

Bessie Coleman

Critical Thinking & Discussion Questions

What kinds of obstacles did Bessie Coleman face in her life?

How did she manage to succeed in spite of the obstacles in her life?

What kinds of racial and gender discrimination did Coleman face as she pursued her dream of being a pilot? How did this discrimination continue after she began performing for audiences and growing in fame? What was Coleman's response to the discrimination and prejudice she faced?

Do you think that people pursuing goals in fields like aviation face more challenges, or fewer, today than when Coleman was alive?

Have you ever had to overcome an obstacle to reach one of your goals? How do you stay motivated when things are difficult?

Who are the bravest people you know in your life? What risks do they take?

Who are people who've gone out of their way to make you feel like "part of the family," as Rev. Hezakiah and Mrs. Viola Hill did for Bessie Coleman when they befriended her in Orlando, Florida?

How did the invention of aircraft and the reality of human flight change the world?

What kinds of technological advances have changed the world in the 21st century? Are there still barriers that prevent some people from using or benefiting from this technology?

The account of Coleman's memorial service in Chicago, by Evangeline Roberts, contains the text of a letter from a young girl who admired Coleman. Who do you admire? How do you emulate them? Would you ever try to contact the people you consider heroes? Why or why not?

Here is a list of Bob Woodson's 10 Principles:

Competence	Innovation
Integrity	Inspiration
Transparency	Agency
Resilience	Access
Witness	Grace

Which Woodson Principles does Bessie Coleman's life story exemplify?