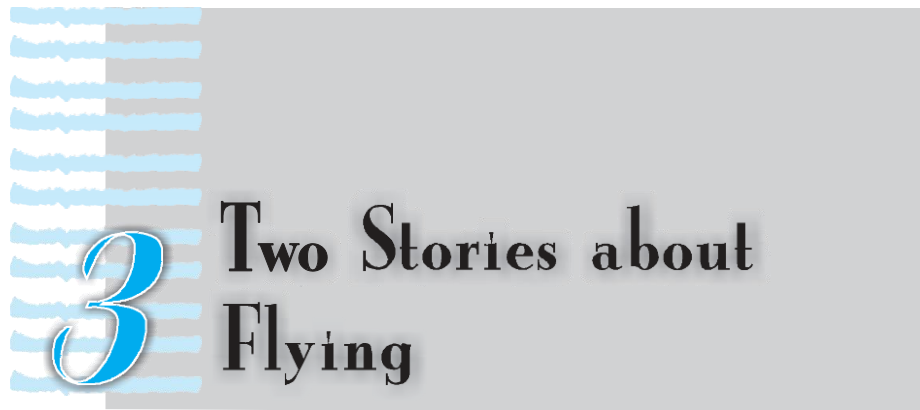


talk
to
me!

LET'S TALK EMPOWERMENT. LET'S TALK ENGLISH

First Flight



- I. **His First Flight** Liam O' Flaherty
- II. **Black Aeroplane** Frederick Forsyth

I His First Flight

1. Watch and listen to the story

Click on the link below to watch a video of the story being read. Note the pronunciations of the words and read along using the subtitles.

[\(30\) Two Stories about Flying - YouTube](#)

2. Summary

This story is about a young seagull who is scared of flying. His two brothers and sister have flown off with their parents, but the vast expanse of the sea and the long distance between the cliff and the sea scares him. He is not confident that his wings will support him for the long flight. His parents try hard to encourage him to fly, and even let him starve for a day in the hope that his hunger will make him dive into the ocean for fish. However, he is unable to overcome his fear.

His mother has a strategy: she approaches him with a piece of fish in her beak but stays just a little far off from the ledge that he is standing on. Tempted by the sight of food, he dives at the fish and the next moment finds himself falling off the ledge and into space. However, the terror he feels lasts only a minute as his wings instinctively spread outwards and he starts to fly! His family flies around him and encourages him on his first flight.

The moral of the story is to face your fears, and try, try, try till you succeed.

Click on the link below to see how baby seabirds learn to fly.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GkJaP9DSuxg>

3. Vocabulary

1. **Conquer** – to deal with or successfully fight against a problem or an unreasonable fear
It may be many years before we can **conquer** this dreadful Covid-19 disease.
2. **Ledge** – a narrow horizontal shelf projecting from a wall or cliff
The **ledge** on top of my window collapsed in the heavy rains.
3. **Brink** – edge, margin
He stood at the **brink** of the cliff admiring the valley below.
4. **Attempted** – tried to do something, especially something difficult
Despite the bad weather he **attempted** to climb to the top of the peak.
5. **Flap** – flutter, beat wings
The baby bird soon learnt to **flap** its wings and fly away.
6. **Expanse** – a large open area of land, sea, sky
The vast **expanse** of the ocean is a beautiful sight.
7. **Stretched** – spread over a large area or distance
Dense dark clouds **stretched** across the sky and blocked out the sun.
8. **Beneath** – under someone or something
I hid the letter **beneath** the pillow and went to sleep.
9. **Muster** – rally, round up, mobilize
The army has decided to **muster** its troops at the border.
10. **Plunge** – jump, dive, tumble
In the summer heat, I was tempted to **plunge** into the pool.
11. **Desperate** – very serious or bad; very great or extreme
She was very sick and in **desperate** need of help.
12. **Shrilly** – in a way that is loud, high and unpleasant or painful to listen
Her mother was scolding her little brother **shrilly**.

