

WOMEN AVIATORS DISCUSSION GUIDE



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About This Book

From the very first days of aviation, women were there. *Women Aviators: 26 Stories of Pioneer Flights, Daring Missions, and Record-Setting Journeys* profiles remarkable female pilots who sought out and conquered challenges both in the sky and on the ground. They broke records, entertained, served their country, and made history.

Pre-Reading Activity

Name a female pilot other than Amelia Earhart. Can you? Many people have trouble naming female pilots although there have been thousands. Why do we not know about these leaders in aviation? Think about what you know about women pilots as you read *Women Aviators*.

Discussion Questions

- Why was Katherine Wright referred to as the “Third Wright Brother”? Did you even know the Wright Brothers had a sister?
- Compare and contrast the firsts from these women: Baroness Raymonde de Laroche, Harriet Quimby, and Bessie Coleman.
- What did Bessie Coleman have to prepare to be a pilot and earn her license?
- Why is Amelia Earhart the most famous female pilot? In your opinion, was she the best pilot?
- Did Elinor Smith’s background help or harm in her aspirations to be a pilot? What makes you think this?
- In addition to discrimination, what were some of the other difficulties for women wanting to fly in the early 20th century? Do any continue today?
- The first women’s air race was the National Women’s Air Derby, nicknamed the Powder Puff Derby. Pilot Louise Thaden said, “To us, the successful completion of the Derby was or more important than life or death.” What did she mean by that?
- What are the Ninety-Nines and what role does it play in women’s aviation?
- Who were the Flying Stinsons?
- Willa Brown went from teaching business to teaching flying. What barriers did she help break?
- Pilots were in high demand in World War II, but only one country in the world allowed women to fly in combat. What country was it and what were the results?
- Although American women weren’t allowed to fly in combat during World War II, 1,074 women belonged to the Women’s Airforce Service Pilots (WASP). What service did they provide during war time and what dangers did they face?
- Why did it take over 30 years before the WASPs were recognized and given veteran’s status?
- Who was Jackie Cochran and what did she do in women’s aviation?
- Wally Funk engaged in many firsts in aviation. What were they?
- Research whether any women from the book still flying today. Can you find other notable women pilots?
- The International Society of Women Airline Pilots (ISAWAP) state that slightly over 3% of the world’s pilots are women. What does this say about women in aviation? What can be done to change it?