

## USA: Off to a flying start

**Level:** Pre-intermediate / Intermediate

**Age:** Teenagers / Young adults

**Duration:** Approx. 60 minutes

**Aims:** In this lesson the students will:

1. learn about the Wright brothers and other American inventors;
2. learn a range of language related to flying - *crash (n)*, *cabin crew*, *catapult*, *rudder*, *lean (v)*, *runway*, *glide (v)*, *take-off*, *steer (v)*, *land (v)*
3. practise extensive and intensive listening and a range of listening sub-skills including listening for specific information and gist;
4. complete a memory recall comprehension task to consolidate the story and new language;
5. practise a variety of expressions related to encouragement and reassurance in a role-play task.

**Materials:** one copy of the worksheet per student; Track 1 (introduction); Track 2 (remaining audio) and Track 3 (full audio) - all downloaded from onestopenglish

**Summary:** Journey back in time with time-travelling teenager Amber Adams to meet the famous airplane inventors Wilbur and Orville Wright. Will Amber manage to avoid crashing one of their original flying machines?

### Warmer

**Aim:** to introduce students to the character of Amber, the secret watch and the Wright brothers

1. Play Track 1 (introduction). At this stage, don't worry about pre-teaching vocabulary; encourage your students to simply listen for enjoyment. Stress that they don't need to write anything down.

2. After listening to the introduction, discuss the answers to the following questions with the whole class:

- Who is Amber Adams?
- Who does she go back in time to find?

### Inventions task

1. Write *The Wright brothers* on the board. Ask students if they have heard of the Wright brothers. Do they know what they are famous for inventing? Write their suggestions on the board.

2. Write the following inventions on the board: *Franklin stove*, *light bulb*, *jeans*. Ask students if they know who invented each item. They can discuss the answers in pairs. Add any suggestions to the board but don't confirm whether they are correct at this stage.

2. Hand out the student worksheet and ask students to read the excerpt taken from *USA - A Macmillan Cultural Reader* by Coleen Degnan-Veness with Chantal Veness to check their answers.

**Note:** The reading passage refers to 'airplane' which is the American spelling of 'aeroplane'.

**Key:** 1. d; 2. b; 3. f; 4. e; 5. a; 6. c

3. Finally, put students into small groups and ask them to discuss the questions below the reading passage. Ask the groups to feedback their ideas to the rest of the class.

### Language task

**Aim:** to focus on a range of language related to flying

Direct your students to the vocabulary task on the worksheet and ask them to match the words to their definitions. All the definitions are taken from [macmillandictionary.com](http://macmillandictionary.com). Feed back on the answers as a group.

**Key:** 1. *cabin crew*; 2. *runway*; 3. *rudder*; 4. *lean*; 5. *lands*; 6. *takes off*; 7. *steer*; 8. *catapult*; 9. *crash*; 10. *glide*

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### Listening task

**Aim:** to practise listening for gist

1. Direct students to the listening task on the worksheet and explain that they need to listen for the answers to the questions.
2. Play Track 2 (remaining audio).

**Key:** 1. *He needs a person her weight to help balance the flying machine;* 2. *The flying machine (plane) very nearly crashes.*

### Memory task

**Aim:** to allow students to fully consolidate what they have heard

Put students into small groups and ask them to work together to see how much of the story they can remember.

**Key:** 1. *the USA;* 2. *nervous;* 3. *a boy;* 4. *he had a small crash / accident;* 5. *she will bounce;* 6. *to steer the plane with the rudder;* 7. *because the plane is heading straight towards some trees;* 8. *left;* 9. *a cowshed;* 10. *because she looks pale*

### Speaking task

**Aim:** to consolidate the meaning and use expressions related to encouragement and reassurance.

1. Tell students that they are going to do a role play on the following situation:

*Student A is going to live abroad to work or study but is feeling very nervous about it.*

*Student B is a good friend of Student A and wants to reassure them*

2. Ask the class to suggest what Student A might be worried about, for example, *money, making friends, cooking, missing their friends and family*. Then ask the class to suggest ways that Student B could make Student A feel better, for example, *you'll be able to find a job, you are really good at making friends, you could invite your family to visit*. Encourage students to be creative with their ideas.

3. Place the students in pairs and ask them to practise the dialogue using the expressions on the worksheet and the suggestions on the board. They should use at least three of the expressions. When they have practised, ask them to swap roles and try the dialogue again. Monitor closely offering guidance on pronunciation and intonation. Students playing the role of Student B should try to be supportive and sympathetic.