13. **Upbraiding** – scolding
The entire class received a severe **upbraiding** from the Principal for its bad behaviour.
14. **Threatening** – expressing the possibility that something unpleasant or unwanted will happen
He sent her a **threatening** letter saying that he will report her to the police, if she did not return his money.
15. **To skim** – to move slightly just above the surface
Our boat seemed to **skim** the surface of the calm waters.
16. **Herring** – a soft-finned sea fish
Herrings are small silvery fish found in coastal waters.
17. **Devour** – eat food or prey hungrily, quickly
I was surprised to see the beggar **devour** the food in a minute.
18. **Cackle** – laugh in a loud harsh way
Her laugh is like the **cackle** of a hen.
19. **Plateau** – an area of fairly level high ground
The Deccan **plateau** is the entire southern peninsula of India, south of the Narmada River.
20. **Taunting** – provoking or teasing a person in a hurtful manner
The bully was **taunting** the new girl on her first day at school.
21. **Cowardice** – lack of bravery
Any soldier displaying **cowardice** during war will be punished.
22. **Ascending** – leading upwards
The group continued **ascending** the hill until they reached the temple.
23. **Blazing** – very bright and hot
The **blazing** sun beat down upon us and we were soon drenched in sweat.
24. **Pretended** – to behave as if something is true when you know that it is not, especially in order to deceive people, or as a game
The children **pretended** that they were lions in the jungle and went around roaring loudly.
25. **Dozing** – sleeping
Anyone caught **dozing** during class will be punished and sent out.

26. **Preening** – making an effort to tidy feathers, spending too much time on your appearance and admiring yourself
I managed to take a picture of the peacock while it was **preening** its feathers.
27. **Hump** – lump, projection
The camel's **hump** stores fat.
On the trek we had to go over many **humps** before we reached our destination.
28. **Maddened** - driven mad, angered
I was **maddened** by the noise of the horns blowing constantly.
29. **Scrapping** – rubbing against something rough or a sharp edge to remove unwanted covering or a top layer
He was **scrapping** his boots against the edge of the step to remove the mud from them.
30. **To whet** - to sharpen
The sight of all the food laid out on the table was enough **to whet** my appetite.
31. **Begging** – asking for something urgently or strongly
The dog went up on his hind legs, **begging** his master for a biscuit.
32. **Screamed** – cried or said something loudly and usually on a high note, especially because of strong emotions such as fear, excitement, or anger
The frog jumped on her and she **screamed** with fright.
33. **Derisively** – mockingly, to ridicule, make fun of
When I fell during the match, the spectators laughed **derisively**.
34. **Plaintively** – mournfully, sadly
The cat was crying **plaintively**, as it was hungry.
35. **Uttered** – said something or made a sound with your voice
She **uttered** a cry and fell down in a faint.
36. **Eagerly** – in a way that shows that you want to do or have something very much, especially something interesting or enjoyable
I am **eagerly** waiting for the release of the new Shahrukh Khan movie.

37. **Tapping** – hitting something gently, often repeatedly, making short sharp noises
The teacher stood, impatiently **tapping** the desk with her pen, waiting for an answer.
38. **Halted** – stopped moving or doing something
Due to the Corona virus outbreak production in all the factories has **halted**.
39. **Motionless** – without moving
The dog lay **motionless** on the grass, as if dead.
40. **Wondering** – asking yourself questions or expressing a wish to know about something
Her parents were **wondering** where she was, when they suddenly saw her enter the hall with her friend.
41. **Dived** – jumped or moved quickly down
The goalkeeper **dived** for the ball, but it went pass him, into the goal.
42. **Monstrous** – horrible, like a monster
A **monstrous** crocodile was spotted in the river that ran though the town.
43. **Terror** – extreme fear
When the enemy army marched into the city, the citizens fled in **terror** into the countryside.
44. **Seized** – grabbed, snatched
The thief **seized** the lady's purse and vanished into a lane.
45. **Headlong** – with head first
She did not see the ditch in the darkness and fell **headlong** into it.
46. **Soaring** – rising very quickly to a high level
The bird flew away, **soaring** into the sky.
47. **Gradually** – slowly over a period of time or distance
Tina **gradually** learnt to speak her mother tongue, Tamil, from her grandmother.
48. **Dizzy** – an uncomfortable feeling of spinning around and losing one's balance
I always feel **dizzy** when I am on a flight.

