


## National Air and Space Museum Washington, D.C.

### Introduction and Instructions

This is the most popular museum in Washington, D.C. In fact, it's the second most popular museum in the country (behind New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art) and fifth most popular in the world! Inside, the museum houses an eclectic collection of aircraft, including the plane flown by the Wright brothers, the command capsule from Apollo 11, and the Bell X-1 – the first plane to break the sound barrier. In addition to any prior knowledge you may have, use your research skills and the resources provided here to answer the questions below.

 The National Air and Space Museum has a long and rich history that dates well before its official founding in 1976. Read more about it here.  
READ: <https://airandspace.si.edu/history-0>

#### 1. Where were collections of the museum first housed?

Answer: The collections of the museum were first housed in the Arts and Industries Building. Then, after World War I, the collection expanded to a hut erected by the War Department behind the Smithsonian Castle that was called the "Tin Shed."

#### 2. When and why was the National Air Museum established?

Answer: In 1946, President Harry Truman signed a bill establishing the Smithsonian's National Air Museum to memorialize the development of aviation; collect, preserve, and display aeronautical equipment; and provide educational material for the study of aviation. There was no more room in the "Tin Shed."

#### 3. Why wasn't it originally called the National Air and Space Museum?

Answer: We hadn't gone to space in 1946.

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### 4. How did the Smithsonian take a leading role in funding rocket pioneers?

Answer: In 1916, Robert Goddard wrote to Secretary Charles Greeley Abbot requesting a grant to support his research. The Smithsonian awarded him \$5,000 to conduct his first practical experiments in rocketry.

### 5. When did construction of the current building begin and who was hired as the National Air and Space Museum's director?

Answer: 1971. Former Apollo 11 astronaut Michael Collins.

### 6. Where is the companion to the National Air and Space Museum? What is it called and when did it open?

Answer: Opened in 2003, the Udvar-Hazy Center is located on the grounds of Washington Dulles International Airport in Northern Virginia.



Check out a sneak-peak of the museum's exhibits and learn more about some of its most famous artifacts.

EXPLORE: <https://airandspace.si.edu/about/history/museum-dc>

EXPLORE: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JP8T5jvtgzY>

### 7. What exhibits and artifacts in the National Air and Space Museum are interesting to you? Why do you think these are included in the museum? How are they significant to air and space travel?

Answers will vary.

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## **WHAT DO YOU THINK?** *This is your chance to share your opinions, make connections, and apply what you've learned!*

1. Why do you think it is important that we have a National Air and Space Museum?

Answers will vary.

2. Imagine living in a world without airplanes and spacecraft. How would our world be different today?

Answers will vary.

3. In 1946, traveling to space was not a reality. Predict where we might go in the next 100 years. What exhibits might future generations see at the National Air and Space Museum?

Answers will vary.