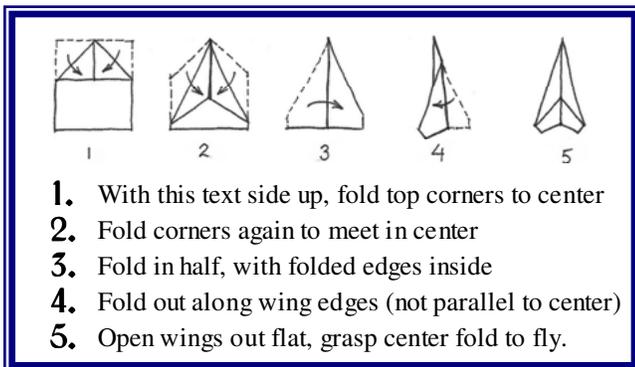


Finding Characters and Stories with a Dragon Flyer

A simple craft can help you find characters and their stories as you make and use it. This dragon flyer inspired the story “How to Teach a Dragon to Fly” in *Fantasy Fair* by Barbara Dubrovin. Make and fly your own dragon and see what story you discover! Is your dragon in a modern-day fantasy or a traditional high fantasy with heroic knights and epic adventures, or maybe in a comic fantasy? Will your dragon be clumsy? A rebel? A no-nonsense fierce leader? This is a basic flyer design, slight differences will affect flight, so each one you make will fly a little differently. This is what makes it helpful for discovering characters. Whatever happens is the character and the story he tells. Or, a character may be the person flying the dragons: *you!* Maybe you are naturally good at this so each one you make flies great with few problems. So then you are an expert and your tale is of The Daring Dragon Trainer. Or maybe yours always veers off towards your friend, so the story is of a person that calls dragons! Find many characters, making several flyers. Families? Teams? Friends? Rivals? Competitors?

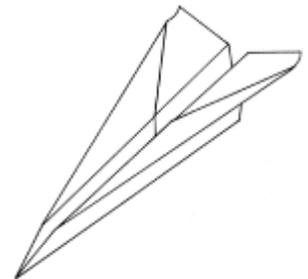


To Use Your Dragon Flyer

To fly it, grasp it between your thumb and finger, towards its nose. (Dragons are touchy near their tails. If you grab too far back, it will be distracted and fly poorly. It may even flip to bite you!) Hold it level in front of your shoulder and toss *gently*. **SAFETY: never** fly your dragon *towards* anyone! Even well-trained dragons can swerve and bite someone in the eye. Aim away from people.

Mastering Dragonflight

Almost all dragons need training to fine-tune their flight. If yours swerves or flips, lift its wings into a slight Y-shape, or bend the back of the body in the opposite direction how it swerved. If it nosedives, curl up the back wing edges with your fingers. If it flips up, turn those edges down. Dragons are touchy! Small changes have big effects. If yours smashes its nose in crash landings, smooth it and straighten wings before next flight. Even clumsy dragons are tough and recover—just adjust and try again! No dragon is “perfect.” Each flies with a personality (Shy? Brave? A show-off?). Adjusting is part of their stories!



Telling a Dragon Tale

Once you’ve discovered your character, your dragon flyer can help you tell the story. Plan when in your storytelling and what direction you might fly it, not directed at anyone but where the audience can see it fly. Fly it early to demonstrate a problem, or at the end to show success, or maybe several times. Practice to see what works best for your story.

Variation

Dragons, Dragons Everywhere! Audience Participation

Your audience may enjoy making and flying paper airplanes, as in the example story, and this can help you discover more characters. But audience activity should emphasize what you want people to remember. Is your story about being brave? Or, kind and caring? The dragon training activity in the story helped tell of teaching novice dragons to fly, and featured courage, determination and patience. What different audience activity would help tell your dragon story? How would you set it up? Be creative!

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