

About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Biography Page Count: 20 Word Count: 1,321

Book Summary

The first African-American female pilot, Bessie Coleman, was a brave pioneer. She set new standards for what women could do and achieve in the world. She also was instrumental in helping to create equal opportunities for African-Americans in the 1920s. This informative book, filled with photos of Coleman and the planes she flew, chronicles her life from childhood to her tragic early death in 1926.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Connect to prior knowledge

Objectives

- Connect to prior knowledge to understand nonfiction text
- Sequence events
- Identify compound subjects
- Understand and use content vocabulary

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*Bessie Coleman* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry-erase board
- Sequence events, compound subjects, content vocabulary worksheets
- Discussion cards



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting the book on an interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if the books are reused.)

Vocabulary

*Bold vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on VocabularyA-Z.com.

- Content words:

Story critical: *barnstormer* (n.), *biplane* (n.), *Curtiss Jenny* (n.), *enlisted* (v.), *loop-the-loop* (n.), *solo* (adv.)

Enrichment: *cockpit* (n.), *discrimination* (n.), *international* (adj.), *manicurist* (n.), *mechanic* (n.), *sharecroppers* (adv.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Ask students what they know about flying and airplanes. Discuss how the first airplanes may have been different from today's planes. Ask students if they know the names of any famous aviators.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Give students a copy of the book and have them preview the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers and offer ideas as to what kind of book this is and what it might be about.

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Connect to prior knowledge**

- Model making a connection to prior knowledge.
Think-aloud: The cover photo and title of the book remind me of a TV show I saw about the early days of aviation. I thought it was a fascinating topic. Because I already know some interesting facts about airplanes and flying, I'm looking forward to learning even more when we read about Bessie Coleman. I can turn to the table of contents to see what kinds of things I might learn about in this book.
- Direct students to the table of contents. Remind them that the table of contents provides an overview of what the book is about. Each section title provides an idea of what they will read in the book. After reviewing the table of contents, model using it as a way to make connections to prior knowledge. For example, say: *The section titled "Barnstorming" makes me think about what I already know about airshows. Ask students if they know anything about pilots or barnstormers performing air shows.*
- Together, read through the headings of the other sections and ask whether they provide students with a better idea of what the book is about.
- Have students preview the rest of the book, looking at photos, captions, and the map. Point out the index and explain its purpose.
- As students read, they should use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Sequence events**

- Review or explain that knowing the order in which events happen in a text helps readers understand and retell a story to others. Explain that readers can look for signal words such as *today, then, first, and after*, or time clues such as dates, that can help them understand the order of the events.
- Model using signal words to describe the sequence of an average day in your life.
Think-aloud: I know that my mornings usually follow a pattern or sequence of events. First, I wake up and turn off my alarm clock. Next, I take a shower and get dressed. Then, I eat breakfast and brush my teeth. Last, I get in the car and drive to school.
- Ask students to share their morning routine. After volunteers have shared, ask students to recall what signal words the speaker used to tell the sequence of his or her morning routine.
- Explain to students that the book *Bessie Coleman* follows a sequence about Bessie's life. Explain to students they will be using a graphic organizer to help them recall the sequence of events in the text.

Introduce the Vocabulary




- As students preview the book, point out any vocabulary you feel may be difficult for them.
- Remind students of the strategies they can use to work out words they don't know. For example, they can use what they know about letter and sound correspondence to figure out the word. They can look for base words, prefixes, and suffixes. They can use the context to work out meanings of unfamiliar words.
- Model how to apply word-attack strategies. Direct students to the first paragraph on page 12. Point to the word *solo*. Model how to use context clues to figure out the meaning of the unfamiliar word. Explain that the sentences before it tell that the planes Bessie learned in had two open cockpits so that the instructor could help fly the plane. The sentence with the unfamiliar word in it explains that in a few months Bessie was ready to fly *solo*. The sentences after it tell that she earned her international pilot's license. Explain to students that these clues make you think that the word *solo* means *by one's self*. Have students follow along as you reread the sentence on the page to confirm the meaning of the word.
- Remind students that they should check whether words make sense by rereading the sentence. If they are still unsure of the meaning, they can look up the word in the glossary or in a dictionary.

Set the Purpose

- Have students think about what they know about airplanes and flying as they read the book to identify the important events in the life of Bessie Coleman.

