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1988 Volume VI: An Introduction to Aerodynamics

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## Daedalus: The Long Odyssey from Myth to Reality

Guide for Curriculum Unit 88.06.10

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According to Greek mythology, a man named Daedalus, imprisoned on the island of Crete, crafted for himself out of feathers and wax a pair of wings. Fastening the wings to his arms, he jumped from a cliff and soared to freedom on the Greek mainland. The event remains mythological, though cultural historians trace the origins of the story to about 3500 B.C. On April 23, 1988, in a record-shattering display of human physical prowess and modern flight technology, a Greek cyclist emulating the myth flew under his own power in the superlight aircraft "Daedalus 88," constructed by a team of scientists and students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, from the island of Crete to the island of Santorini, 74 miles across the Aegean Sea. The long flight from myth to reality was at last completed for Daedalus.

Examining the Daedalus flight from myth to reality with a variety of perspectives, this unit is intended for use in general science, physical science, and modern technology courses in grades 7-12. The most ideal setting for the unit would be an interdisciplinary study of the relationship between science and technology on the one hand, and the interaction between technology and culture, on the other. However, individual teachers, closely attuned to the interests and skill levels of their students can adapt the material presented to enrich a wide variety of courses and curricular emphases.

(Recommended for General Science classes, grades 7-10; Physical Science classes, grades 9-12; Physics classes, grades 11 and 12; and Technology classes, grades 7-12)

### **Key Words**

*Science Aerodynamics*

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