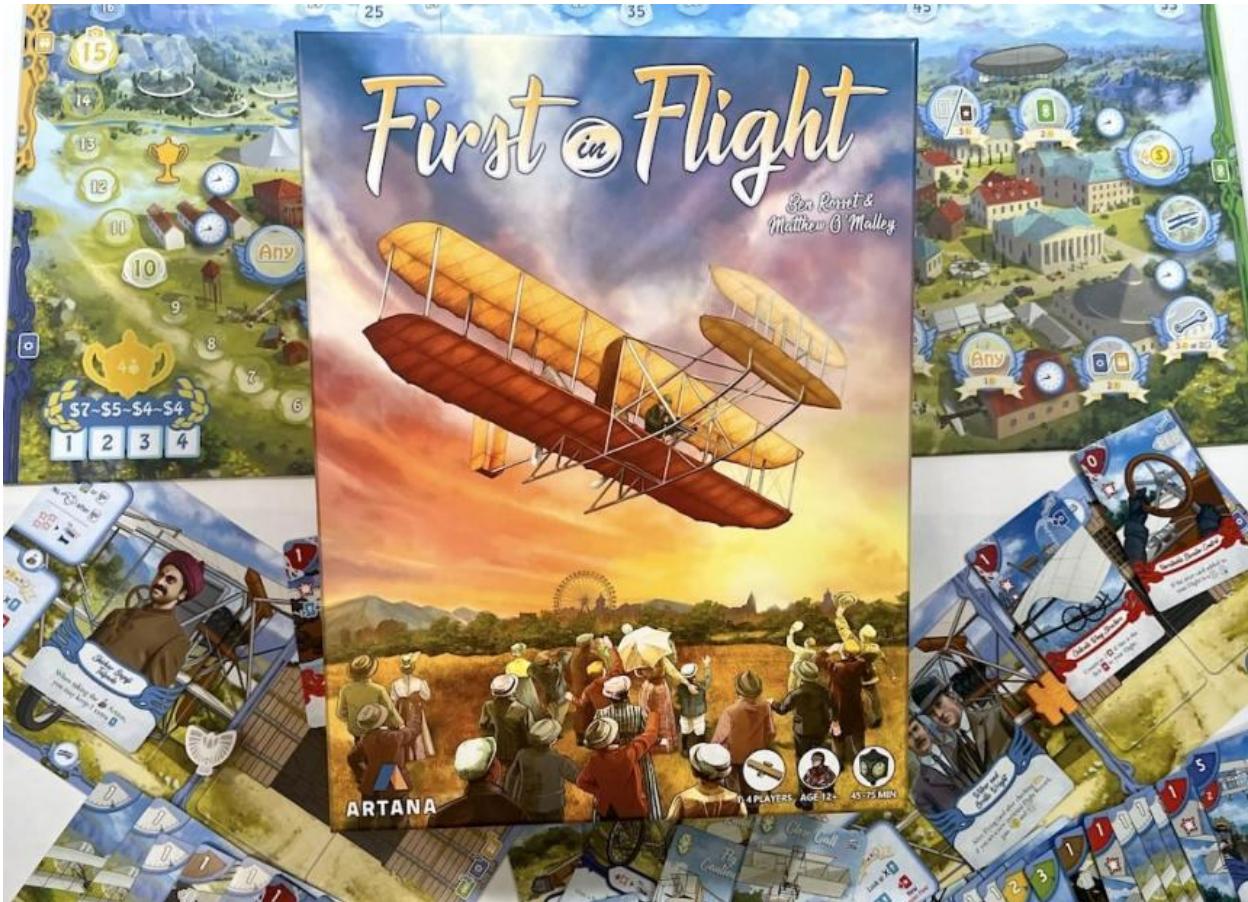


## First in Flight – Iterative Aviation



Did you know the Wright brothers weren't the only ones trying to make a controllable, heavier-than-air, powered aircraft? There were many inventors who were all aiming at the same thing – to be the *First in Flight*.

