



# The Wright Brothers: How They Invented the Airplane

*Russell Freedman*

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## **The Wright Brothers: How They Invented the Airplane** Russell Freedman

The first powered, sustained, and controlled airplane flight, and the men behind it. A Newbery honor Book.

### **The Wright Brothers: How They Invented the Airplane Details**

Date : Published January 1st 1991 by Holiday House

ISBN : 9780823410828

Author : Russell Freedman

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Genre : History, Biography, Nonfiction, Childrens



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# **From Reader Review The Wright Brothers: How They Invented the Airplane for online ebook**

## **Casey says**

1. Classification: Biography/Autobiography junior books
2. Summary: This is such an amazing biography on the Wright Brothers. This story is full of facts, quotes, and pictures of the Wright Brothers from children all the way up to death. Follow Wilbur and Orville Wright as they start out as bicycle mechanics and evolve into one of histories greatest wonders.
3. Critique:
  - a.) I grew up splitting my years between Hampton Roads and Kitty Hawk where my grandparents have a summer beach house. I have always known a lot about the Wright Brothers when it came to flying but other than that they were a mystery. This story has amazing photographs of the brothers and I learned a lot about their history starting from childhood.
  - b.) The photographs throughout the story are so wonderful. I'm a huge photography fan and it was really neat to see what they looked like when they were younger and to get the experience to feel as though I was a part of their history.
  - c.) I never would have known how the Wright Brothers went from bicycle mechanics to flying. It always seemed like such a weird change in interests even though they were both similar in the way of being forms of transportation. I discovered while reading that the Wright Brothers interest in flying sparked from a gift their grandfather gave them when they were boys. "It was a helicopter made of cork, bamboo, and paper; powered by a twisted rubber band attached to twin propellers." (page 9).
4. Curriculum Connection: It is clearly obvious that this novel would be a great connection to history. I would say that this story is for older students like 5th and 6th grade due to the length and girth of information provided in the book. The students could do a research project on the Wright Brothers in small groups and do a tri-fold presentation. One group could do their childhood, one could do their college years, bicycle to flight years, and death, etc. It would be such a fun project. The kids could even build a paper airplane to include in their presentations.

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## **Kelli Clem says**

This Biography book tells how the Wright brothers invented the airplane. From their struggles to their achievements. Personally not a huge fan of Biographies but this is fit as a children's book and is suitable for them! Lots of pictures for them to relay the text.

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## **Demi VanDeCasteel says**

This history book about the Wright brothers is the perfect mix of learning how airplanes are made as well as

the relationship between the Wright brothers. The book is filled with so many wonderful photographs!

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### **midnightfaerie says**

This was given as additional reading material for my son's history class. Whatever. First of all, this is an adult book, long, boring, and in black and white. There is no desire to read this book, from me or my children. The only person that I could see liking this book would be a lover of all things airplane. I tried to read it, but fell asleep after a few pages. In any case, not something children would be interested in reading, although it has some good pictures of the Wright brothers and the airplanes/biplanes.

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### **Ms\_Harris says**

In *The Wright Brothers How They Invented the Airplane*, author Russell Freedman draws the reader in to the familiar tale of two brothers who over 100 years ago took to the sky on their glider. I listened on CD to the unabridged version of the text performed by Knighton Bliss. Bliss' evenly paced recording brought Freedman's words to life. As you listen, the text takes on the tone of a PBS documentary sans video. The listener hears about the close-knit Wright family, we learn that the patriarch Bishop Milton Wright was a minister and that Orville and Wilbur were as "inseparable as twins."

Through ten chapters, Bliss narrates giving the listener intimate access into the lives of the Wright Brothers through first and second hand accounts. In addition to the Wright Brothers, the aviation contributions of others, such as Chanute, Lilienthal, and Langley were chronicled. The hard copy of the book features original photos by the Wright Brothers interspersed throughout. The compact disc has a bonus disc of some of the same photos, which may be viewed by computer.

While I commend Bliss' reading of the material, the nature of the text made me wish for the visual support pictures would provide; there were only thirty on the bonus cd. I would recommend using the cd in conjunction with a hard copy of the text for students in third grade or higher who may be inquisitive about the topic but in need of linguistic support. This text could be used in a unit about the Wright Brothers, or as part of a series of inventors or specifically, pioneers of flight. As a challenge, older students may also research others inventors and innovators with no formal training in the field which they've significantly impacted. A lead in for this project could be *Balloons Over Broadway* about the life of puppeteer Tony Sarg.

