

BBC Learning English

6 Minute English

Going gliding

NB: This is not an accurate word-for-word transcript



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Kate: Hello and welcome to 6 Minute English with me, Kate Colin. In this programme we're going to be talking about **gliding**. This is when you fly in a light unpowered aircraft known as a glider. Today I'm joined by Rebecca Byrne, who by sheer co-incidence, has just been gliding for the first time! Hi Rebecca – so how was it?

Rebecca: Hi Kate – it was fantastic. I really enjoyed it.

Kate: You weren't flying by yourself were you....?

Rebecca: answers

Kate: I can't wait to hear more about it - but first of all, let's find out a bit more about the sport. Gliding is also sometimes known as 'soaring'. To **soar** means to fly high in the air using the wind to carry you. The glider is designed to be graceful and extremely light and actually doesn't even have an engine. So, tell me, if it doesn't have an engine how do you get into the sky in the first place? And how do you stay up?

Rebecca: Well, in order to get into the air you do need a little assistance. There are several ways of doing this but when I went, my glider was pulled up into the sky by another light aircraft (which had an engine) sometimes called a 'tug' or 'tow' plane and the two planes were connected together with a strong rope. When the glider got to the required height, the pilot released the cable and we were free to glide gracefully back down to the ground again.

Kate: Were you scared at all?

Rebecca: I was a little bit scared at first but once the cable was released it was much smoother. It felt a bit like being a bird. The typical modern glider uses the same **air currents** or moving air that birds use to fly.

Kate: It sounds like an amazing experience.

Rebecca: Yes, it was and it really gave me a **bird's eye view** of the countryside - this means to see things as a bird would.

Kate: Before we go any further, here's my question for this week. What year do you think the first flight in a glider took place?
a) 1891
b) 1905
c) 1913

Rebecca: answers

Kate: Now we're going to hear from the president of the North Yorkshire gliding club which is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. Moyra Johnson is ninety three years old and was one of the first people to fly in the area back in 1935 when she was still a teenager. In the following extract, we're going to hear how she got interested in flying. She mentions her father was in the RNAS – what does this mean?

Rebecca: This stands for the 'Royal Naval Air Service' but this was later turned into the RAF, the Royal Air Force. She also mentions '**measles**' which is an infectious disease which produces small spots all over the body and is common in childhood.

Kate: Let's listen – how did Moyra first become interested in flying?

Clip 1

Having been born during the First World War, my father was in the RNAS. When I had measles he rigged up an aeroplane which went from one end of the bedroom to the other which I could pull on a string. I would have probably been only about 10 then and I think from then on, flying or things like that which were new in those days, I was interested in.

Rebecca : She said that when she was about 10 years old she was ill with measles and her father who had been a pilot, put a toy aeroplane in her bedroom. Ever since then, flying has interested her.

Kate: So, we heard from you earlier in the programme how your glider got into the air by being tied to another small aeroplane and being pulled up - but how did they do it in the old days?

Clip 2

Well you were bungee launched by these two great thick ropes that several strong men on each side would pull – like a catapult. And someone else hanging on to your tail until someone else said 'let go'! And then phroom – you would just go into the air.

Rebecca: She said that she was 'bungee launched' and we think that means that maybe the ropes were elasticated and the force from the men pulling and then suddenly letting go, would propel the plane into the air. She said it was like a **catapult**. A catapult is a device which can throw objects at a high speed using a spring or elastic to give it extra force.

Kate: Incredibly, Moyra still flies occasionally. Let's listen to the final extract. Can you tell me what it is she likes about flying?

Clip 3

You don't hear anything but the wind, you just hear the wind blowing. It was wonderful here. You get that feeling of being a bird, which is what I've felt I'd always like to be.

Rebecca: She said that you don't hear anything but the wind and that you get the feeling of being a bird. That is exactly what I would have said about the flying experience actually, it does actually really feel like that. It was a fantastic experience and I'd definitely recommend that you try it if you have the chance.

Kate: I'll do my best. Let's go over some of the flight related vocabulary we've come across today.....

First we had **gliding** which is the flying of very light unpowered aircrafts known as gliders

soar - to fly high in the air using wind currents to move forward rather than an engine or the power of wings

air currents refers to moving air

birds eye view – this means to see things from above as a bird would

RNAS –'Royal Naval Air Service'

RAF - the Royal Air Force

measles – an infectious disease which produces small spots all over the body and is which is common in childhood.

a **catapult** is a device which can throw objects at a high speed using elastic or a spring to gain power

Kate: Lastly let's find out the answer to the question I asked you earlier. I asked you when was the first flight in a glider?

Rebecca: answers

Kate: It was actually in 1891.

Kate: Well thanks very much Rebecca for coming in and telling us about your flight. That's all we have time for, until next time. Goodbye!