49. **Swooped** – pounced, descended
The dog **swooped** on the piece of meat and ran away.
50. **Curveting** – a prancing leap of a horse in which the hind legs are raised just before the forelegs touch the ground
It is very difficult to mount a **curveting** horse.
51. **Banking** – flying with one wing higher than the other; also transactions with a bank.
The flock of birds turned in a **banking** movement and rose up again.
I am going to ICICI bank to do my **banking** work.
52. **Commended** - praised, complimented
He was **commended** for bravery in action and awarded a medal.
53. **Ridges** – narrow raised parts of a surface, especially high edges along a mountain
We walked carefully along the **ridge** of the hill before we reached the steps.
54. **Cawed** – made a loud, rough cry like that of a bird such as a crow
The crows around the house **cawed** so loudly that they woke up the child.
55. **Amusedly** – showing that you think something is funny
She smiled **amusedly** at his jokes.
56. **Flooring** – the material that a floor is made of
The **flooring** was made of marble and was cool under our feet.
57. **Beckoning** – moving your hand or head in a way that tells someone to come near
The old lady was **beckoning** me to come closer.
58. **Exhausted** - extremely tired
We were all **exhausted** after our ten kilometer walk through the forest.
59. **Belly** - stomach
He will fall asleep only when his **belly** is full.
60. **Praising** – expressing admiration or approval of the achievements or characteristics of a person or thing
They all continued eating and **praising** her cooking.

4. Questions

Thinking about the Text

- 1. Why was the young seagull afraid to fly? Do you think all young birds are afraid to make their first flight, or are some birds more timid than others? Do you think a human baby also finds it a challenge to take its first steps?**
- 2. “The sight of the food maddened him.” What does this suggest? What compelled him to fly?**
- 3. “They were beckoning to him, calling shrilly.” Why did the seagull’s father and mother threaten him and cajole him to fly?**
- 4. Have you ever had a similar experience, where your parents encouraged you to do something that you were too scared to try? Discuss this in pairs or groups.**
- 5. In the case of a bird flying, it seems a natural act, and a foregone conclusion that it should succeed. In the examples you have given in answer to the previous question, was your success guaranteed, or was it important for you to try, regardless of a possibility of failure?**

5. Speaking

We have just read about the first flight of a young seagull. Your teacher will now divide the class into groups. Each group will work on one of the following topics. Prepare a presentation with your group members and then present it to the entire class.

- Progression of Models of Airplanes**
- Progression of Models of Motorcars**
- Birds and Their Wing Span**
- Migratory Birds — Tracing Their Flights**

6. Writing

Write a short composition on your initial attempts at learning a skill. You could describe the challenges of learning to ride a bicycle or learning to swim. Make it as humorous as possible.

II The Black Aeroplane

1. Watch and listen to the story

Click on the link below to watch a video of the story being read. Note the pronunciations of the words and read along using the subtitles.

[\(30\) Part II The Black Aeroplane - YouTube](#)

2. Summary

This is a fascinating story about the mysterious way in which a pilot is guided through the skies when he gets caught in a storm. He is on a flight from Paris to London, and looking forward to meeting his family and sharing a hot breakfast with them. Suddenly he is faced with huge black clouds. He thinks of turning back but decides to continue and flies into the dark clouds. Soon his radio and compass stop working. He is lost in the storm and unable to find his way. Suddenly, he sees a black plane flying next to him. The pilot waves to him asking him to follow him. Guided by the other pilot, he is able to land safely at London airport. After he lands, he asks the control tower staff about the other plane. There was no other plane in the stormy skies, he is informed. He wonders who helped him land safely. The author leaves us with the mystery of the guidance he received from an unknown source during the crisis.

The Dakota aircraft flown by the pilot in this story is also known as the Douglas C-47 Skytrain. It was used extensively by the Allies (USA, Britain, British colonies, and other European countries) during World War II. Click on the link below to see a Dakota belonging to the Royal Air Force of Britain flying.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zvtoBI2NDk>

3. Vocabulary

1. **Compass** – an instrument for determining directions, by means of a freely rotating magnetized needle that indicates the magnetic north. The trekkers used their **compass** to find their way out of the jungle.

