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National Paper Airplane Contest

Calling all paper airplane experts! Start a Paper Airplane Contest in your school and prove just how far and how long your airplanes can fly. It's a fun way to learn about aerodynamics!

- [How to Participate](#)
- [Materials You Can Use](#)
- [What Makes Paper Airplanes Fly?](#)
- [Paper Airplane Resources](#)

How to Participate

Here's how to hold your own Paper Airplane Contest. Just follow these steps:

1. Each competitor builds two paper airplanes using only the [materials](#) listed below. Students can participate individually or as a class.
2. One paper airplane should be designed to fly as far as possible. Build the other paper airplane to stay in the air as long as possible. For helpful information on paper airplane aerodynamics, encourage students to check out "[What Makes Paper Airplanes Fly?](#)".
3. For the "distance" category, each student throws his or her paper airplane while the teacher records distances in feet and inches. All distances must be measured from the starting line to the point where the plane first touches the ground or floor -- not to the final resting place if it slides. Each student has up to three chances to get his or her best distance.
4. For the "time in air" category, each student throws his or her airplane while the teacher times the flights with an accurate stopwatch. Report the times in seconds and hundredths of a second. (Example: 2.45 seconds.) Each student has up to three chances to get his or her longest "time in air."
5. When all results are in, determine two winners: the student or class who makes the airplane that flies the farthest; and the student or class who makes the airplane that flies the longest time.



NOTE: Cardboard planes and planes made from paper airplane kits like WhiteWings™ should not be used. The teacher is responsible for checking the materials in the plane to make sure they include only the allowed [materials](#) listed below.

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Materials



You may use only the following materials to build your paper airplane:

- one or two standard-size sheets of copy paper (required)
- one standard paper clip (optional)
- three inches of tape (optional)
- a dab of glue (optional)
- three staples (optional)

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Paper Airplane Resources

There are many [books](#), [Web sites](#), and [articles](#) available on the successful construction of paper airplanes and aerodynamics. Check out some of these!

Books

Blackburn, Ken and Jeff Lammers. The World Record Paper Airplane Book. Jeff New York: Workman, 1994.

Bosak, Susan V., Douglas A. Bosak, and Brian A. Puppa. Science Is New York: Firefly Books, 1992.

Churchill, E. Richard. Paper Action Toys, illustrated by James Michaels. New York: Sterling, 1994.

Morris, Campbell. Skybusters. New York: Scholastic, 1990.

Razzi, Jim. Paper Airplanes to Make and Fly. New York: Scholastic, 1990.

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Web Sites

National Air and Space Museum

<http://www.nasm.edu>

You can explore the history and science of flight online at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. Support material for teachers and students for every exhibit is here, as well as a thorough exploration of flight. Lesson plans, demonstration ideas, hands-on activities, historical exhibits online, and support links are included. Be sure to check out the [How Things Fly](#) exhibit.

How We Made the First Flight (Wright brothers)

www.aero-web.org/history/wright/wright.html

Based on the work of flight pioneer Orville Wright, this site contains his accounts about the first trials and flight of the Wright brothers' airplane. There are also black-and-white photographs.



Aviation History Online Museum

<http://www.aviation-history.com/>

This online museum is a collection of aircraft images and information about some of the world's most famous and historic aircraft. Other areas covered are The Early Years of Aviation, Construction Technology, Aircraft Engines, and The Theory of Flight.

Article

[Fantastic Frequent Flyers](#) (ScienceWorld)

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[What Makes Airplanes Fly?](#)