

**FICTION:** Pilot                      Center for Urban Education ©2007

I have always wanted to fly. Thinking back, it's what I dreamed about as a child. When I was just five years old, I would watch planes on television, and I was fascinated. How did they stay in the air, I wondered? I had a toy plane that I flew, and I loved to take it outside and fly it through the air. It was just a glider, so it did not really fly far, but I felt special whenever I played with that toy. While other children amused themselves with games, I preferred to fly that little toy plane.

When I was 12, I went to the airport for the first time, and I will never forget that experience. I had seen planes flying above, of course, but always from a great distance. This would be my opportunity to see them close up.

We were going to meet my brother, who was returning home from the war. I was delighted to see him, but I was even more excited about the great planes. They were so much bigger than I had envisioned. I did not want to leave the airport, and I recall looking back at the airplanes taking off as my mother drove us on the expressway home.

I announced, "I want to be a pilot," when my family assembled for dinner. My family liked the idea, but they really thought it was just a passing plan. They got me books about flying, and I read them over and over, because I was so very fascinated. When I was a freshman at high school, I informed my math teacher that I wanted to learn to fly airplanes and that I thought I could do it. My teacher said that if I studied hard, I could get into the Air Force Academy, and that one thing I would really need to fly is math. "There's a lot of math and science you need to know to fly those jets," she said, "but you need to excel in all your subjects to get into that special college."

I was determined to do well, to earn good grades, to learn the math and science I needed. I worked hard at school and I got good grades. I was on the track team, too. I kept busy, and sometimes other students criticized me. They ridiculed my dedication. I did not care what they said; I wanted a chance to go to the Air Force Academy. I was determined to be a pilot, and I was persistent.

When I was 18, I went to college, and I took my first plane trip. I had a scholarship, and I was going to the Air Force Academy. Yes, I did it. I got the grades I needed to get into that college. My career vision had become a reality. I was on the way into the future I had envisioned.

Now I am 21, and I am completing four years at the Academy. I have learned how to fly, and I have learned a lot more, too. On the way to becoming a pilot, I have learned physics, astronomy, and calculus. You really do need to know a lot to be a pilot today. You also need to be a really good decision-maker. With all the instruments that help guide the plane, the pilot still has to make decisions that determine the success of each flight. I still love planes, and I am going to be a pilot now. My dream has come true. I have achieved my ambition.

*Directions: Choose the best answer for each question*

1. What is the first event?

- a. She is five.
- b. She wants to fly.
- c. She gets a glider.
- d. She is growing up.

2. What happens after they go to the airport?

- a. Her brother comes home.
- b. She decides to be a pilot.
- c. She stays at the airport.
- d. The family moves.

3. What does she do to reach her dream?

- a. She goes to school.
- b. She studies.
- c. She talks with her family.
- d. She buys her own plane.

4. What is the last event?

- a. She finishes college.
- b. She flies a plane.
- c. She goes home.
- d. She gets her own plane.

5. *Write your own answer to this question.*

Make a sequence chart of the important events in the story.

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**TEACHER NOTES: Develop Students' Skills: Exercise Thinking**

These questions have not been validated, so decisions about student's achievement should not be made based on their responses. They are intended to exercise skills. Recommended activities include: students work in pairs to choose the best response; give students the questions without the responses so they generate their own answers; students make up additional questions; students make up questions like these for another passage.

**Answers:** *You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.*

Item	1	2	3	4
Answer	c	b	b	a

Question 5 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

5. She goes to the airport; she talks with her teacher; she works hard in school; she goes to the Academy; she graduates.