plane. You can try multiple designs for a longer experiment.
2. Make a chart to track your results. Record the type of plane on one side, and how far it flew on the other.
3. Pick a starting spot from which to throw your planes. Make sure you have plenty of space in front of you!
4. Predict which plane you think will go farthest, then throw each plane ahead of you. Use the tape measure to record how far each plane went. Was your prediction correct?
5. Try adding weight to the planes using paper clips or coins. Predict if you think this will make the flight shorter or longer.
6. Throw each plane with the weight now added. Record your results on your chart. What did you notice changed after adding weight to each plane?
7. Continue to try different combinations of designs and weights to see which flies the farthest!

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Sources

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This lesson helps reinforce these Florida State Standards for K-5th grade:

- SS.2.C.2.5 Evaluate the contributions of various African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, veterans, and women.
- SS.4.A.6.3 Describe the contributions of significant individuals to Florida.
- SS.3.C.2.1 Identify group and individual actions of citizens that demonstrate civility, cooperation, volunteerism, and other civic virtues.
- SS.4.E.1.1 Identify entrepreneurs from various social and ethnic backgrounds who have influenced Florida and the local economy.
- SS.2.C.2.4 Identify ways citizens can make a positive contribution in their community.
- SS.4.A.5.2 Summarize challenges Floridians faced during Reconstruction.
- SS.4.A.8.1 Identify Florida's role in the Civil Rights Movement.
- SS.4.P.12.2 Investigate and describe that the speed of an object is determined by the distance it travels in a unit of time and that objects can move at different speeds.
- SC.4.N.1.2 Compare the observations made by different groups using multiple tools and seek reasons to explain the differences across groups.
- SC.5.P.13.3 Investigate and describe that the more mass an object has, the less effect a give force will have on the object's motion.

