

Amazing Amy!

Read the fictional extracts from the journal of heroic aviator – Amy Johnson.

17 July 1929

Today is a day for celebration! I have earned my pilot's licence! Let those who tried to dampen my spirit with their doubts and archaic beliefs know that I will fly the sky as their equal, if not their superior!

3 December 1929

I have come to the conclusion that I must seek out an investor, for I am rich in qualifications — a pilot, a navigator, a ground engineer — yet I can barely afford to feed myself! If I wish to earn a living as a pilot, then I must have my own plane!

4 May 1930

The day before my grandest adventure! I leave England in the morning — bound for Australia. My saviour, Lord Wakefield (rich in oil and a believer in dreams), has given me the capital to purchase a plane. It's a beautiful green Moth that I've named 'Jason', after the family business. I shall cross the Atlantic in less than 15 days and beat the record of the Australian, Bert Hinkler.

8 May 1930

My fourth day of flying. I landed in the desert to the frightful sound of desert dogs. With my gun at hand, I waited for them to appear so they might rip me to shreds. Thankfully, no such creature revealed itself to me.

11 May 1930

Reached Karachi in splendid time! I've travelled 4000 miles and improved on Hinkler's record by two wonderful days! It amuses me that I left England to only a handful of well wishers and no journalist to report on my venture (perhaps as they thought it too absurd to be real) and now I may not only be the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic but the first pilot to do so in under 15 days!

14 May 1930

Nine days in the air, battling monsoon rains and blistering heat, and I've crash landed my beautiful Moth into a football field in Rangoon, India. They say it will be three days before she is in the air again. Impossible!

24 May 1930

I've journeyed 11 000 miles — an admirable feat but I feel a failure. The Australians, in Darwin where I landed, have been jolly good sports, calling me an heroic adventurer. Alas, I don't feel heroic. I feel weary and second best.

'The Daily Mail' (who thought my departure was not newsworthy) are awarding me ten thousand pounds for such a daring feat! They say a telegram from the King and Queen should also be expected!

July 1930

It has been one year since I earned my pilot's licence. Today I was driven through the streets of London in a parade so that one million English fans could welcome me home!

July 1932

London to Cape Town in 11 hours! I have finally broken a record! Now I must plan my next adventure. I think England to New York!

January 1941

The whole world has changed! We continue to ferry pilots and aircraft from the factories to the RAF bases. At least I am contributing to the war effort. The weather has been disastrous of late! There is thick fog and it is freezing. I head off again tomorrow.

1 Literal

- (a) What factors prompted Amy to seek out an investor to finance a plane? [2]

Scanning for specific information

- (b) Who was Bert Hinkler? [2]

Scanning for specific information

1 Literal

- (c) What frightened Amy on 8 May 1930? [2]

Scanning for specific information

- (d) What event delayed Amy's attempt at the record? [2]

Scanning for specific information

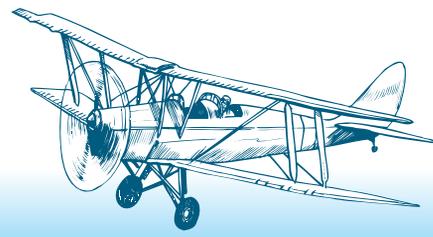
- (e) How was Amy's departure from England different from her return? [2]

Scanning for specific information
Comparing and contrasting

2 Inferential

- (a) Why did Amy refer to Lord Wakefield as a 'believer in dreams'? [2]

Using prior knowledge
Making inferences



2 Inferential

- (b) Why did Amy feel second-best when she arrived in Darwin? [2]

Making inferences

- (c) What do you think Amy meant by the remark that the 'whole world has changed' in her final entry? [2]

Using prior knowledge
Making inferences

3 Applied

Using prior knowledge
Making inferences

- (a) Who do you think it was that 'tried to dampen' Amy's 'spirit with their doubts and archaic beliefs'? [1]

- (b) Amy Johnson is known as Britain's most famous pilot. Why do you think she became so famous? [2]

Try this

- 1 (a) When you read the text about aviator Amy Johnson, what questions come to mind about her and her life? Discuss your thoughts with a partner and write four questions in the boxes below. [4]

Using prior knowledge
Making inferences

- _____

- _____

- _____

- _____

- (b) Together with another pair of students, discuss possible answers to your questions. Circle one of the questions above and write the answer to that question. Use a separate sheet of paper if necessary. [2]

Using prior knowledge
Making predictions

Answers:

Amazing Amy!

- (a) She had the qualifications but she was unable to earn a living as a pilot.
 - (b) He was an Australian pilot who flew from Australia to England in fifteen days.
 - (c) The sound of desert dogs when she landed in the desert on the fourth day of her adventure frightened her.
 - (d) Amy crash landed in a football field in Rangoon, India during her journey and she had to wait three days for repairs, delaying her and making it impossible for her to beat Bert Hinkler's record of fifteen days.
 - (e) Amy departed from England with only a handful of spectators but she returned to a parade with possibly a million people lining the streets.
- (a) He believed in her dream of flying her own plane across the Atlantic and provided her with the capital needed to buy the plane.
 - (b) She was unable to beat Bert Hinkler's record so she was not the best pilot but second to that.
 - (c) (suggested answer)
The events taking place in the world and the way societies functioned were different from what they were in the past.
- (suggested answers)
 - (a) Those who were already pilots and who were probably men were the ones who did that.
 - (b) She was a female pilot at a time when the pilots were males and she broke a record by taking the shortest time to get from London to Cape Town.

Try this (suggested answers)

- (a) How did you feel in your earlier years when you struggled to be a pilot? Why did you decide to travel from England to Australia? Did you go on all the adventures in order to gain recognition? How difficult was it to continue on each adventure whenever you met with obstacles?

2. Famous Female Pilot Dies

Amy Johnson, one of Britain's most famous pilot, died in a tragic accident yesterday. She was ferrying several pilots to the RAF bases when she suddenly lost control of her plane.

Trips from the factories to the RAF bases are made daily and no accident had occurred before this. Amy Johnson had flown the same route numerous times without any mishap.

Investigators attribute the accident to bad weather. There was extremely thick fog and there had been advice to stop all flights yesterday. However, Amy was adamant about carrying on with her job, saying that it was the least she could do to contribute to the war efforts.

Amy obtained her pilot's licence on 17 July 1929. Not long after that, she secured the capital to purchase her own plane. She started her adventures, travelling first from London to Australia. Although she failed to beat the record for the fastest travelling time then, she was regarded as a heroic adventurer. In 1932, Amy broke a record by travelling from London to Cape Town in eleven hours.

It is Amy's adventurous streak and her determination that allowed her to become a successful pilot. She defied public perception of what a female should do during that time. Not only was she successful in a job dominated by males, she also managed to break records.

Amy's contribution to the war efforts will not be forgotten. She will always be remembered for her dedication towards flying and her loyalty to the country.