**Winging It**

**In this final six-week unit of sixth grade, students read Dragonwings by Lawrence Yep, compare this novel to biographies of aviators, and read about the science and history of flight.**

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**Overview**

* + Reading *Dragonwings* helps students recall class conversations that incorporate the themes from this year: flying (from *Peter Pan*), reading folklore, embracing heritage, courageous characters, and “figuring it out,” as well as being an effective springboard for a conversation about people’s dreams. The goal of this unit is for students to apply all their reading, writing, speaking, and listening strategies, and skills learned up until this point in the year. The year culminates with a multimedia project on the science of flight, and making connections to how people worked to make their dreams of flying come true.
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**Focus Standards**

* + These Focus Standards have been selected for the unit from the Common Core State Standards.
    - **RL.6.2:** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
    - **RI.6.6:** Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.
    - **RI.6.7:** Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.
    - **W.6.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
    - **SL.6.5:** Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, images, music, sound) to visual displays in presentations to clarify information.
    - **L.6.1:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

[Common Core State Standards, ELA](http://commoncore.org/free/resources/CCSSI_ELA_Standards.pdf) (1.5 MB)

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**Suggested Student Objectives**

* + - Read a variety of fiction and nonfiction about flight and dreams of flying.
    - Compare and contrast literature with biographies of aviators with original videos.
    - Write a variety of responses to literature and informational text.
    - Conduct research on an aviator of choice.
    - Compare the experience of reading a text to watching it performed live.
    - Perform an original skit about aviators and science of flight for classmates.
    - Publish a multimedia presentation, including relevant information from multiple print and digital sources.
    - Participate in group discussions.
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**Suggested Works**

* + (E) indicates a CCSS exemplar text; (EA) indicates a text from a writer with other works identified as exemplars.

**Literary Texts**

**Stories**

* + - *Dragonwings* (Lawrence Yep) (E)
    - *First to Fly: How Wilbur and Orville Wright Invented the Airplane* (Peter Busby)
    - *Flight* (Robert Burleigh)

**Poetry**

* + - *I Am the Phoenix: Poems for Two Voices* (Paul Fleischman)

**Picture Book (Used as an introduction to this unit)**

* + - *A is for Airplane: An Aviation Alphabet* (Mary Ann McCabe Riehle)
    - *The Airplane Alphabet Book* (Jerry Pallotta)

**Informational Texts**

**Biographies**

* + - *Sterling Biographies: The Wright Brothers: First in Flight (*Tara Dixon-Engel)
    - *Wilbur & Orville Wright: Taking Flight* (Stephanie Sammartino McPherson)
    - *The Wright Brothers: How They Invented the Airplane* (Russell Freedman)
    - *Charles A. Lindbergh: A Human Hero* (James Giblin)
    - *William Boeing: Builder of Planes* (Sharlene Nelson)
    - *Amelia Earhart (DK Biography*) (Tanya Stone)
    - *Up In the Air: The Story of Bessie Coleman* (Philip S. Hart)

**General Nonfiction**

* + - *Flying Free: America's First Black Aviators* (Phillip S. Hart)
    - *Fantastic Flights: One Hundred Years of Flying on the Edge* (Patrick O'Brien)
    - *Black Eagles: African Americans in Aviation* (James Haskins)
    - *Strange And Wonderful Aircraft* (Harvey Weiss)

**Science**

* + - *The Simple Science of Flight: From Insects to Jumbo Jets (Henk Tennekes)*
    - *Flight: Discover Science Through Facts and Fun (Gerry Bailey)*
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**Sample Activities and Assessments**

* + **Introductory Activity/Class Discussion**

Your teacher will read *A is for Airplane: An Aviation Alphabet* by Mary Ann McCabe Riehle and/or *The Airplane Alphabet Book* by Jerry Pallotta to the class. How can picture books give you background information about topics that may be new to you? Were you surprised by the amount of information within an alphabet book? Talk with a partner about the answers to these questions, then write your own response in your journal. (RI.6.6, RI.6.7)

**Literature Response**

As you read *Dragonwings*, keep a journal that specifies:

* + - The characteristics of Moon Shadow and Windrider that enable them to overcome obstacles
    - The obstacles that they face
    - Their internal responses and external behaviors to these obstacles
    - The events that lead up to climax, and, ultimately, the characters’ growth

After reading the novel, the class will create an alphabet book summary as a class, so keep a list of ideas for each letter in your journal. (W.6.9a, b, RL.6.2, RL.6.3, RL.6.5, RL.6.10)

**Journal Entry/Figurative Language**

After reading chapter 3 (where Windrider recounts his dream of being the physician to the dragon king), mark the text with Post-It Notes in places where Yep’s uses imagery, alliteration, metaphors, similes, and personification. Share your ideas with a partner before class discussion. As a follow-up, write about your own dreams using similar types of figurative language. (L.6.1a, b, c, d, e, L.6.5a, b, c)

**Graphic Organizer/Literary Response**

As a class, keep a class chart of the aviators studied with the following categories. At the end of the unit, this information will be used to make comparisons and generalizations about people who are passionate about aviation, either as a hobby or a career.

