

## Amelia Earhart

Amelia Earhart was born in Kansas on July 24th, 1897. By the time of her mysterious death, she would be famous around the world. Earhart changed the world of aviation completely during her lifetime.

Amelia was determined to do things her way from the beginning. Girls were expected to behave in certain ways back then. Earhart had other ideas. She played basketball, attended college and completed a course on car mechanics. During World War 1, she headed to Canada and became a Red Cross nurse. It was during this period that she spent time watching pilots at the local airfield. Her lifelong interest in the skies was born.

Earhart didn't take her first flight until 1920. She took to the skies above California with the famous World War 1 pilot, Frank Hawks. Amelia started taking flying lessons in 1921. Her instructor was another female pilot named Neta Snook. Earhart purchased her own plane later that year. It was bright yellow. She nicknamed it "The Canary". She passed her flight test at the end of the year and participated in her first flight exhibition a few days later.

Throughout her life, Amelia Earhart had done things her own way. She was a great advocate for equality and fought for women to be treated the same as men. She said, "Women must try to do things as men have tried. When they fail, their failure must be but a challenge to others." She set about proving that women were as capable as men almost immediately.

In 1922, Earhart broke her first record. She became the first woman to fly a plane above 14,000 feet. Ten years later, she became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. She was only the second person ever to complete this task. The US government awarded her the Distinguished Flying Cross for her achievement. She was the first woman to receive the honour.



That wasn't the end of Earhart's flying prowess. Later that year, she became the first female to complete a solo, non-stop flight across the United States. The journey took her 19 hours. In 1935, she became the first woman to fly solo from Hawaii to the United States mainland.

Throughout her career, Earhart fought for the rights of female pilots. She founded the international organisation for female pilots called the Ninety-Nines in 1929. She also became the first president of the organisation of licensed pilots.

Disaster struck in 1937. Earhart was determined to become the first person ever to fly around the world. She was joined on the flight by Fred Noonan. Everything went well for a while. They touched down in New Guinea on June 29th. They had flown 22,000 miles and had 7,000 more to go to make history. The pair left on July 2nd and were never seen again. Amelia Earhart wasn't quite 40 years old.

The president of the United States ordered a two-week search of the ocean. Nothing was found. Eventually, both pilots were declared lost at sea. There are many theories as to what happened. However, the fate of one of the most famous pilots in history remains a mystery.

## RETRIEVAL FOCUS

1. What was the first record that Amelia Earhart broke?
2. Why did Earhart nickname her plane 'The Canary'?
3. How old was Earhart when she disappeared?
4. Who disappeared alongside Earhart?
5. In their final flight, how far did they have left to fly to break the record?

## VIPERS QUESTIONS

- I** Why wasn't Amelia Earhart like other girls as a child?
- V** Find a word with a meaning closest to "a person who recommends or supports something".
- S** What is the meaning of the quote from Amelia Earhart in the text?
- V** If somebody flies "solo", what does it mean?
- I** Do you think the US government were proud of Amelia Earhart? What makes you think this?