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The tunnels are used to copy the actions of an object in flight. Researchers use wind tunnels to learn more about how an aircraft will fly. Some wind tunnels are big enough to hold full size versions of vehicles. The wind tunnel moves air around an object, making it seem like the object is really flying.

In wind engineering wind tunnel tests are used to measure the velocity around and forces or pressures upon structures.

The automobile boating and motorsports industries all use wind tunnels.