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### **Mary Joy says**

It was informational, but it was not my favorite by Freedman. I think that it was less personal than some of his other pieces. It did not catch my eye and I found myself not retaining interest throughout the book. I think this also is because I am not very interested in flying. If I were interested in airplanes, I think I would appreciate this book a lot more.

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## **Amanda Toombs says**

Genre: Junior Book—Biography/Autobiography

Summary: Russell Freedman provides readers with a better understanding on the lives of two brothers, Wilbur and Orville Wright as they head through many journeys and hardships. Many pictures and much information do a good job of showing readers these journeys up until they accomplished the biggest one of all: the invention of the airplane.

Critique:

- a. Personally, I think the greatest strength of this title is the information about the two brothers lives and also the old fashion illustrations.
- b. As this is a biography of two important and famous brothers, it gives readers a more understanding approach on the two men. This is because readers are able to understand how the brothers achieve such a huge accomplishment and also the events that lead up to this accomplishment. The illustrations/pictures throughout the biography allow readers to have a better understand on the events as the pictures show real life happenings. They allow readers to see how and what things looked like back years ago. Young readers are able to learn more about these men and understand them better and not only know they were the ones that invented the airplane. Readers get the full effect of two very important men's lives.
- c. As photos are provided throughout the novel, we notice they are very old pictures as they are shown in black and white. Readers are able to understand what the men's beds and kitchens looked like (pg. 50-51) as they learned the differences in their living environments throughout the years. Allowing the readers to get the full understanding of how things were back then and their appliances they used, readers can see this by referring to the couple of pages that shows the men trying out the glider in 1902 (pg. 55-63). This really gives the students the ability to see how things were used and how different they were, back many years ago. As the book is organized into 10 chapters, readers are able to connect with the two men who invented the airplane as their personal lives, struggles, accomplishments and deaths are talked about in this biography novel.

Curriculum Connection:

This book can be used in a classroom during a history lesson on famous people and their accomplishments. This book will allow students to understand the full biography of the two important men who invented the airplane and now just their names with their inventions. This book can be used when researching more information on the two men or even when a project is being done on airplanes. Students could work as groups to assembly an airplane like the two Wright brothers done and share with the class their way of making the airplane. Students could use the airplane with a research paper or an oral presentation when talking about the brothers and their accomplishment.

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## **James Biser says**

I have spent time on the Outer Banks of North Carolina where the Wright Brothers performed their magic of

inventing the airplane at Kitty Hawk. I learned the idea that two smart brothers figured out the science of speed and lift. This book maps out each step that these genius brothers took as they discovered flight. It also covers what other things happened in their lives. This is a great book.

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### **Steve Ward says**

A well written history of one of the most important inventions of the 20th century accompanied by original photos make for a compelling read. Most of the basics are well known but the author was able to add interesting details to the discovery of manned flight by the Wrights. I recommend this book to any reader over 8 who has an interest in machines.

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### **Jakob Mills says**

#### Personal response

This book was very informative for me. I learned a lot about the Wright brothers and how they invented the airplane. It helped me write my essay, and it was a very credible source. I like how it laid everything out in chronological order. Everything was always easy to find.

#### Plot Summary

The book starts from the brothers' beginnings as children and ends with their deaths. It talks about how they were always working together during their childhood to build and repair their toys, and break them again. This led to the opening of their own bicycle repair shop, after several printing presses. They used their mechanical skills to build the airplane and successfully fly it for the first time ever. After this, the book talks about how the plane evolves throughout the rest of the brothers' lives. It doesn't spend very much time on this because most of the book is also spent on talking about how they invented the plane and all the working parts in it.

#### Recommendation

I would recommend this book to a middle or high schooler who has an interest in flight or history. I think these groups would like this book because it talks about the physics of the airplane and all the history about it. It is very informative about both subjects and the author clearly did his research. I believe that anyone dreaming of flying would love this book.

