

AMELIA EARHART

Amelia Mary Earhart was the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. She set many records, wrote books about flying, and helped form a female pilots' organization. She disappeared in 1937 during an around-the-world flight.

Amelia Earhart was born in Atchison, Kansas on July 24, 1897. Homeschooled until the age of 12, she was encouraged to be independent. She was a voracious reader, and collected newspaper clippings about successful women. She was strong-willed, and defied traditional feminine standards of behavior all her life.

Amelia saw her first plane at a state fair when she was ten. She was not impressed. "It was a thing of rusty wire and wood and looked not at all interesting," she said. In fact, her interest in aviation didn't take off until December 28, 1920, when she rode in an airplane. "By the time I had got two or three hundred feet off the ground, I knew I had to fly," she said.

Earhart took her first flying lesson on January 3, 1921, and bought her first plane six months later. She used it to set her first women's record by rising to an altitude of 14,000 feet. After Lindbergh's solo flight across the Atlantic in 1927, Earhart flew across the Atlantic with a team. In August 1928, she became the first woman to make a solo, roundtrip flight across North America. She competed in an air race and set a world altitude record of 18,415 feet. She became involved with the Ninety-Nines, an organization of female pilots that worked to help women in aviation.

On May 20, 1932, she made a solo trans-Atlantic flight. The plan was to fly from Newfoundland to Paris. Bad weather forced her to land in a pasture near Londonderry, Ireland. But she had succeeded! Earhart was famous around the world. President Herbert Hoover gave her a gold medal. Earhart said her achievement proved the equality of men and women in "jobs requiring intelligence, coordination, speed, coolness and willpower."

Earhart's final dream was to be the first woman to fly around the world. Her first attempt in March 1937 failed. On June 1st that same year, she tried again. On July 2, near the end of her flight, Earhart's plane vanished.

Earhart's fate is shrouded in mystery. No wreckage or body were ever found. The world will always remember Amelia Mary Earhart for her courage, vision, and pioneering achievements in aviation and for women. In a final letter to her husband, Earhart wrote, "Please know I am quite aware of the hazards... Women must try to do things as men have tried. When they fail, their failure must be but a challenge to others."

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ABOUT *AMELIA EARHART*

1. Which of the following experiences from her childhood is *least* related to Amelia Earhart's adult success?
 - a. She was unimpressed by an airplane as a ten-year-old.
 - b. She was encouraged to be independent.
 - c. She kept a scrapbook of successful women.
 - d. She was a voracious reader.

2. Which sentence best summarizes Earhart's life as presented?
 - a. Luck was the main factor in her success.
 - b. She wanted to be a pilot all her life.
 - c. She was ambitious, hardworking, and courageous.
 - d. None of the above

3. What does the word *voracious* mean?
 - a. unwilling
 - b. lazy
 - c. hungry
 - d. compulsive

4. The article says Earhart will be remembered for her services to women. What did she do for women?
 - a. She showed that they are equal to men in many respects.
 - b. She inspired them to try to achieve their dreams.
 - c. She helped organize a women's professional organization.
 - d. all of the above

5. Amelia Earhart is famous as an aviation pioneer. Which of the following is she most likely to have done?
 - a. invented a new airplane motor
 - b. married a famous pilot
 - c. set a solo flight distance record
 - d. starred in a Hollywood movie about her life

Answers to *AMELIA EARHART*

1. a
2. c
3. c
4. d
5. c