

Sprouting Wings: Companion Questions and Activities

Discussion Questions:

Here are some discussion questions for use in a classroom after reading *Sprouting Wings*:

- 1) How did James Herman Banning's ability to tell a story help make his journey possible?
- 2) What specific abilities did Thomas Cox Allen have that enabled him to help make the flight across America possible?
- 3) James Herman Banning and Thomas Cox Allen did not always get along, but they needed to collaborate to make the journey possible. How did their differences complement each other?
- 4) What are some of the ways communities came together to support Banning's journey?
- 5) How did Banning's ability to read and write help make his journey a success?
- 6) How did Banning and Allen's knowledge of math and engineering help ensure their journey was successful?

Extension Questions:

- 1) What are some of the ways you can collaborate with someone you don't always get along with? Someone you don't know well?
- 2) How does your community come together to support one another?
- 3) What special abilities do you bring to your community?

Activity: Compare and Contrast Charles Lindbergh's flight with James Herman Banning's flight.

(**Teacher's note:** This requires research on Lindbergh, his plan and his flight across the Atlantic. All information about Banning's flight is included in *Sprouting Wings*. Chart below provided for students to use.)

Have the students fill in the chart below for both Banning and Lindbergh

Lindbergh: Research the specifics about Lindbergh's plane including any information about its special design and any other details they deem important. Note how Lindbergh raised the money for his flight. Have them research and list ten newspapers that covered Lindbergh's journey. Also what specific skills helped Lindbergh made his flight over the Atlantic a success. Now fill in the chart below.

Banning: Next, have students list on the chart below what steps specific details about Banning's plane and any other information they feel is important. Have students list how Banning and Allen raised money for their flight. Have them research and list at least three newspapers that covered Banning's flight. Now fill in the chart below.

Now for the fun part. The students have done their research, filled out the chart and now can compare the two flights!

- 1) Compare and contrast Lindbergh's plane to Banning's plane.
- 2) Compare and contrast the media that covered Banning's and Lindbergh's journey.
- 3) Compare and contrast how each raised money for their heroic flights.
- 4) Compare and contrast the two men's skills. Were some of the skills Banning needed different from the skills Lindbergh needed? (Hint: yes)
- 5) Both of these men were considered heroes in the history of aviation. How are their heroics the same, and how are they different? Do you think one is more of a hero than the other? How do you define a hero?

(There is no right or wrong answer, but they need to explain why they made their choice)

To save time, the teacher may want to divide the students into groups and have the groups research different parts of the chart and then put them together like a jigsaw activity. Example: one group could research how Lindburgh and Banning raised money. Another group could work on the media coverage, etc.

Teachers Note:

Extension 1: Look up the four articles Banning wrote for the Pittsburgh Courier about his journey. Note that this is an African American newspaper and one of the most powerful and popular in 1932. Read the articles aloud and discuss what makes Banning's articles so special and unique. Hint: he is sharing his journey with those unable to fly using storytelling techniques. How does he do that?

Comparing and Contrasting Banning's Historic Flight with Lindbergh's Historic Flight Chart

	Banning	Lindbergh
Airplane each flew. List details such as how much gas did it hold. (How far could they fly before the gas ran out)	The Eaglerock 14 year old engine Held 35 gallons of gas.	The Spirit of St. Louis Brand new engine, brand new plane Held 400 gallons of gas
Money: How did each raise the money for their flight?		
Media: What papers covered their story?		
Skills: What skills did each possess to make this journey possible?	Banning and Allen needed to be able to fix their Airplane, which was always breaking down.	