* + - Aviator’s name
    - Obstacles he/she faces
    - Why he/she is famous
    - What was a turning point in his/her life that led him/her into aviation
    - What did you learn about this person that surprised you?

Your teacher may ask you to write your own responses in your journal and share it with a partner before each section of the class chart is filled in. Be sure to make notes of page numbers with relevant information, or mark your text with a Post-It Note, so you can go back and cite the text during class discussion. (W.6.7, W.6.8, W.6.9b, RI.6.6, RI.6.10)

**Class Discussion**

Talk about the aviators studied. How are their stories alike? Different? What traits do they have in common? Cite specific information from the text read to justify your response. Write a summary of the class discussion in your journal. (L.6.1a, b, c, d, e, R.I6.9)

**Essay**

“Success is not a destination, it's a journey.” Write an essay response to this quote from the perspective of the aviator you studied. Would he/she agree with this phrase? Why or why not? Cite specific details from your research. You may have the opportunity to talk about your ideas with a partner prior to writing, and then work with the same partner to revise and edit your paper after the first draft. Be prepared to record yourself reading your essay as a podcast. (RI.6.7, W.6.1a, b, c, d, e, RL.6.10, RI.6.10)

**Drama, Drama, Drama**

Work in small groups to create and present short skit about the principles of flight and/or an aviator you learned about from experiments, simulations, videos, or multimedia sources in science class. Try to include the idioms about flying learned in this unit. Write the script paying careful attention to capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and word choice. Your classmates will compare the experience of watching you present with the written version and will talk about what is different between seeing it “live” and “reading” it. (RI.6.7, W.6.7, L.6.2a,b, RL.6.10, RI.6.10)

**Poetry Performance**

Choose your favorite poem from *I am Phoenix* and present a dramatic reading to the class. (Alternately, write your own poem for two voices about flight, and present that to the class with a classmate.) (RL.6.2, SL.6.6)

**Reflective Multimedia Presentation**

Create an informative/explanatory multimedia presentation in which you respond to the question, “How do literature and informational text reveal why people dream of flying?” Cite specific details from your research, such as videos of flights or interviews with aviators. Compare the information from primary source documents with the secondary sources (biographies) read. Use a variety of words (from Word Study) learned and studied throughout the year. Work with peers to revise, edit, and present your research in a multimedia format to the class. (RI.6.7, W.6.2a, b, c, d, e, f, SL.6.5, L.6.3a, b, L.6.6, W.6.6, W.6.8, W.6.10, RL.6.10, RI.6.10)

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**Additional Resources**

* + [The Wright Brothers Made Their Phenomenal Flight](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/calendar-activities/wright-brothers-made-their-20372.html)

Wilbur and Orville Wright's landmark flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, was the realization of their dream of powered human flight. Although their historic achievement lasted only 12 seconds, it continues to symbolize - even after more than 100 years—human determination, imagination, creativity, and invention. (RI.6.7)

[America on the Move](http://americanhistory.si.edu/onthemove/games/game1/game1.html)

In this interactive from Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, students explore the changes in America transportation over time. (RI.6.7)

[Charles Lindberg Began His Transatlantic Flight on May 20, 1927](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/calendar-activities/charles-lindbergh-began-transatlantic-20518.html)

On May 20, 1927, Charles Lindbergh began the first non-stop flight from New York to Paris and the first solo flight across the Atlantic, taking off from Roosevelt Field in New York in his plane *The Spirit of St. Louis*. Thirty-three and a half hours later, "Lucky Lindy" landed safely in Paris, France, becoming the first person to fly solo across the Atlantic. (RI.6.2)

[Women Aviators in World War II “Fly Girls”](http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=743)

In this lesson, students will explore the contributions of the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs) during World War II. (RI.6.3)

[ABC Bookmaking Builds Vocabulary in the Content Areas](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/bookmaking-builds-vocabulary-content-276.html)

Students are engaged and motivated to build content area vocabulary through the creation of ABC books. (L.6.4)

[Aviation History Online Museum](http://www.aviation-history.com/theory/index-theory.html)

Website for researching the history of flight. (RI.6.3)

[First Flight](http://firstflight.open.ac.uk/index.html) A website for researching flight and aviation. (RI.6.3)

[Lesson Plans for *Dragonwings*](http://www.webenglishteacher.com/yep.html)

[Video Interview with Lawrence Yep](http://www.readingrockets.org/books/interviews/yep)

Videos of first flights, for example, [Wright Brothers Have Lift Off](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uT2dQB_OgFE)

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**Terminology**

* + - figurative language
    - idioms, such as:
      * “fly in the face of”
      * “fly off the handle”
      * “flying by the seat of your pants”
      * “flying colors”
      * “when pigs fly”
    - imagery
    - literary techniques: rhyme scheme, meter, metaphor, simile, alliteration, onomatopoeia
    - memoir
    - personification