

Kites In The Sky

Lesson Plans



About These Lesson Plans

We strongly recommend you demonstrate a completed, flying kite before you do anything else. Make no assumptions that your students have ever seen, held, or flown a kite! This can be a very short flying session, but should be motivating, and it's a great time to introduce vocabulary, procedures, and safety considerations.

HELPFUL RESOURCES:

[How to Fly a Kite](#) and [Kites In The Classroom](#) will give you a good overview of what you need/want to know about flying kites.



Fun Kite Facts

A cave drawing of a man flying a kite was created thousands of years before kites appeared in China.

The first kites are believed to have been used as fishing tools in the Indonesian Islands.

Kites are still in use today throughout Indonesian Culture as both tools and toys.



Kites Around The World

To prepare for this lesson start with a discussion about the history of kites from various cultures.

Around the world, different cultures and societies take great pleasure in creating amazing kites that are both spectacular and wondrous.

Kites come in all shapes and sizes. In some countries kites have spiritual, historical and cultural significance.

Early in the history of modern man kites were used as tools for fishing, military, messaging and social influence, and research/study of the atmosphere.

Kites are the foundation for the invention of the airplane.



Here you see the Cody kite, famous for lifting men, women and children in baskets above the earth, before the invention of the airplane.



In many cultures around the world kites have long since been used for the creation and expression of spiritual, cultural and artistic norms of their communities.

At various times throughout history multiple countries have banned kite flying for a variety of reasons - from having too much fun to religious reasons.

Rarely is the mixing of science, history, math, engineering, culture and art so intricately intertwined.

Easy access to affordable modern kite-making materials has reduced the cost of making and flying good quality kites. If you are interested in making your own kites and designs this too is possible with 1000's of kite plans available on-line and easy access to parts and supplies.

Kites can be made from many different kinds of materials, including but not limited to paper, plastic, cloth, ripstop nylon... even leaves! With spars/sticks made of bamboo, wood, carbon fiber, fiberglass, to no spars or sticks at all. The possibilities are endless!



Kites can be divided into 2 main categories: **Single Line**, and **Dual** or **Quad Line** kites.

The Dual and Quad Line kites are also called Sport kites. These kites are very maneuverable. They can move in any direction, including backwards. They can even stop and "hold their hover." Sport kites can be flown both outdoors and indoors!

Some Sport kite fliers fly in groups performing synchronized routines in the air. Dual and Quad Line Kites are also used for Kite Surfing on the water, snow or land.



To this day, kites are more popular than ever. Every year there are many events and kite festivals throughout the world. The wonderful colors, shapes and kite designs soaring through the sky are magical to everyone from kids to adults!



There are many notable kite events all around the world including the incredible mechanical kites of China, the massive Edo kites of Japan, the magnificent kites of the Sumpango Guatemalan Day of the Dead Kite Festival, the Bali Kite Festival, the Long Beach International Kite Festival, the Fanö International Kite Meeting in Denmark, the and even an annual kite festival in India where hundreds of thousands of people, young and old fly colorful kites from their roof tops to celebrate the new year.



Kites Around The World



Kites are ancient and an important part of many cultures around the world.

The exact origin of kites are not known. However, it is known that kites were flown in China and the Malay Archipelago around 2000-3000 years ago.

[Kites in the Classroom](#) is an excellent resource for information about kites, culture and history from around the world. Includes an extensive list of kite project and how they relate to education.

Here are some additional Kite Links with some excellent embedded YouTube movies, and book links that can take you across the globe:

[Japanese Traditional Kites](#)
[Kid World Citizen](#)

Consider these project ideas to add background and richness to your kite unit:

Have students create their own narration script for any YouTube movie about international kite flying.

- You may want to provide a set of links of approved movies, and set up a "sign-up" list, so students all have different movies.
- You might consider limiting the length of movies that can be used.
- You might consider having students' partner.
- Should students turn in a written script?
- Should they present their narration "live" in front of an audience?
- Should they record their narration?

Have students create their own slideshow about kite history.

(This should include some of the early pioneers of flight such as the Wright Brothers.)

Here are some example prompts you could use:

- The Wright Brothers had a 'break through' success. How did they use kites?
- What other practical uses have been made of kites?
- You might consider assigning subtopics: Wright Brothers, Alexander Graham Bell, kite aerial photography, earliest kites, kite fishing, etc,
- You might consider limiting length to a certain number of slides.

Here are some helpful links that can support this process:

[Chronological History of Kites](#)

[Bibliography Related to Kite History](#)

[Kite History](#)

Have students build and decorate a kite from a different part of the world.

(Not like the kites you might have assembled as a class.)

- You may want to supply materials: spars, paper/tyvek, tape/glue/crayons/markers/paint
- You can have students prepare a budget.
- Students can build a “how-to” set of their own instructions, including troubleshooting, and their flying experience.
- The instructions can include photography and videography.
- The student made kites could make a really nice classroom or hallway display.
- Consider connecting this to an “international” or “multicultural” event at your school.
- A big group of student-made kites from around the world all flying at the same time would make a spectacular movie!

Here are some helpful links that can support this process:

[Kites in the Classroom - Free kite plans](#)

[Plans for Japanese Kites - Free kite plans](#)

[Kite Plan Base - Free kite plans](#)

[Kites for Everyone - Book with kite plans from around the world](#)

[More Kites for Everyone - Book with kite plans from around the world](#)

Have students study kite art from around the world and decorate their “Kite Kit” using a thematic idea from a kite from somewhere in the world.

Students can present orally about their art theme. They can also document their work with photography or videography and write about their experience.

The finished kites can make a nice gallery display for your classroom, a hallway or lobby, or the school library. For any display, students can create a signboard that explains the art on each numbered kite.

Here are some example prompts you could use:

Where did it come from? What was hard about adapting this theme to their kite? What did they start with?