

Annotation Practice: Informational Text

Directions: download this assignment into Goodnotes and use the color key below to annotate the most important elements of the article that make it a strong informational text. If you choose to work in groups, you must list the names of all the students in the group on the line below. Groups should be no larger than four people. If you choose to work alone, just write your name.

Group names: _____

Color Key: Draw a different color on each line to indicate each element of the article below. Then use that color to mark the corresponding phrases, sentences, and/or paragraphs that fit each element.

_____ Introduction	_____ Reason
_____ Hook	_____ Quotation from Historical Figure (Evidence)
_____ Thesis	_____ Fact (Evidence)
_____ Conclusion	_____ Narrative/Anecdote (Evidence)

“Women in Aviation”

History Writing by Patricia and Fredrick McKissack

1. American aviation was from its very beginnings marred with sexist and racist assumptions. It was taken for granted that women were generally inferior to men and that white men were superior to all others. Flying, it was said, required a level of skill and courage that women and blacks lacked. Yet despite these prevailing prejudices, the dream and the desire to fly stayed alive among women and African-Americans.
2. The story of women in aviation actually goes back to the time of the hot-air balloons. A number of women in Europe and America gained fame for their skill and daring. Sophie Blanchard made her first solo balloon flight in 1805. She grew in fame and was eventually named official aeronaut of the empire by Napoleon. By 1834, at least twenty women in Europe were piloting their own balloons.
3. Though she did not fly, Katherine Wright was a major supporter of her brothers' efforts. Orville so appreciated his sister's help that he said, "When the world speaks of the Wrights, it must include my sister. . . . She inspired much of our effort."
4. Although Raymonde de la Roche of France was the first woman in the world to earn her pilot's license, Harriet Quimby held the distinction of being the first American woman to become a licensed pilot.
5. On August 1, 1911, Quimby, who was described as a "real beauty" with "haunting blue-green eyes," strolled off the field after passing her pilot's test easily. To the male reporters who inundated her with questions, Quimby fired back answers with self-confidence. Walking past a group of women who had come to witness the historic event, Quimby was overheard to quip with a smile and a wink: "Flying is easier than voting." (The Woman's Suffrage Amendment wasn't passed until 1920.)
6. As difficult as it was for women to become pilots in significant numbers, it was doubly hard for African-Americans, especially black women. That's why Bessie Coleman, the first African-American to earn her pilot's license, is such an exciting and important figure in aviation.

7. Bessie Coleman was born in 1893 in Atlanta, Texas, the twelfth of thirteen children. Her mother, who had been a slave, valued education and encouraged all of her children to attend school in order to better themselves. The encouragement paid off, because Coleman graduated from high school, a feat not too many black women were able to accomplish in the early 1900s.

8. Bessie Coleman refused to accept the limitations others tried to place on her. She attended an Oklahoma college for one semester but ran out of money. Accepting the offer of one of her brothers to come live with him and his family in Chicago, Coleman found a job as a manicurist. She fully intended to return to school after saving enough money. But she never did. While in Chicago she learned about flying and made a new set of goals for herself. She wanted to be a pilot.

9. Coleman learned about flying from reading newspaper accounts of air battles during World War I. She tried to find a school that would accept her as a trainee. But no American instructor or flying school was willing to teach her.

10. When the war ended, a friend, Robert S. Abbott, the founder of the Chicago Defender, one of the most popular black-owned and -operated newspapers in the country, suggested that Coleman go to France, where racial prejudice was not as restrictive as it was in America. Even though the United States was the birthplace of flight, it was slower than other countries to develop an organized aviation program. European leaders immediately saw the commercial and military advantages of a strong national aviation program. Bessie knew from her reading that both French and German aircraft were among the best in the world.

11. Coleman had also read about Eugene Jacques Bullard, the well-decorated and highly honored native of Georgia who had become the first African-American to fly an airplane in combat as a member of the French Lafayette Flying Corps during World War I. Other blacks had gone to Europe to get their training, too. Coleman realized that if she were ever going to get a chance to fly, she, too, would have to go to France. But she didn't have any money to get there, and besides, she couldn't speak a word of French.

12. For almost two years, Coleman worked part-time as a manicurist and as a server in a Chicago chili parlor and saved every penny to finance her trip to France. Meanwhile she learned to speak French, so when the time came, she'd be able to understand her instructors.

13. In 1921, Coleman made it to France, where she found an instructor who was one of Tony Fokker's chief pilots. Fokker, the famous aircraft manufacturer, said Coleman was a "natural talent." On June 15, 1921, Coleman made history by becoming the first black woman to earn her wings, thus joining the ranks of the handful of American women fliers.

14. Returning to the United States determined to start a flying school where other African-American pilots could be trained, Coleman looked for ways to finance her dream. There were very few jobs in the aviation industry for women or blacks. She soon learned that there was little or no support for a black woman who wanted to start a flying school. To call attention to aviation and to encourage other women and African-Americans to take part in the new and growing field, Coleman gave flying exhibitions and lectured on aviation. She thrilled audiences with daredevil maneuvers, just as Quimby had done before her.

15. Along with racism, Coleman encountered the burden of sexism, but she made believers out of those who doubted her skill. “The color of my skin,” she said, “[was] a drawback at first. . . . I was a curiosity, but soon the public discovered I could really fly. Then they came to see Brave Bessie, as they called me.”

16. The strict rules and regulations that govern aviation today didn’t exist during the first three decades of flying. For example, it wasn’t uncommon for aviators to ignore safety belts and fly without parachutes. One of these simple safety precautions might have saved the lives of both Harriet Quimby and Bessie Coleman.

17. On a July morning in 1912, Quimby, and a passenger named William P. Willard, set out to break an over-water speed record. When Quimby climbed to five thousand feet, the French-made Blériot monoplane suddenly nosed down. Both Quimby and Willard were thrown from the plane and plunged to their deaths in the Boston Harbor.

18. The New York Sun used the opportunity to speak out against women fliers: Miss Quimby is the fifth woman in the world killed while operating an aeroplane (three were students) and their number thus far is five too many. The sport is not one for which women are physically qualified. As a rule they lack strength and presence of mind and the courage to excel as aviators. It is essentially a man’s sport and pastime.

19. Fourteen years later, Bessie Coleman died in a similar accident. With almost enough savings to start her school, Coleman agreed to do an air show in Florida on May Day for the Negro Welfare League of Jacksonville. At 7:30 P.M. the night before, Coleman, accompanied by her publicity agent, William Wills, took her plane up for a test flight. When she reached an altitude of about five thousand feet, her plane flipped over. Coleman was thrown from the plane and plunged to her death April 30, 1926. Wills died seconds later when the plane crashed.

20. Once again critics used the tragedy to assert that neither women nor blacks were mentally or physically able to be good pilots. “Women are often penalized by publicity for their every mishap,” said Amelia Earhart, the most famous female pilot in aviation history. “The result is that such emphasis sometimes directly affects [a woman’s] chances for a flying job,” Earhart continued. “I had one manufacturer tell me that he couldn’t risk hiring women pilots because of the way accidents, even minor ones, became headlines in the newspapers.”

21. Although Bessie Coleman died tragically, her plans to open a flight training school for blacks were continued by those she had inspired.

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