4. Ask for volunteers to present their dialogue to the class.

### Extension activities

1. Place students in pairs to research one of the great American inventors mentioned in the Inventions activity. Ask each pair to prepare a short presentation on their chosen inventor to share with the class.
2. Ask students to consider what they think is the greatest invention of the last few hundred years. They should research the invention for homework and share their findings with the class.

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### Inventions task

Read the excerpt about American inventors and discuss the questions below.

## American inventors

Throughout American history, there have been many great inventors – people who make something for the first time. Some inventors become national heroes because their inventions make extremely important changes to their country and also to the world. The names of some of these inventors are internationally famous.

Adapted from *USA* (Macmillan Cultural Readers)  
by Coleen Degnan-Veness with Chantal Veness  
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1741	1852	1873	1879	1888	1891	1903
Franklin stove	elevator	jeans	light bulb	Kodak camera	movie camera	airplane
Benjamin Franklin	Elisha Graves Otis	Levi Strauss	Thomas Edison	George Eastman	Thomas Edison	Wilbur and Orville Wright

1. What impact have these inventions had on our daily lives?
2. What would you invent and why?

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### Language Task

Match the words in the box to the definitions below.

crash (n)	cabin crew	catapult	rudder	lean (v)
runway	glide (v)	takes off	steer (v)	lands (v)

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ on a plane are the people who look after the passengers.
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ is a long road used by planes when they land or take off, usually at an airport.
3. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a flat piece of wood at the back of a plane or boat that changes the direction of travel.
4. To \_\_\_\_\_ is to move your body so it is closer to or further from something.
5. When a plane comes down from the sky at the end of journey it \_\_\_\_\_.
6. When a plane goes up into the sky from the runway it \_\_\_\_\_.
7. To \_\_\_\_\_ is to control the direction in which a vehicle moves.
8. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a piece of equipment used for sending aircrafts into the air.
9. A \_\_\_\_\_ occurs when a vehicle hits something.
10. To \_\_\_\_\_ is to fly without using power, carried by the wind.

### Listening task

Listen to the story and answer the questions below.

1. Why does Wilbur Wright need Amber to help him to fly?
2. What problem occurs on Amber's journey?

### Memory task

Working in small groups, see what you can remember by answering the following questions:

1. Where are Amber and her Grandad going?
2. How does Amber's Grandad feel before the flight?
3. What does Wilbur mistake Amber for?
4. Why is Wilbur limping?
5. What does Orville say will happen if Ambers falls from the flying machine?
6. When in the air what does Orville allow Amber to do?
7. Why does Amber start to panic?
8. What direction do they have to lean in?
9. What do they nearly hit?
10. Why does Amber's Grandad ask her if she's okay at the end of the flight?

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### Speaking task

Now you and your partner must create your own role play using the scenario below.

**Student A** is going to live abroad to work or study and is feeling very nervous about it.

**Student B** wants to reassure and Student A that everything will be OK.

1. Firstly, discuss with the whole class some of the things that Student A might be worried about. Then think about how Student B could reassure Student A. Be creative with your answers.
2. Read the expressions in the box and practise saying them aloud. Try to sound reassuring!

### Reassuring and encouraging

- You'll love it
- Don't be afraid
- You'll be just fine
- There's no need to worry
- You have to take risks in life
- It will turn out alright
- Whatever you do, don't panic!
- To get through something

3. Practise the dialogue with your partner. You must use at least three of the expressions in the box as well as your own ideas from the class discussion. When you have finished, swap roles with your partner and try again.
4. If you're feeling confident, perform your dialogue to the rest of the class!

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**Amber:** Hi! I'm Amber, Amber Adams! Now keep this to yourself, but I've got something amazing to show you! OK, it's a watch! But it's not just any old watch - listen to what happens when I touch it! I can use it to travel through time to anywhere I want to go. So, what do you reckon? Are you ready to come on an adventure?

Track 1

**Captain:** Ladies and gentlemen this is your Captain speaking. We're due to take off at any moment now and I hope you enjoy the flight.

**Amber:** Yes! We're going to America, Grandad! We are finally going!

**Grandad:** Please calm down Amber, I'm feeling rather nervous.

**Amber:** Sorry, Grandad, I'm just excited! I didn't know flying made you nervous. I always thought you were very brave.

