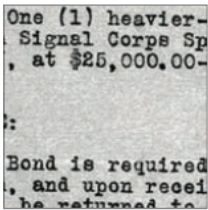


Assessing with Primary Sources

Grade Level: Grade 6

Standard(s) or Objectives: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.8 - Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

Library of Congress Resources:



Page 2 of Subject File: United States--War Department--Army Signal Corps--Correspondence, 1908. **A letter to the Wright brothers**
<https://www.loc.gov/resource/mwright.04164/?sp=2>

Topic Background: In 1878, a toy forever changed the lives of Wilbur and Orville. Milton gave the boys a toy helicopter, a simple device made of bamboo, paper, and cork and powered by a rubber band. Wilbur and Orville would later recall that their father's gift sparked their interest in the science of flight.

Excerpted from:

http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/flight/pdf/teacher_guide.pdf

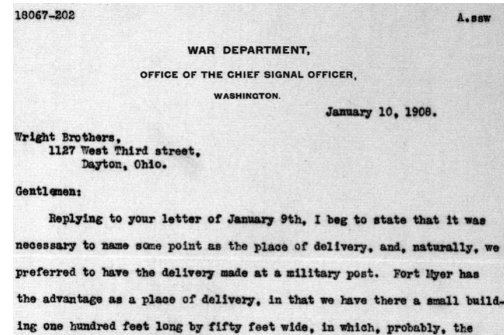
By 1903, the Wright Brothers had successfully flown the first airplane and by 1908 were still perfecting their design for the U.S. government. The famous 1903 photograph of their successful flight at Kitty Hawk was not published until 1908.

Source(s) Used: This source is a letter to the Wright brothers regarding the delivery and continued testing of an airplane, a project that was still operating in secrecy 5 years after the first successful flight at Kitty Hawk. Excerpt from **United States--War Department--Army Signal Corps--Correspondence, 1908**.

Answer Key: This letter shows the level of secrecy surrounding the Wright Brothers' airplane experiments and testing as late as 1908 (five years after their first successful flight). Because the U.S. government wanted to limit the number of people who knew about this project, the author of this letter is telling the Wright Brothers why an army base is the best location for their 1908 flight test. For this reason, the first underlined phrase is the best student response. The following underlined phrases are reasons why the brigadier general is in favor of this location.

U.S. War Department Letter to Wright Brothers, 1908 [Excerpt]

Directions: Read the excerpt below from an 1908 primary source about an early airplane test flight and answer the following question.



Wright Brothers,
1127 West Third Street,
Dayton, Ohio.

Replying to your letter of January 9th, I beg to state that it was necessary to name some points as the place of delivery, and, naturally, we preferred to have the delivery made at a military post. Fort Myer has the advantage as a place of delivery, in that we have there a small building one hundred feet long by fifty feet wide, in which, probably, the machine could be stored, or even assembled. Also there is ample space at Fort Myer, and another advantage of a military post is that we would be able to have entire control of the flight, without interference from outside people. The trial flight will naturally excite tremendous interest, and while there is no desire on the part of the Government to exclude people from seeing what they properly may, it is thought the matter could be much better controlled at that point than elsewhere. It is therefore desired that bids be made for the delivery at Fort Myer. [...]

Very respectfully,

Brigadier General,
Chief Signal Officer of the Army

According to this excerpt, which underlined statement or phrase best conveys the author's main point? Explain why. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.6)
