

How To Emulate: Rinker Buck



Flight of Passage // Rinker Buck

15-year old Rinker Buck, and his 17-year old brother Kern restored a small airplane over a winter. They had a huge plan of flying that airplane from their home in New Jersey, all the way across the coast to California. In doing that, they face huge hardships such as mountain crossings, bad weather, money, and inexperience.

Written by: Majd Bostani - Gold Stream

The Narrator's Experience

What's this element?

The narrator and author of *Flight of Passage*, Rinker Buck details his experience as a pilot, and compares it to his brother, Kern's a handful of times throughout this book. 17-year old Kern is a flight whiz. According to Rinker, "Kern was naturally graceful and coordinated at the controls, and what he couldn't memorize by just handling a plane he picked up by memorizing all twenty-eight chapters of *The Student Pilot's Handbook*." (p.8) 15-year old Rinker Buck (narrator) however, has found his flight progress "less satisfying". He then added that, "Except for navigation, which I enjoyed and worked hard at, I was less graceful than my brother as a pilot and, worse, afraid most of the time." (p.9) Rinker did however read.

Why does it matter?

Rinker's experience in aviation plays a pivotal role in the events that transpire in this memoir. His experience makes him have an understanding of what exactly is going on, yet not really have much of an interest in actually flying the plane. His more experienced brother Kern, was the man behind the controls of the plane, while Rinker was the navigator as that was what he was more adept at. This enabled Rinker to still have an active part in the flight, yet not complain about not keeping coordinated and fighting turbulence. If Rinker were to have the controls, the flight wouldn't have went so smoothly. Even as the navigator, Rinker admitted to fear of what's going on. He admitted to this by saying, "I hate this f***ing turbulence, Kern. You sit there and take it for a while?" (p. 160). This shows that the flight would have had a scary feel to it.

What's the impact on the reader?

Rinker is not an all-rookie or a self-proclaimed all-pro, like how his brother is perceived. I believe that that makes him feel somewhat knowledgeable, yet really relatable at the same time. The average reader doesn't want to read a story about this all-pro pilot flying a plane from New Jersey to California. The average reader likes drama in a novel. That combination of humor, light-warmheartedness, and serious pilot talk is what makes *Flight Of Passage* appeal to all.

Quotes:

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Humor

What's this element?

Rinker Buck has added numerous humorous twists to his story. From having cringe-worthy moments of being high on airplane dope, to flat-out rebellion, to relate-able teenage shenanigans, this book has it all.



Why does it matter?

Humor adds an entertaining factor to a story. Authors add humor to books to lose that formal, monotoned feeling. That makes the readers feel more intrigued the about authors' stories. Rinker Buck noted every last thing that him and his brother did. Chapters are organized by legs of the trip, so they might become really heavy. Rinker's addition of humor makes the plot go by faster, yet maintain its track. It also adds suspense to the story that Rinker is trying to tell. For example, on page 111, Rinker and Kern were originally told to do a simple fly-by by their father. However, they planned on doing a buzz job against their father's word. That added suspense, as it made the reader wonder whether they were going to get hollered at for being so humorous and rebellious.



What's the impact on the reader?

This element of humor and rebellious characters make the book more appealing to readers of all kinds. It does that with it's not-so-serious nature, as well as its imperfect characters. If the book had serious pilots that wouldn't talk about anything but how aerodynamics help them, it wouldn't appeal to the the average reader. The characters in this book are pilots, but they are also teenagers. They get high, they disobey their parents, they make mistakes, and they are most of all, funny. That humor, and teenage spirit is what makes this book a winner with all audiences.

"Karl Kinchierf wears Davy Crockett underpants." (pg. 73)

"Hey Rink, did he say a flyby, or a buzz job?" "Buzz job!" (pg. 111)

"The next day, Kern and I pulled our usual Sunday morning sunrise. We put on our best jackets and ties, exited the house through the kitchen so my mother could see we were dressed for Mass the way she liked, and went into the Willys. After turning the corner, we switched clothes and went to the diner." (pg. 61)

Local Traditions and Slang

What's this element?

Rinker, the author kept one of his main themes of showing off people of the country in mind in his dialogue styles. The people that Rinker would meet would be different everytime. Not only would they speak aviation, but they also speak their local slang. The people that Rinker and Kern would run across would also try to introduce them into the local traditions.

swale - pg. 146 - Tennessee - a hollow, low area

cropduster - pg.146 - Midwest - pilot that sprays insecticide.

Why does it matter?

