MILESTONES of FLIGHT
FARHER
FASTER
HIGHER
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The National Air and Space Museum is America’s most-visited museum, attracting over 20 million visitors each year. The Museum’s collections represent the most comprehensive and significant collection of its kind in the world. The Museum cares for and shares its collections through exhibitions, research, education, and conservation. The Museum is open every day, except Thanksgiving and Christmas.

BLACKLINE MASTERS

Which craft have two wings? One wing? Why do you think some craft have one propeller and some have two or more? Why did the Wright Brothers begin to study birds? What differences did they notice about the birds’ wings?

1. Explain that the seven aircraft and spacecraft on the poster represent six milestones. Ask how students would list the six milestones and the dates. The DC-3 flight of May 20, 1935, is the first date on the timeline, and the X-15 flight of October 4, 1967, is the last date on the timeline. Individually or in pairs, students should research the six milestones on the poster and the drawings to find the answers to the questions and form a simple timeline with six dates corresponding to the six milestones.

2. Beginning with the first date on your timeline, ask students to describe the craft, the six milestones on the poster, and the drawings. They may want to make additional research to find more details about the aircraft and spacecraft they just studied. After students have completed their timelines, ask them to share their timelines with others. The X-15 flight of October 4, 1967, is the last date on the timeline.

3. Conclude by asking students: How has aviation and spaceflight transformed the way people travel and transport goods and services? How have these advances affected the way people live and work? Students may want to use the Six Milestones of Flight from the National Air and Space Museum’s web site of the National Air and Space Museum’s web site to search for answers to these questions.

4. Conclude by asking students: How do you think the Wright Brothers got the idea for the airplane? How do you think they designed the Wright Flyer? How do you think they built and flew the Wright Flyer? How do you think they survived the many crashes they had? Why do you think the Wright Brothers chose to build their airplane and not improve steamers or railroads?

5. Conclude by asking students: How did the Wright Flyer get its lift? How did the Wright Flyer get its power? How did the Wright Flyer get its control? How did the Wright Flyer rise and fall? How did the Wright Flyer turn? What are some of the differences you notice about the Wright Flyer and the six milestones on the poster and the drawings?

6. Ask which one milestone has the propellers? Ask which pair of propellers are on the X-15? How do you think the propellers on the X-15 will help the airplane fly higher and farther? Why don’t some of the other airplanes have propellers?

7. Ask what similarities and differences did they notice? What similarities and differences did they notice about the six milestones on the poster and the drawings?

8. Ask what other differences do you notice about the wings?

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