



The Smithsonian Book of Air & Space Trivia

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Blast off into a sky full of knowledge with this fact-packed, exciting guide to aviation.

The Smithsonian Book of Air & Space Trivia gives a bite-size overview of human flight from primitive attempts at aircraft to commercial jets, space in pop culture, and military aviation. The book's Q&A format makes it easy to pick up for either a minute or an hour.

With each question is a bold, quick answer, then several paragraphs giving more detail, allowing the reader to choose between skimming for facts or seeking more in-depth learning. The chapters are organized around topics like "Pioneers of Air and Space," "Launchings and Landings," and "Controversies and Calamities." Each chapter includes a quote (often from an aviator) that captures the theme. The book contains a mix of well-known facts (Q: Who invented the first powered, piloted, heavier-than-air machine to sustain controlled flight? A: The Wright brothers) and lesser-known details (Q: What space missions were "saved" using duct tape? A: Apollo 13 and 17). It touches on engineering, culture, and politics, like the space race during the Cold War. Chapters on combat in flight and women in aviation provide particularly interesting cultural and historical views.

The Smithsonian is the ultimate authoritative source, giving the book both credibility and excellence, both of which extend from the information itself to the editorial and design quality. Many pages contain images, mostly photos, that augment the information.

The book is perfect for teachers who want to hook their students' interest, Baby Boomers who grew up in awe of space travel, kids and teens energized by trivia, and anyone who's enthralled by the people and science behind humanity's life in flight. It reads a bit like a friendly encyclopedia, and it's a perfect diving-off point for further research.

The Smithsonian Book of Air & Space Trivia is a fun read for anyone who's curious about all things airborne.

MELISSA WUSKE (Summer 2014)

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