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### **Haley Smith says**

This book is a non-fiction biographical book about Orville and Wilbur Wright it is intended for students between 6th and 8th grade. It received the 1991 Boston Globe - Horn Book Award Honor Book (Nonfiction) award, the 1992 Golden Kite Award and the 1992 Newbery Medal Honor Book award. This book is all about how The Wright Brothers invented the airplane just as the title suggests. I enjoyed the real photographs and how it explained why the brothers were successful. I think the portion of the book that explained their experience in the bicycle trade helped them view flight differently than other who tried was especially

interesting. I however don't think this book would draw in readers because it is extremely factual. Also because the pictures are in black and white I have found younger readers tend to find these books "boring" although that is not my opinion of this story.

12/1/17

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### **Lars Guthrie says**

Russell Freedman's books are just fantastic. In each one, he focuses in on an area of history that fascinates him, connects the dots into a cohesive narrative that tells a story with a beginning, middle and end, and then enriches the verbal with visuals that match up perfectly, usually from primary sources. And he does so in a hundred pages or so.

'The Wright Brothers: How They Invented the Airplane' is no exception. Freedman's got a good story. Wilbur and Orville Wright were a couple of nerdy kids who loved tools and tinkering. They had the advantages of a middle class life, made possible by their preacher father, a rising star in the United Brethren Church. But neither finished high school. Their mother died from tuberculosis. They had no corporate sponsors, no sponsors at all, to back their experiments in flight. Through a combination of luck—getting into the bicycle business just as two-wheeled peddling became a national craze—and stick-to-itiveness, they were able to change history.

It's an exaggeration to say the Wright Brothers 'invented' the airplane, but not much of one. While contemporaries also produced motor-propelled flying machines, Wilbur and Orville realized the key was not just getting the dang things in the air, but keeping them up there. They really can make the claim to the first sustained and controlled flight.

I read Freedman's book because a student with whom I'm working was reading the National Geographic-published 'Airborne: A Photobiography of Wilbur and Orville Wright,' by Mary Collins, for a book report. It was interesting and enlightening to compare two works. At the same time, I read Paul Clee's 'Before Hollywood: From Shadow Play to the Silver Screen,' another history book aimed at younger readers.

One reason I liked Freedman more than Collins and Clee was that 'The Wright Brothers' was more straightforward and clear. 'Airborne' intersperses narrative with tinted photos overlayed with quotes from the brothers and periodicals of the day. 'Before Hollywood' occasionally presents information in sidebars, rather than in the main body of text. I suspect that such book layout, designed, I'm sure, to catch the reader's attention and draw him in, can be distracting and confusing. I'm convinced it is for me.

This is a style engrained in schools' social studies presentation. Look at nearly any textbook.

Usually suffering from authorship by committee, these books often seem drained of the enthusiasm that a single writer genuinely involved with the entire scope of his work, like Freedman, brings to the text. Their neutral, stilted prose is an unappetizing draw, so perhaps publishers figure that by jazzing up the graphics, they'll get kids excited. It doesn't work.

I know this is generalizing, but so be it. History in elementary grades, and in high school, is almost always boring, boring, boring. Sidebars, overlays, and other digressions from a consistent and linear narrative serve only to obfuscate central concepts that are delivered in a lackluster, bland style.

When kids really engage with history, they get excited. You can see it when they read historical novels, or watch the History Channel, or even, on occasion, read a work such as 'The Wright Brothers,' or another Freedman book I just finished, the recently published 'The War to End All Wars.' They want a story.

But they are rarely given that opportunity.

Add to this requirements to 'research' history on the internet, where dubious and trustworthy sources are as easily accessed, with lots and lots of possible distractions, and you've got a world that is failing to give children a sense of historical context, and the critical tools to evaluate and make use of what they've learned.

It's a world that needs more Russell Freedmans, and more books like 'The Wright Brothers.'

Highly recommended for fourth graders on up.

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### **Nadine Willis says**

I labeled this book, The Wright Brothers: How They Invented the Airplane, in the Informational Book: Biography genre. I chose this book because I live so closely to the Wright Memorial so I recognized the cover immediately, and fell in love with all the photographs that are throughout the story. I enjoyed how Freedman (the author) portrayed the Wright Brothers, which was as inventors and heroes but real people who were very personable.

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### **Briana Hilton says**

The Wright Brothers were aviation pioneers who invented, built, and flew the most successful airplane. This book brings light to the creative process of creating a new tool of transportation and an invention that would unknowingly be groundbreaking for the 20th century.

Literary Awards: Newbery Honor (1992)

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### **Amber Scaife says**

A good way to get kids uninterested in an interesting subject. Yoicks.

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