Paper Glider Classroom Management

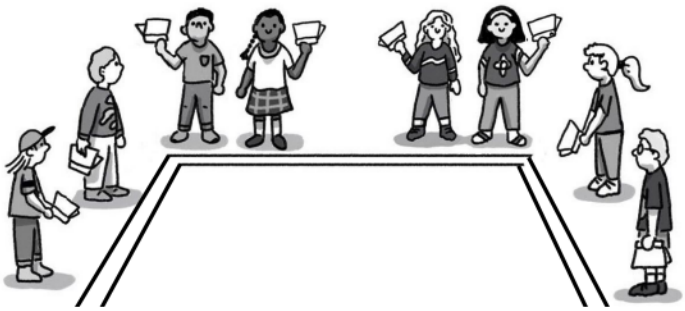
General

Paper airplane activities are fun and engaging, but they are also a challenge. This activity will involve paper airplanes failing and crashing to the ground. We see this as an opportunity to learn from failure and improve. It may be worthwhile to have a conversation with your students prior to the activity so that they have these expectations in mind.

Launch Area Set-up

1.Use masking tape (inside) or chalk (outside) to mark the Throw Line and Sidelines.

2. For each round of launching, we suggest having two Squadrons (8 students) at the Launch Area. The Pilots (4 students) will line up at the Throw Line and the Control Towers will stand behind the Sidelines to observe the launch technique of their Pilot. Count down “3, 2, 1” so all Pilots launch at once. After one or two launches, Pilots and Control Towers can switch positions. Then another two Squadrons (8 students) can cycle through.

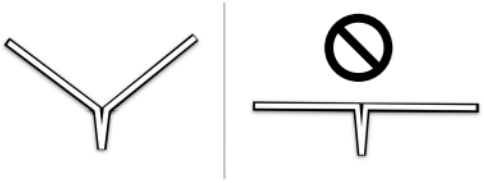


3. Depending on how much space is available to you and your class, you can always have more or fewer students launch their gliders at once.

Three Launching Tips

We suggest leading a discussion after each launch, asking if anyone noticed ways they can improve their glider’s flight on the next launch. The three easiest ways students can improve their glider’s flight are shown here.

Check the wings for a “V” shape.



Try throwing it gently instead of hard.

Try to throw it straight or slightly up towards the sky.

Don’t tilt it down.