**Grandad:** I am brave! I just ... Well, it's all a bit scary.

**Captain:** Cabin crew, prepare for take-off.

**Grandad:** You see, things have changed, it's not like it was back in the days of Orville and Wilbur Wright. They invented the first aeroplane you know - or flying machine as they called it. They once described flying as, "birds soaring freely through space on the infinite highway of the air!" I'm going to get some sleep, Amber. Wake me when we get there.

**Amber:** I just can't believe you're scared of flying, Grandad ... Grandad? He's already asleep! Hmm, the Wright brothers sound interesting. I wonder ...

**Amber:** OK, the year is 1905 and this should be the right place. Yes! That's Wilbur Wright over there, I've seen his photo on Wikipedia!

**Wilbur:** Hmm, we just need a little extra weight from somewhere. We need more weight!

Track 2

**Wilbur:** Aha! You boy, you must be from the local school. Come here, you look just about the right size!

**Amber:** I'm a girl.

**Wilbur:** Of course! How much do you weigh?

**Amber:** About ...

**Wilbur:** Actually, let me pick you up. Put your arms out to the sides. Yes! You're the perfect weight to balance out our flying machine. Follow me!

**Amber:** Erm, OK! Why are you limping?

**Wilbur:** Hmm, there was a bit of an accident the other day. However, it was only a small crash and I'm pretty sure we've fixed the problem now!

**Amber:** Small crash? Erm ... I don't think I want to ...

**Wilbur:** Nonsense, **you'll love it!** The sensation of flying is one of perfect peace mixed with great excitement, if you can imagine it? Orville!

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- Orville:** Yes?
- Wilbur:** This boy is the perfect weight to balance the machine, you know, so we don't crash land again.
- Amber:** I'm a girl!
- Wilbur:** **Don't be afraid**, boy, my brother Orville will tell you what you need to do.
- Orville:** Hey there little guy! You'll fly with me, and my brother Wilbur will shout directions from the ground using a megaphone. What's your name, boy?
- Amber:** Amber.
- Orville:** That sure is a funny name for a boy, never mind!
- Amber:** Is this flying machine safe?
- Orville:** Oh, yes, yes, yes, ermm, no. Well - it's probably safe. **You'll be just fine** because you're small enough that you'll bounce if you fall - small people bounce. Everyone knows that! Now, **there's no need to worry**. Climb up the ladder.
- Amber:** I'm not sure ...
- Orville:** Yes you are. **You have to take risks in life**. Up the ladder. Good. Now jump up here. Let me strap you in. Hold on tight to that lever and follow my instructions. Ready for take-off, Wilbur!
- Wilbur:** I'm starting the engine up, Orville!
- Wilbur:** WE'RE ALL SET! I'LL LAUNCH THE CATAPULT!
- Amber:** Catapult? You never said anything about a catapuUUUUUUUUllllllttt!
- Orville:** OK, Amber - that lever you're holding controls the rudder, which steers the flying machine left and right. Give it a try!
- Amber:** Oh wow! This is amazing!
- Orville:** We are like birds soaring freely through space on the infinite highway of the air! See, I told you it would **turn out alright!** Now we're getting close to the end of the field, so let's turn sharply to the left.
- Amber:** Yes, Captain!
- Amber:** Oh. Orville? I think I got a bit excited and I think I've broken the lever.
- Orville:** ARGH! **WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T PANIC!** We can still control it. We just need to lean in the direction we want to go!
- Amber:** Well, can we do that right now? I mean, I know you said 'DON'T PANIC', but we're heading straight towards those trees!
- Orville:** LEAN TO THE LEFT!
- Amber:** I can't, I'm strapped in! Help!
- Orville:** Quick, let me take the straps off. Now lean left!

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- Amber:** Oh, we made it!
- Orville:** Phew, that was close.
- Orville:** Oh.
- Amber:** Orville, erm, we're losing height!
- Orville:** We can glide back to the runway, lean left again. It's OK, we can go straight over that farm. **Don't worry; we'll get through this together.**
- Amber:** We're going to hit that cowshed!
- Orville:** That was too close. Right, we're coming into land. **HOLD ON TIGHT!**
- Cabin crew:** Please remain seated until the captain has switched off the fasten seatbelt signs and the plane has come to a complete stop.
- Grandad:** Ah! Good morning! I slept through the whole journey! Are you alright Amber? You're looking a bit pale ...
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