Summarize a Text

Grade 4 Reading Worksheet

Name _____ Date _____

Read the text. Circle the detail that could be left out of a short summary.

READ THIS FIRST

Bessie Coleman Takes to the Sky

Bessie Coleman was born in Texas in 1892, one of thirteen children. Her family was poor. As a child, she helped pick cotton in the fields. She also walked four miles each way to a one-room school. Bessie loved to read, and she was especially good at math.

In 1915, Bessie moved to Chicago to find better work. She took a job at a barbershop. Customers there talked about many things, including airplanes. Some soldiers had come home from Europe with stories about pilots in France. Some of those pilots were women. Bessie decided that she would learn to fly.

That goal was not easy to reach. At the time, flight schools in the United States would not teach her. They turned her away because she was Black and because she was a woman. Bessie did not give up. She learned that schools in France might accept her. So she took French classes at night and saved every dollar she could.

In 1920, Bessie sailed to France. For seven months, she trained in a small, open airplane. The lessons were risky, and the planes were simple machines made of wood and cloth. In June 1921, she earned an international pilot's license. She was the first Black woman in the world to earn one.

Back in the United States, Bessie became a stunt pilot. At air shows, she flew loops and figure eights high above the crowds. Newspapers called her "Queen Bess." She used her fame to stand up for fairness. Once, she refused to perform unless Black and white visitors could enter the show through the same gate. The organizers agreed.

Bessie's biggest dream was to open a flight school for Black students. She gave talks at schools and churches to raise money for it. She never got to open the school herself. But in 1929, a flying club named for her opened in Los Angeles. It trained many new pilots.

Today, Bessie Coleman is remembered as a pioneer. Her courage opened the sky to people who had been told they did not belong there.

1. U.S. flight schools would not teach her.

   Her family had thirteen children.

   She worked to start a flight school for Black students.

   She earned her pilot's license in France.

2. She trained for seven months in France.

She refused to fly unless all visitors used one gate.

A flying club named for her trained pilots.

Bessie loved to read and was good at math.

3. She learned French to study in France.

Newspapers called her Queen Bess.

She became the first Black woman to earn a pilot's license.

She wanted to open a flight school.

4. She decided that she would learn to fly.

She worked at a barbershop in Chicago.

She earned an international pilot's license.

She sailed to France in 1920.

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Answer Key - Grade 4 Reading Worksheet

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