



0. WILBUR AND ORVILLE WRIGHT - Story Preface

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Ever since 1878, when their father brought home a toy helicopter powered by a rubber band, Will and his brother Orville wanted to fly.

Although flying machines (follow this link to a drawing by Leonardo da Vinci from 1488) had been designed and invented before Will Wright's "affliction," the only humans who had ever flown a controlled flight were characters from Greek mythology. Remember the story?

Daedalus, a famous Greek inventor and craftsman from Athens, was summoned by King Minos (of Crete). At the king's request, the architect created a maze to prevent a monster bull, called the Minotaur, from escaping.

When Minos grew angry with his inventor, he threw both Daedalus and his son, Icarus, into the labyrinth. Since he had created the maze, Daedalus knew how to get out of it. But how would he leave the island? He fashioned wings, made of bees' wax and bird feathers, to help him and Icarus fly away.

Icarus did not heed his father's warning: "Don't fly too close to the sun." When his wing wax melted, Icarus fell to his death while his father flew safely to Sicily.

Before Wilbur and Orville Wright, no one but mythical characters flew. Flying machines which had been invented didn't work properly because they could not be controlled in flight.

Even the Wright brothers had a seven-year struggle. (This link takes you to a crash of their 1900 glider.) Things we take for granted today - how to use lift, thrust, weight and drag to fly - were not common knowledge before the Wright brothers.

After the Wright brothers, the world changed. Darrel Collins, from Kitty Hawk National Historical Park, said it best:

Before the Wright Brothers, no one in aviation did anything fundamentally right. Since the Wright Brothers, no one has done anything fundamentally different.

Wilbur and Orville owned a bike shop in Dayton, Ohio. It was the very things they knew and did as bike shop owners that helped them figure out what no one before them had fully understood.

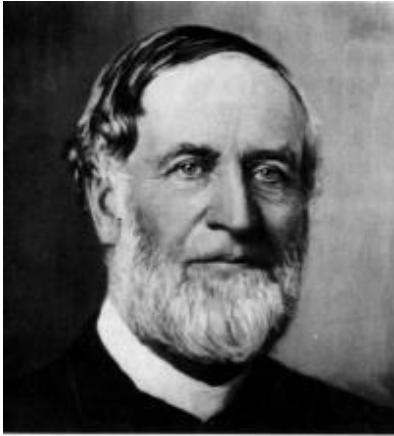
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/WILBUR-AND-ORVILLE-WRIGHT-History-of-Flight>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/WILBUR-AND-ORVILLE-WRIGHT-History-of-Flight>

Media Stream



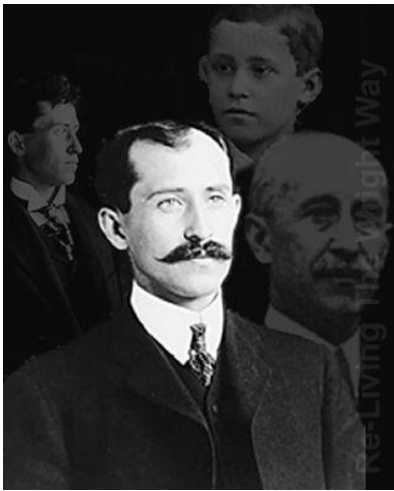
Father of Orville and Wilbur Wright

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Park Service.

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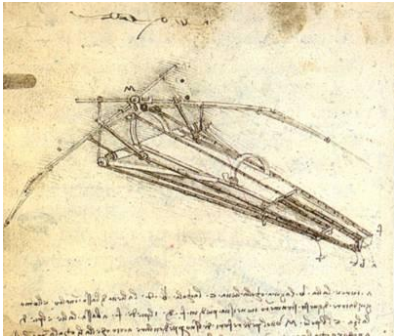


Orville Wright - First to Fly

Photo online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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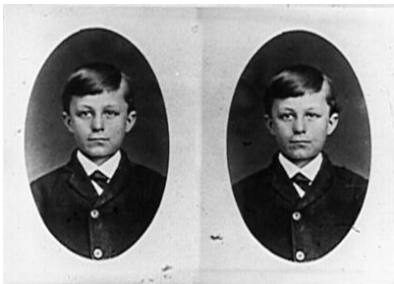


Drawing - by Leonardo da Vinci

This image is from the Institut de France, Paris. Online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Wilbur Wright - Photo

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

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Icarus Falling - Illustration

Image online, courtesy the George Washington University website.

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Death of Icarus - By P. Brueghel, the Elder

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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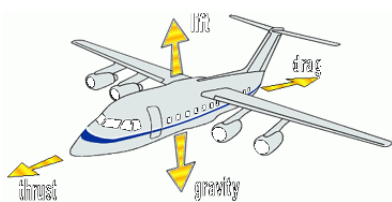
A Failed Attempt - Wright's Glider in 1900

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

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Four Forces of Flight

Image online, courtesy NASA.

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