

## The Wright Brothers—Men with a Vision

Before

You Read

1. Do you like to travel by airplane? Why or why not?
2. What are the names of some famous inventors?



CD 2, TR 01

Read the following textbook article. Pay special attention to simple-past-tense verbs.

### Did You Know?

*The Wright brothers never married. Their only love was aviation.*



Wilbur Wright, 1867–1912;  
Orville Wright, 1871–1948

Over 100 years ago, people only **dreamed** about flying. The Wright brothers, Wilbur and Orville, **were** dreamers who **changed** the world.

Wilbur Wright **was** born in 1867 and Orville **was** born in 1871. In 1878, they **received** a paper flying toy from their father. They **played** with kites and **started** to think about the possibility of flight.

When they were older, they **started** a bicycle business. They **used** the bicycle shop to design their airplanes. They **studied** three aspects of flying: lift, control, and power. In 1899, they **constructed** their first flying machine—a kite made of wood, wire, and cloth. It **had** no pilot. Because of wind, it was difficult to control. They **continued** to study aerodynamics.<sup>1</sup> Finally Wilbur **designed** a small machine with a gasoline engine. Wilbur **tried** to fly the machine, but it **crashed**. They **fixed** it and **flew** it for the first time on December 17, 1903, with Orville as the pilot. The airplane **remained** in the air for twelve seconds. It **traveled** a distance of 120 feet. This historic flight **changed** the world. However, only four newspapers in the U.S. **reported** this historic moment.

The Wright brothers **offered** their invention to the U.S. government, but the government **rejected**<sup>2</sup> their offer at first. The government **didn't** **believe** that these men **invented** a flying machine. Finally, President Theodore Roosevelt **investigated** their claims and **offered** the inventors a contract to build airplanes for the U.S. Army.

December 17, 2003, **marked** 100 years of flight. There **was** a six-day celebration at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, the location of the first flight. A crowd of 35,000 people **gathered** to see a replica<sup>3</sup> of the first plane fly. The cost to re-create the plane **was** \$1.2 million. However, it **rained** hard that day and the plane **failed** to get off the ground.

You can now see the Wright brothers' original airplane in the Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.