
BORED—NOTHING TO DO!

Author: Peter Spier
Publisher: Doubleday

THEME:

A wonderful adventure can cure any case of boredom.

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

On a lazy afternoon, two bored brothers keep themselves busy by building and flying an airplane.

When LeVar takes a commercial airline flight, he finds out that airline employees do everything — from stocking up on meals to stowing luggage. He also spends time flying a remote control model airplane, exploring the history of flight through film clips, and experiences piloting a plane himself.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

Before viewing the program, ask the students what it means to be “bored.” When are some times that they are bored? What ideas do they have to keep from being bored?

In the story, the two boys made an airplane that they flew only once. Why did their father make them take it apart and return all the parts to their original places?

Ask the class to recall how the boys learned how to make an airplane. (They read the information in a book.) What other types of things can you learn to make by reading books? Enlist the aid of the media specialist in locating some “how-to” books. Allow students time to examine them and discuss the variety of topics in the books and notice how the information is presented.

Discuss which elements of the story could really happen and which are fantasy. Could two young boys really build an airplane that they could fly in? What types of airplanes might they actually be able to build?

LeVar’s flight instructor had him help her with a pre-flight check. Discuss with students why such a check is necessary before people travel.

Invite students to share any experiences they have had traveling by air.

CURRICULUM EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Make a chart headed, “What can fly?” Divide it into two columns: “in nature” and “made by people.” Brainstorm a list of things that can fly and write them in the appropriate categories.

Have students make an alphabet book of flight. As a class, decide on the words for each page, such as a—airport; b—baggage handler; c—cockpit; e—Amelia Earhart; f—flight attendant; g—gate; h—helicopter; j—jetway; l—Charles Lindbergh; p—pilot; r—runway; s—seatbelt; t—taxi; w—Wright Brothers; etc. Revisiting the program and books about flying will give students some ideas for words. Have them illustrate the pages and bind them into a book.

Make a timeline of the significant achievements in the history of flight. Include both people and important happenings on the timeline. Construct the timeline as you read stories about the people and events.

Assemble all sorts of recyclable materials (“junk”) and classroom items and have small groups of students create a flying machine. Possible items to use include: plastic margarine and yogurt containers, film canisters, cardboard rolls, lunch milk cartons, egg cartons, oatmeal and salt boxes, packing material, game pieces, pattern blocks, cloth scraps, string, foil, newspaper, nutcups, pencils, and the like. After they have had a chance to display and explain their creations, have them take their flying machines apart and put all the pieces back where they found them. Take pictures before the machines are dismantled to put in the classroom scrapbook.

Have students make paper airplanes. Locate a copy of *Planes and Other Flying Things* by Florence Temko (Millbrook Press) to use as a resource. It contains fairly simple directions for making all sorts of flying things from paper and includes tips for making them fly.

Contact a local aircraft school and invite an instructor to the classroom to talk to the students about learning to fly a small plane. If possible take a field trip to the aircraft school instead, so that they can see the cockpit and interior size of a small plane. Depending upon available facilities, a field trip to a small airstrip would enable students to compare the operations and air traffic of this type of site with those at a large airport.

Have the class survey all the students at their grade level about their favorite pastime activities, or what they do when they feel themselves getting bored. Make a pictograph of the survey results under the heading, “_____ Graders Fight Boredom!” (Photocopies of school pictures make good pictographs.)

Use *Bored—Nothing to Do!* along with other **Reading Rainbow** programs that have transportation themes. *Kate Shelley and the Midnight Express* (trains); *The Bicycle Man* (human-powered vehicles with wheels); *Tooth-Gnasher Superflash* (cars); *Mystery on the Docks* (boats); and *Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie* (boats) are excellent tie-ins with this program for a study of transportation. Use these programs to compare modes of transportation.

RELATED THEMES:

inventions
travel

RELATED READING RAINBOW PROGRAMS:

Program #110 — Ruth Law Thrills A Nation
Program #16 — Hot-Air Henry

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Peter Spier's highly detailed watercolors have reaped many honors for his numerous children's books including the Caldecott Award winning *Noah's Ark* and Honor Book, *The Fox Went Out on a Chilly Night*, and **Reading Rainbow** review books, *The Star Spangled Banner* and *Peter Spier's Rain*. He often travels to the settings of his books to research the authenticity of the details he includes in the illustrations. Peter Spier grew up in Amsterdam, Netherlands, and now makes his home in New York state.

BOOKS REVIEWED BY CHILDREN:

THE MAGIC WINGS: A TALE FROM CHINA
by Diane Wolkstein, illus. by Robert Andrew Parker (Dial)

REDBIRD (an EYES ON THE ENDS OF YOUR FINGERS book)
by Patrick Fort (Orchard Books)

FLYING
from the "LET'S DISCOVER" Library (Raintree/Steck-Vaughn)

SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKLIST:

AIRPORT
by Byron Barton (Crowell)

FLIGHT
by Robert Burleigh, illus. by Mike Wimmer (Philomel)

FLYING
by Donald Crews (Greenwillow)

LINDBERGH
by Chris Demarest (Crown)

AIRPLANE RIDE
by Douglas Florian (Crowell)

FLYING
by Gail Gibbons (Holiday House)

AMAZING FLYING MACHINES

by Robin Kerrod, photos by Mike Dunning (Knopf)

UP IN THE AIR

by Myra Cohn Livingston, illus. by Leonard Everett Fisher (Holiday House)

FIRST FLIGHT: THE STORY OF TOM TATE AND THE WRIGHT BROTHERS
by George Shea, illus. by Don Bolognese (HarperCollins)

PLANE SONG

by Diane Siebert, illus. by Vincent Nasta (HarperCollins)

