



Readers' Theater



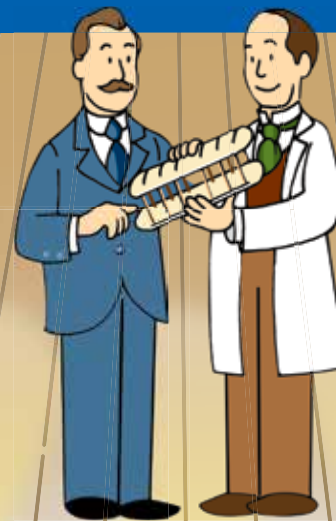
Readers' Theater



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The Wright Brothers and the First Airplane



GRL: J
DRA: 18

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Each reader's part is highlighted in color.

List of Characters

(in order of appearance)

Group 1: Green

Group 2: Blue

Group 3: Orange

Orville Wright: Light Blue

Wilbur Wright: Purple

Orville and Wilbur: Red



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Group 1: Since the days of Orville and Wilbur Wright, people have built better and faster airplanes.

Group 2: Airplanes fly all over the world. Some can fly faster than the speed of sound.

Group 3: You can see the Flyer, the Wright brothers' first plane, in the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. It reminds us of the Wright brothers' success and how much we have learned about flight.



The Wright Brothers and the First Airplane

Group 1: People have always wanted to fly like birds, but no one knew how.

Group 2: People tried wings and balloons. They tried kites and gliders, but they still couldn't fly.

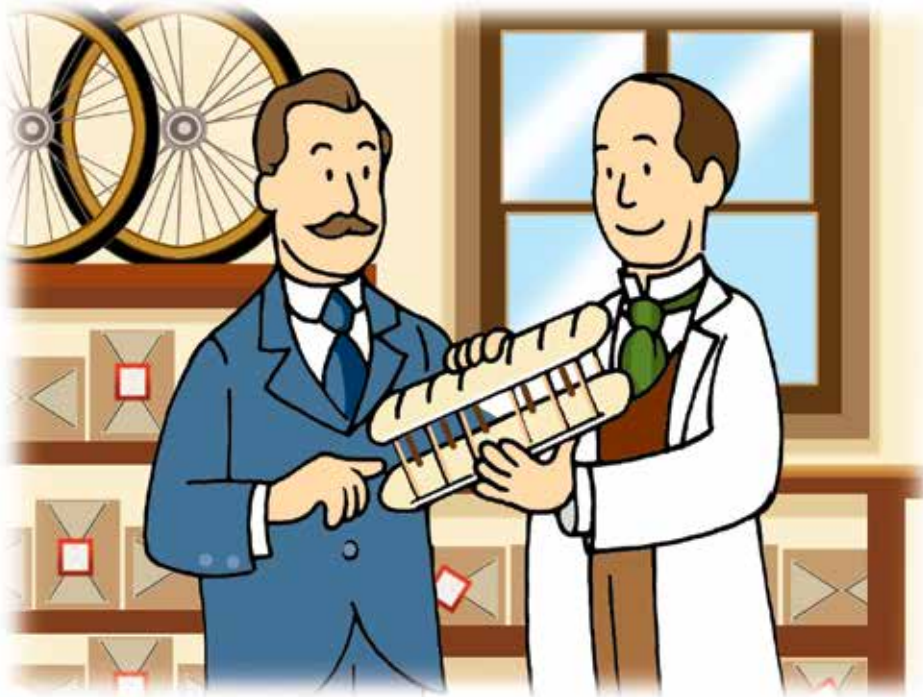
Group 3: In 1896, two brothers, Orville and Wilbur Wright, read about gliders in the newspaper.



Group 1: Gliders don't have engines.
They ride the air like kites.

Orville Wright: Gliders are hard to steer
in the air. Maybe we can figure
out a way to make one work.

Wilbur Wright: We need to build a glider
with moving parts.



Group 1: People who were watching the
Flyer ran back into town. They
were very excited.

Orville and Wilbur: We did it! Our machine
works! It really works!

Group 2: Soon everyone in the world knew
that two bicycle repairmen from
Ohio had built the first real flying
machine—the first airplane.



Group 1: They tried again on December 17. Again, the brothers took turns and Orville went first.

