

Social Studies

# Women Who Dared to Fly

by Mei Hua Chen





## Question of the Week

What does it take to be a hero?

### Key Comprehension Skill

Character, Plot, and Theme

### Concept Words

record      NASA      inspire

### Learning Goals

- Women pilots became heroes.
- Women pilots flew warplanes.
- Eileen Collins was the first female Space Shuttle pilot.

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## Harriet Quimby

Wilbur and Orville Wright flew the first plane in 1903. After that, many people were excited about flight. They foresaw the big changes that airplanes would bring. For many years, pilots were all men. But some women also became flying heroes.

Harriet Quimby was one of the first women pilots. She decided to fly in 1910, when she saw an air show. At an air show, pilots do tricks with their planes. Harriet decided to show everyone that a woman could be a pilot. In 1911, she got her pilot's license. Soon she was doing tricks at air shows.



Harriet Quimby



Planned route for Amelia Earhart's flight around the world.

## Amelia Earhart

Amelia Earhart is the most famous female aviator. She earned her pilot's license in 1922 and started doing things no one had done before. She flew 14,000 feet above ground to set a new **record**.



Amelia Earhart

In 1932, Amelia reached another goal. She flew solo across the Atlantic Ocean. Amelia was the first woman to do this.

Amelia wanted to fly around the world. She started her journey on June 1, 1937. In July, her plane disappeared. Amelia and her plane were never found.

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**record:** better performance than anyone before her

## **Katherine Cheung**

Katherine Cheung was born in China in 1904. She moved to the United States to study music. Her father taught her to drive a car. Soon Katherine wanted to go even faster.

In 1932, Katherine earned her pilot's license. She became the first Asian American female pilot. She flew in many air races. Katherine was very popular. People loved to watch her fly.



Katherine Cheung



Jackie Cochran

## **Jackie Cochran**

The Air Force is part of the United States military. Before World War II, women were not allowed to fly planes in the Air Force. Then a pilot named Jackie Cochran wrote a letter to Eleanor Roosevelt, the president's wife. Jackie said that if women flew planes, it would help the American soldiers win the war. Mrs. Roosevelt agreed with her. Soon, women were allowed to fly in the U.S. Air Force. Their part of the Air Force was called the WASPs (Women's Air Force Service Pilots).



Eileen Collins

## Eileen Collins

Eileen Collins always wanted to fly a space shuttle. She wanted to see how Earth looked from the void of space. Her dream came true. In 1991, she became an astronaut. In 1995, she became the first female space shuttle pilot.

In 1999, NASA chose Eileen to command a space shuttle. She was the first woman to do this. Eileen hoped to inspire young people. This means that boys and girls would see her success and follow their own dreams.

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**NASA:** the National Aeronautics and Space Administration; the United States space program  
**inspire:** to fill with a feeling of hope



## Kalpana Chawla

Kalpana was born in India. In 1994, she became an astronaut. She worked on computers in the spaceship. In 2003,



Kalpana Chawla

Kalpana flew on Space Shuttle *Columbia*. She did many experiments on the spaceship.

There was an accident at the end of the trip. *Columbia* was coming back to Earth. Then the space shuttle broke apart. All seven astronauts were killed.

Flying in planes and on space shuttles can be dangerous. But many men and women still dream of flying. The brave women you have read about still inspire other people to learn to fly.

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- A vertical timeline on a white background with a blue border. The years are listed on the left, and the corresponding events are listed on the right. The background of the entire page is a blue sky with white clouds at the top and a dark blue space with white stars at the bottom.
- 1903 — Orville and Wilbur Wright fly a plane.
  - 1911 — Harriet Quimby becomes the first woman pilot.
  - 1932 — Amelia Earhart is the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean.  
Katherine Cheung becomes the first female Asian American pilot.
  - 1937 — Earhart disappears over the Pacific Ocean during a worldwide flight.
  - 1943 — Jackie Cochran leads the WASPs during World War II.
  - 1995 — Eileen Collins becomes first female Space Shuttle pilot.
  - 1999 — Eileen Collins becomes the first female commander of a Space Shuttle.
  - 2003 — Kalpana Chawla flies as an astronaut on Space Shuttle *Columbia*.

## Talk About It

1. Think about the aviators in the book. Which aviator interested you most? Why?
2. How did aviators in this book show they could be leaders?

## Write About It

3. On a separate piece of paper, make a time line of good things you have done in your life. For each event, include the year or years. You can begin with the year you were born. Then include events you choose.

## Extend Language

An action verb tells what someone or something does. Harriet *flew* a plane. Amelia *crossed* the Atlantic Ocean. The flight *delighted* people. In these sentences, *flew*, *crossed*, and *delighted* are action verbs. Other forms of those verbs are *fly*, *cross*, and *delight*. Begin a list of action verbs. Start with action verbs from this book.

**Illustrations:** Frank Mayo

### Photographs

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Genre	Build Background	Access Content	Extend Language
Expository Nonfiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career Adventures</li> <li>• Women in Flight</li> <li>• Astronauts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical Photographs and Captions</li> <li>• Definitions</li> <li>• Time Line</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action Verbs</li> </ul>

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