Ben Rosset and Matthew O'Malley have created a simulation of these harrowing early days of aviation, in a deck-building game from Artana. *First in Flight* is for up to four players, teens and adults, and takes around 75 minutes to play (unless you're playing solo).

### Setup

There are a lot of unique pieces for First in Flight, but the box comes with organizers that make setup go quickly.



Every player takes a play mat, pilot pawn, and flight tracker in their chosen color. Each constructs a flight deck, with basic glide cards, “design flaws”, and a single Experience card. They also choose a pilot card with a unique ability.



Choose the correct side of the board, then randomly set out the pilot pawns in the starting zone. Give each player starting money; the player at the back gets the fewest coins (they'll go first), and each player gets one more coin than the player behind them.

## How to Play

Players take turns moving clockwise on the board. Turns are not distributed equally; instead, the player who is farthest back always goes next. They move forward to an unoccupied Action space of their choice. This means that sometimes a player may take two turns in a row, if the others have jumped far enough ahead on the board.



You **must** take the action associated with the space you have chosen.

Many actions have a cost, either in money or in time – and some let you choose which way to pay. Money is obvious – pay the indicated number of coins back to the bank. To pay a **time** cost, move your Pilot pawn forward on the clock spaces that appear between the action spaces. Unlike Action spaces, Time spaces can be shared with other pawns; if so, the later pawn lands “ahead” of the pawn that was there first.

## Fly

The Fly action is the heart of the game. If you choose to Fly, shuffle your deck, being sure to include any Design Flaws you may have placed in your garage from an earlier flight.

Draw cards one at a time from your deck and place them in a row. Each card shows a Distance value of at least one.

After playing any number of cards, you may play your Descend card to end your flight. After playing Descend, you must shuffle your remaining deck and then play two more cards to land. If you land safely, Descend adds 5 distance; if you crash, it still adds 2 distance.



This Flaw

forces you to play Descend if you do not have a Skill card to exhaust.

### Crashing

You crash if your flight reveals four (or more) crash icons. **Do not draw** any more cards. Set your pilot pawn on its side; your next action **must** be a “recover” action, in which the pawn moves two Time spaces, then stands back up.



Four crash

icons. This flight scores 8 distance.



Orange pilot

crashed. On their turn, they will move two TIME spaces to the clock behind White pilot.

### Flight Distance & Records

Even if you crashed, add up your flight distance: all the values on your played Flight cards, including your Descend card (if you played it) and any effects from Skills or Design Flaws. If this flight distance is longer than your previous record, you've set a new record! Move your flight tracker on the board to mark your new record distance.



Even though

the Flaw (crash) card forced an immediate Descend, this short flight scores 14 distance.

If your new record is at least 15, you are now **famous** – flip your Pilot card and take its Fame bonus immediately. You'll also enjoy an improved ability for the rest of the game.





When Samuel Langley becomes famous, he immediately grants a Technology card (shown in upper left corner).

He now also grants extra +1 distance for each Technology card you have.

### Upgrade

Choose a cost in either time or money (at least two). Then draw that many cards from the upgrade deck. Choose two of the cards you drew, and add them to your deck of Flight cards. But it's not all good! You must **also** add a randomly-drawn Design Flaw.



Upgrade

cards let you fly further distances quickly



Design Flaws

have a crash icon AND a negative effect.

### Repair

Repair allows you to replace one of your Design Flaw cards with a Basic Flight Problem.

Pay the indicated cost. Then you choose a Design Flaw that you previously placed in your garage. You gain the bonus Repair benefit pictured on the Design Flaw. Discard the Design Flaw and take a Basic Flight Problem.



Repair this

Flaw to receive a Technology card (upper left)...



Flaw with this Basic Flight Problem.

#### Glide / Experience

This Action space allows you to either take a Glide card for free, or pay 3 coins to take an Experience card instead. Every time you draw an Experience card during flight, you'll add another Glide card to your flight **from the supply**, permanently adding it to your deck.