Group 2: Orville flew the Flyer 120 feet and stayed in the air for 12 seconds.

Group 3: Wilbur flew the Flyer 175 feet.

Group 1: Then Orville flew 200 feet.

Group 2: On the last flight of the day, Wilbur flew the Flyer 852 feet and stayed in the air for 59 seconds!

Orville and Wilbur: No human has ever flown that far before!



Group 1: Orville and Wilbur Wright fixed and sold bicycles in their shop in Dayton, Ohio.

Group 2: In his free time, Wilbur read everything he could find about flight. He also watched birds and studied how they flew.

Wilbur: Birds never crash, Orville. They stay in the air because they can move their wings, heads, and tails. If we can build a machine with moving parts, it will fly, too!



Group 1: In 1900, the brothers started to build different types of gliders.

Group 2: When their second glider crashed in 1901, Wilbur wanted to give up.

Wilbur: I don't think people will ever be able to fly—not in a thousand years!

Orville: We can't give up. We just have to keep trying.



Group 1: They took their new machine to Kitty Hawk. The Flyer weighed 600 pounds. It was 40 feet from wingtip to wingtip.

Group 2: On December 14, 1903, the weather was bad. Wilbur and Orville wanted to fly the Flyer and see if it worked.

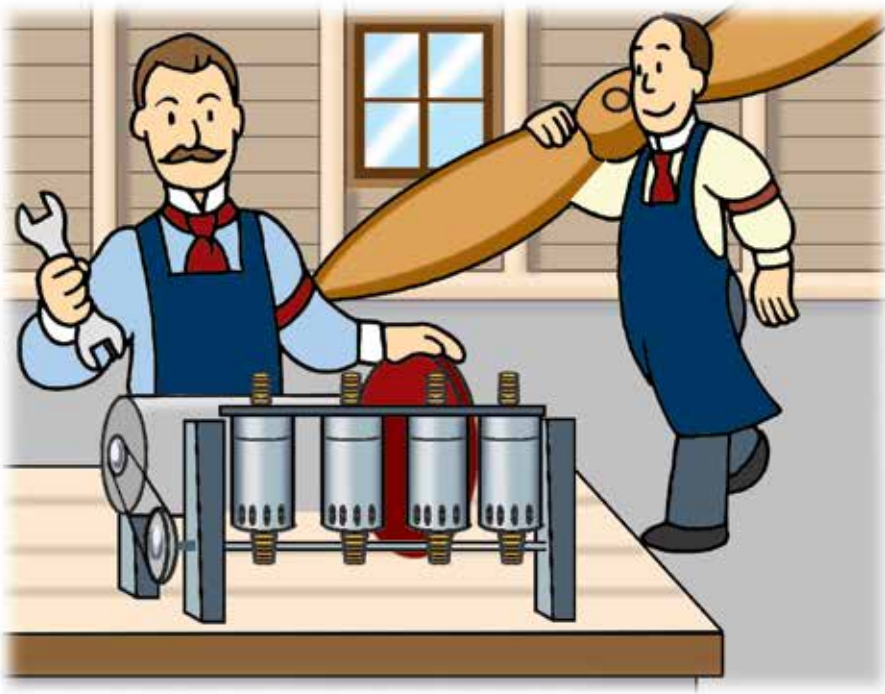
Wilbur: Let's hurry up and try the Flyer. I want to be back home in Ohio for Christmas!

Group 3: They flipped a coin to see which of them would fly their new machine first. Wilbur won. The Flyer went a few feet into the air and crashed.



Wilbur: We can do so much better! If we can put an engine on the glider, it will fly even if the wind isn't blowing!

Group 1: The brothers went back to Ohio and built an engine in their bike shop. They built the world's first working airplane propeller.



Group 1: The brothers found a way to move the wings on their third glider. They made a tail that wiggled like a bird's tail.

Orville: Let's see how our new glider flies.



Group 1: In 1902, the brothers took their third glider to a beach in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. They took turns flying their glider.

Group 3: They flew their glider more than 700 times in about five weeks! They recorded the distance and time of each flight.

Group 1: Wilbur had the best flight that season. He flew 622 feet and stayed in the air for 26 seconds.