During Reading

Student Reading

-  **Guide the reading:** Have students read to page 10. Encourage them to underline the words and phrases in the book that tell about an important event that occurred in Bessie Coleman's life. If they finish before everyone else, encourage them to go back and reread.
- When they have finished reading, have students summarize what they read in the introduction. Ask why they think the author presented the events out of order from the rest of the book.
- Have students tell the events they underlined. Write the following events on the board: *Even though she had to work very hard in the fields, Bessie graduated all eight grades in school then worked for four years washing clothes to pay for a year of college. Bessie's family moved to Waxahachie, Texas, where she attended an all-black school. Bessie Coleman was born in Atlanta, Texas, in 1892.* Have students use their book to identify the correct order of these events. Introduce and explain the [sequence events worksheet](#). Have students write the events on the board on their worksheet in the correct order.
- Model making connections to prior knowledge.
Think-aloud: *I understood how Bessie felt when she wanted to go to college so badly but didn't have the money. I remember when I first started college; I had to find a job to make enough money to pay for classes. Ask students if any of them have ever had to work hard to save enough money to buy something they really wanted. Ask if they were proud of their accomplishment when they reached their goal and whether they think that Bessie was proud of herself.*
-  Have students read the rest of the story and underline the important events in Bessie's life. Remind them to think about what they already know about planes and pilots as they read.
-  Have students make a small question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. These can be addressed in the discussion that follows.


After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- Discuss how making connections to information in the text keeps them actively involved in the reading process and helps them understand and remember what they have read.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Review with students the sequence of events they wrote so far on their worksheet. Discuss how identifying the sequence of events helped them remember what happened in the story. Point out that being able to identify the sequence of events in the text will also help them write their own compositions in proper sequence.
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete the sequence events worksheet. If time allows, discuss their answers.
-  **Extend the discussion:** Instruct students to use the inside cover of their book to make a sequential list of people who influenced Bessie Coleman.

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Compound subjects

- Direct students to the first sentence on page 5. Ask them to tell what the sentence is about (Bessie Coleman). Review or explain that this is called the *subject* of the sentence. The *subject* tells *who* or *what* the sentence is about. Write the following sentence on the board: *Hard wooden benches lined the train.* Ask students what they think the subject is (*benches*). Point out that the subject is a noun. Explain that the words *hard* and *wooden* are adjectives that tell what the subject, *benches*, looked like. The verb *lined* tells what the benches did.
- Explain to students that some sentences have more than one subject. Direct students to the last sentence in the first paragraph of page 11: *Robert Abbott and other friends helped her pay for the trip as well.* Ask students to tell the subjects of the sentence (*Robert Abbott, other friends*). Then ask them to tell what the subjects did (*helped her pay for the trip*). Explain that they can check their answers by using each subject separately in the sentence. Demonstrate by reading the sentence as follows: *Robert Abbott helped her pay... and other friends helped her pay...* Explain that you know both of these are subjects because they make sense with the verb.
- **Check for understanding:** Direct students to page 18 and ask them to find the sentence that has a compound subject. (*She and her mechanic...*)
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [compound subjects worksheet](#). Discuss students' answers when they have finished.

Word Work: Content vocabulary

- Explain to students that many of the words in the book are used to tell about planes and flying. Talk about content words, such as *barnstormers* and *biplanes*.
- **Check for understanding:** Provide opportunities for students to say the new vocabulary words from the book and to make up sentences using the words.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [content vocabulary worksheet](#). Each worksheet provides an opportunity for students to work with two vocabulary words. Supply multiple copies for students to continue working on more words from the text if they have time.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Invite students to read their book independently. Additionally, partners can take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends.

Extend the Reading

Writing Connection

Provide print and Internet resources for students to research other influential African-Americans of the past. Have students choose one person and write a report that includes answers to what, when, where, and why. Encourage them to use sequential order to tell about the person's life. Have students share their reports with the group.

Visit [Writing A-Z](#) for a lesson and leveled materials on expository writing.

Science Connection

Have students make paper airplanes of different shapes and sizes. Have them compare construction, weight, the distance each one flies, the person launching each one, and current weather conditions (if outdoors). Chart the results. If possible, invite a pilot to talk with the class about different types of aircraft and about flying in general.

Skill Review

Discussion cards covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment

Monitor students to determine if they can:

- consistently use the reading strategy of making connections to prior knowledge to understand nonfiction text
- correctly identify and sequence important events in a biography during discussion and on a worksheet
- accurately identify compound subjects during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly understand and use content vocabulary during discussion and on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

- **Book Quiz**
- **Retelling Rubric**