

# Early Flight

The Wright Brothers were not the first people to build a machine that put people in the air. Hot air balloons and gliders came first. Otto Lilienthal was the first successful aviator. He was sometimes called the “Glider King”. He made over 2000 flights.



People liked hot air balloons, but they had one major problem. You couldn't steer them! The winds took the balloon whichever way they were blowing. As a result, they were hard to control.

The Wright Brothers were the first people to add a motor to a glider. In order to perfect the design they did something called “Scientific Kite Flying”. Their experiments with gliders helped them come up with the exact design! Since they owned a bicycle shop first, they took the knowledge they had from there, and put it into building airplanes.