2. **Obedient** – doing what you are told to do.
He is an **obedient** and hard- working student.
3. **Runway** – a long piece of land with a hard surface, where aircraft take off and land
Indira Gandhi International Airport will soon have 4 **runways**.
4. **Control tower** – a tall building in an airport from which the movements of aircraft are controlled
The **control tower** of an airport guides the pilots to take off and land safely.
5. **Strangely** – in a way that is unusual, unexpected, or difficult to understand
When the flood waters entered our house, my mother was **strangely** calm and took control of the situation.
6. **Radar** – a system for detecting the presence, direction, distance of aircraft, ships and other objects
Radars are of great help to the air force to detect any enemy aircraft.

4. Questions

Thinking about the Text

1. “I’ll take the risk.” What is the risk? Why does the narrator take it?
2. Describe the narrator’s experience as he flew the aeroplane into the storm
3. Why does the narrator say, “I landed and was not sorry to walk away from the old Dakota...”?
4. What made the woman in the control centre look at the narrator strangely?
5. Who do you think helped the narrator to reach safely? Discuss this among yourselves and give reasons for your answer.

5. Grammar

Thinking about Language

I. Study the sentences given below.

- (a) They looked like black mountains.
- (b) Inside the clouds, everything was suddenly black.
- (c) In the black clouds near me, I saw another aeroplane.
- (d) The strange black aeroplane was there.

The word 'black' in sentences (a) and (c) refers to the very darkest colour. But in (b) and (d) (here) it means without light/ with no light.

'Black' has a variety of meanings in different contexts. For example:

- (a) 'I prefer black tea' means 'I prefer tea without milk'.
- (b) 'With increasing pollution the future of the world is *black*' means 'With increasing pollution the future of the world is very depressing/ without hope'.

Now, try to guess the meanings of the word 'black' in the sentences given below. Check the meanings in the dictionary and find out whether you have guessed right.

- 1. Go and have a bath; your hands and face are absolutely *black*. _____
- 2. The taxi-driver gave Ratan a *black* look as he crossed the road when the traffic light was green. _____
- 3. The bombardment of Hiroshima is one of the *blackest* crimes against humanity. _____
- 4. Very few people enjoy Harold Pinter's *black* comedy. _____
- 5. Sometimes shopkeepers store essential goods to create false scarcity and then sell these in *black*. _____
- 6. Villagers had beaten the criminal *black and blue*. _____

II. Look at these sentences taken from the lesson you have just read:

- (a) I was flying my old Dakota aeroplane.
- (b) The young seagull had been afraid to fly with them.

In the first sentence the author was controlling an aircraft in the air. Another example is: Children are flying kites. In the second sentence the seagull was afraid to move through the air, using its wings.

Match the phrases given under Column A with their meanings given under Column B:

A	B
1. Fly a flag	– Move quickly/ suddenly
2. Fly into rage	– Be successful
3. Fly along	– Display a flag on a long pole
4. Fly high	– Escape from a place
5. Fly the coop	– Become suddenly very angry

III. We know that the word 'fly' (of birds/insects) means to move through air using wings. Tick the words which have the same or nearly the same meaning.

swoop	flit	paddle	flutter
ascend	float	ride	skim
sink	dart	hover	glide
descend	soar	shoot	spring
stay	fall	sail	flap

6. Writing

Have you ever been alone or away from home during a thunderstorm? Narrate your experience in a paragraph.



In this Lesson

WHAT WE HAVE DONE

Provided two stories about flying — one about a bird, another about a human being in a plane.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- As they read the story of the seagull, students can be asked to imagine how a baby learns to walk, and compare and contrast the two situations.
- After they read the second story students should be asked for their ideas about the phantom plane: Was it really there or did the pilot imagine it? If the students feel it was really there, who could have been piloting it?
- Ask students to narrate their own stories about flying. It could be about flying in an airplane, or flying a kite, or about watching a bird flying — in short, anything to do with flight. Give students ten minutes to think quietly about the topic — during this time, they can make notes about what they want to say. Then ask for volunteer speakers.

Compound Words Whose Parts Mean Just the Opposite or Something Else

- Quicksand works slowly
- There is no egg in eggplant nor ham in hamburger; neither apple nor pine in pineapple
- Boxing rings are square