

5th Grade Reading: The First Airplane (Nonfiction) - Answer Key

5th Grade - nonfiction comprehension and author's purpose | 20 minutes

Read the passage:

For most of history, people could only dream of flying like birds. Two brothers, Orville and Wilbur Wright, decided to turn that dream into a machine. The brothers owned a bicycle shop, but they spent their free time studying how birds glided and how air moved over a wing. They built kites and gliders, tested them, and learned from every crash. They even built their own small wind tunnel to test wing shapes. On December 17, 1903, on a windy beach in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, their hard work paid off. Orville lay flat on the lower wing of their flyer, started the engine, and the machine lifted into the air. That first flight lasted only twelve seconds and traveled about 120 feet - shorter than the length of a modern jet. Yet it changed the world forever. The Wright brothers had proved that powered human flight was possible, and within a few decades, airplanes were carrying people across oceans.

Read the passage. Then answer each question in a complete sentence, using evidence from the text.

1. What jobs or hobbies did the Wright brothers have before flying?

Answer: They owned a bicycle shop and studied how birds and air moved.

2. Name two things they built to test their ideas.

Answer: Kites and gliders (and a small wind tunnel).

3. When and where did the first flight happen?

Answer: December 17, 1903, at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

4. How long was that first flight?

Answer: About twelve seconds and 120 feet.

5. What is the main idea of the passage?

Answer: Through careful study and persistence, the Wright brothers achieved the first powered flight and changed the world. (Sample answer.)

Challenge

6. Why do you think the author included that they 'learned from every crash'? Use the text.

Answer: To show that their success came from persistence and learning from failure, not luck. (Sample answer.)