... and replace the



## Funding

Running out of money? Stop on this Action space to take coins from the supply.

## Development Card

After paying the cost, choose one of the pictured Development card types (Technology, Friend, Skill) – either from the face-up options next to the board, or randomly from the top of the appropriate deck.



Friend cards

may be used once per Year (round).



Technology

cards give an ongoing effect.



Each Skill

card may be used once during Flight, before playing a Descend card.

### Any

The Any space lets you copy the action of another space. You must still pay the full cost of the action.

### Year (Round) End

When a player's pawn reaches the start zone, they must pause and wait for all the other players to catch up. The first player to reach this area will go first in the next Year.

The Year ends when all pawns are in the start zone. Award seven coins for the Michelin Cup to the player with the best flight record, and five coins to the second-best. All other players receive four coins.

Discard any face-up Development cards that were not bought this Year, and reset with all new cards.

Don't forget to advance the Year tracker and reset any used Friend cards!



End of Year 1.

## Game End

*First in Flight* can end in two ways. Either someone passes the flight record of 40, or the fourth Year ends. Either way, all players get one more chance to fly and see if they can set the highest record.

After everyone has completed their final flight, the player with the longest flight record wins.



## Impressions

*First in Flight* takes a unique era in history and expands it into an incredibly thematic game. These pioneers of flight worked hard and experimented over and over again, often at risk to their own lives, until they could create just the right combination of power, lift, and control.

You'll do the same, by adding cards to your deck and trying for longer and longer flights. You'll always want to press your luck to set new records, even as flaws and problems multiply.

Unfortunately, playing out a “flight” can feel tedious, even though it fits the theme. All other players must wait while you play out cards one at a time. Once you add in Skills or Flaws that change the distance calculation, this becomes painfully slow as decks get larger and flights get longer.



This flight is

27 distance, unless Skills bring it higher or Flaws bring it lower.

## Are You Feeling Lucky?

And as luck-based as the flights are, you're not **guaranteed** to get a chance to fly each round. Players can jump out ahead on the board, and some pilot abilities (such as the Wright Brothers) will incentivize this.



Wright

Brothers want to set incremental new Flight Records as often as possible.

A focused player can greatly reduce others' chances to fly. And although a wide-open board leaves you more chances to do all of the **other** actions, those actions always have a cost. And **flying** is the only way to set records and win the game.

### Not For Two Pilots

*First in Flight* requires at least three players to balance the availability of actions. The designers allowed for this by adding automata to the two-player and solo modes. Although the automata simulate a three-player game very well, these modes add complexity, and I would recommend that first-time players learn with a three or four player game.



## Unusual and Unique

All the cards are interestingly illustrated, in a way that makes flying concepts more concrete and reminds us that historical figures were real people.



The card design is also thoughtful towards how the game is actually played.

All Flight cards – Glide, Experience, Upgrade, Problems, and Flaws – are the same size. But Development cards are smaller, and the Descend card is subtly larger, preventing you from accidentally shuffling either

of these into your deck. And the Descend card has a handy tip to remind you not to leave Flaws in your garage when it's time to fly.



You can't shuffle the Descend card in by accident.



Flip the

Descend card to remind you to check your Garage before a flight.

## Family Fun?

For all its flaws, *First in Flight* expands on an era of modern history that gets little attention, and does it well.

Although it can feel tedious to shuffle and re-shuffle your deck, the iterative nature of early flight design is clearly demonstrated. You'll constantly seek ways to add distance and counter Design Flaws.

With so much going on in this game, I think the recommended age range of 12+ is about right. Even though there are only a few types of cards in your deck, Flaws and Skills can leave you recalculating often. And you'll need patience to wait through other players' turns.

*First in Flight* isn't really a family game. It takes time to learn and patience to play. It's best for gameschoolers or students of aviation history, willing to put the time in for a truly thematic experience.

But for those with the patience to try it, it's well worth it.