

At the airport

A Departures

This is the usual sequence of activities when you get to the airport.

First you go to the **check-in desk** where they weigh your **luggage**. Usually you are permitted 20 kilos, but if your bags weigh more, you may have to pay **excess baggage** (= you pay extra). The airline representative checks your ticket and gives you a **boarding card** for the plane with your seat number on it. Then you go through **passport control** where an official checks [NOT controls] your passport, and into the **departure lounge**. Here, you can also buy things in the **duty-free**, e.g. perfume, alcohol and cigarettes. About half an hour or forty minutes before take-off, you are told to go to a **gate number**, e.g. gate 14, where you wait before you get on the plane. When you board (= get on) the plane, you find your seat. If you have **hand luggage**, you can put it under your seat or in the overhead locker above your seat.



The plane then **taxi** (= moves slowly) towards the runway, and when it has permission to take off, it accelerates along the runway and takes off.

Note: The verb to taxi is generally only used in this context.

B The flight

You may want or need to understand certain announcements; these come from the **captain** (= the pilot) or from an **air steward** or **stewardess** / **cabin crew** / **flight attendants** (= people who look after the passengers):

Please **fasten your seat belt** and put your seat in the **upright position**.



We are now **cruising** (= flying comfortably) at an **altitude** (= height) of 10,000 metres.

May we remind passengers (= ask passengers to remember) that there is no smoking until you are inside the **terminal building** (= where passengers arrive and depart).

The **cabin crew** (= air stewards) are now coming round with **landing cards**. (These are cards you sometimes have to fill in when you enter certain countries.)

C Arrival

When the plane **lands** (= arrives on the ground), you have to wait for it to stop / come to a halt. When the doors are open, you get off the plane and walk through the **terminal building** and go to the **baggage reclaim** where you collect your luggage. You then pass through **customs** (green = nothing to declare; red = goods to declare; blue = European Union citizens). If you are lucky, you can then get a bus, taxi or train to the centre of town without waiting too long. You can also **hire a car** (= rent a car) at most airports.

Note: British English usually **hire** something for a short period, e.g. hire a room for a night. American English usually **rent** something for a short period, e.g. rent a room for a night; for a car, you can use both words.