This element is really important to the book because it helps develop one of the author's main purposes in writing this book: to show off the country that he lives in. While interacting with pilots from the airports that he lands at, he makes sure to note the exact wording used by them. This helps detail the differences and similarities between many different parts of America, and their culture. For example, in Kentucky, they ran across a cropduster (heavily used term in Midwest), and the word swale was mentioned. A swale - which was unfamiliar to me, is a hollow, low area. Also in PA, they also had the Pennsylvania Dutch treatment, of riding horseback to the airport geezer (old man who fuels planes)'s house.

What's the impact on the reader?

The descriptions of language and rituals help the reader learn a lot more about the different parts of the country, how the people are there, and most importantly, how they speak (slang). This book really gives it's readers an appreciation for the diversity of Americans and their culture.



Cast of Boredom

“Hey Majd, do you want to hang out this weekend?”, my cousin Joey asked via telephone.

“Umm... Sure.”, I replied in uncertainty. “What are we going to do while the ladies are out shopping?” I added.

“Don’t know”, my cousin answered.

“Well, we aren’t shopping with the ladies, are we?”, I chuckled..

“Nope. I hate furniture stores! If you want: you, Uncle Joe, dad, and I could go fishing”, he offered.

“Sounds good!”

Fishing has always been a pastime in the Bostani family. My father and grandfather used to casually fish, when time allowed. My cousin’s side of the family are also avid anglers. Me, not so much. I could tell you about the time of year striper season is, and where you should go to catch them. However, my technique is really lax. I can’t tell you how to cast properly.

On the road from my cousin’s house in Delaware to Maryland, our tummies were a grumblin’. We stopped at a local sandwich shop in the town of Milfurt. Being the purebred Philly boy, I felt like a hoagie. I asked the lady behind the counter for a Turkey and Cheese hoagie, with lettuce, tomatoes, and onions. Little did I know that she didn’t know what I meant.

“Do you want that on a long roll or white bread?”, she asked.

“Long roll, please.”

“A sub coming right up.”

Duh, Majd. We ain’t in Kansas anymore. After getting the local spice on a Philly favorite, we drove the five miles to the wildlife refuge. We cast our fishing poles, which I was unable to do without getting my cousin to help, and relaxed.

After an hour of doing absolutely nothing, I saw my line moving.

“Fish on”, I exclaimed while running towards the pole. After excitedly reeling in what I thought to be my first fish, I was hard pressed to find nothing but hook. I didn’t hook it properly.

As if it were a chain reaction, Uncle Sal’s line started moving. He yanked the pole back, and started wrestling the fish back. A twenty pound shark. He grinned with a “Leave it to beaver” appearance.

It was at that moment, when I realized that fishing wasn’t for me.

Annotation 1: Experience

My cousin and my uncle Sal (Joey’s father) know everything there is to know about fishing. They took me out fishing, which I knew something about from my aimless research. However, I didn’t really know all of the techniques there is to know, such as the hooking. This makes me more of a fun character that makes mistakes, and isn’t perfect.

Annotation 2: Humor

I added humor to the piece by making a couple of dry lines such as “Let the ladies do their thing, and we’ll go fish”, and the whole thing with duh-ing myself, saying that “We ain’t in Kansas anymore.” The humor is supposed to engage the reader a bit more, and not make it a flat-toned story.

Annotation 3: Localization

The localized slang was used by using the word “Milfurt”, for Milford, DE and by subbing the word “hoagie” to “sub”, as someone from Delaware would say. Delawareans that live by the shore are very localized, and believe that their way is the best, explaining why the girl corrected me.

About The Authors



Rinker Buck has great writing skills in his blood. He is the son of Look Magazine publisher, Thomas Francis Buck. His father was also a pilot by night. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that his son wrote *Flight of Passage*. Rinker and his brother, Kern did in fact make the 1966 coast to coast flight in N4971H. To this day, flying still isn't Rinker's favorite. He is however, a reporter for New York, Life, Adweek, and many other magazines. Rinker's multiple books detailing his flight, the Oregon Trail, and many other experiences have won countless awards.



Majd Bostani is a proud student of Science Leadership Academy, in Philadelphia, PA. He is in the 10th Grade, and has racked straight A's for his entire life. Along with being a full-time high school student, Majd is also a student pilot. With thirty-five hours in planes like the Cessna 150, 172, Piper Warrior, PT-17 Stearman, and Great Lakes 2T-1A, Majd knows all of the ins and outs of flying. Majd is also a newsletter editor for his EAA Chapter in New Jersey. Those two elements make Majd and Rinker's backgrounds highly similar.

