



**How to get your
Pilot's License with
Flying Colors**

CONTENTS

1 - Introduction	4
2 - Are you Qualified?	6
USA	6
Canada.....	6
UK	7
Australia	7
Getting your medical certificate	7
Flying with a Disability.....	8
3 - Covering your Expenses.....	9
Why Drive when you can Fly?	9
Professional Flying	10
Making friends with a pilot	10
Joining the Air Force	10
Taking out a Mortgage	11
Aviation Scholarships and Loans.....	11
4 - How to Select the Instructor or School That's Right for You.....	12
Reputation	12
Distance from Home.....	13
Facilities	13
Price	14
Instructor Experience	14
It's Your Choice.....	14
5 - Pre-flight Jitters, airsickness, and Anxiety	16
Conquering pre-flight jitters	16
The Right Way	17
Taking a walk.....	17
Cutting back on Caffeine	17
Breathing techniques	17



6 - Getting the Most out of your Airborne Education20

7 - Passing your Tests with Flying Colors23

8 - So Now What? Putting your new Pilot’s License to Good Use26

9 - Finding a Safe, Affordable Aircraft, to Rent or Own30

 Consider the aircraft’s attributes as well31

 Making Payments36

 Resale Value.....36

1 - INTRODUCTION

For many people, learning to fly is somewhere on the "Things to do Before I Die". If you've decided it's time to pursue your own pilot's license, first of all, congratulations! Most people go their entire lives without ever making that first step towards their dreams. Simply making the decision and committing to go through with it is an accomplishment in itself.

However, let's not kid ourselves. The reason so many people are reluctant to commit to something like obtaining a pilot's license is, well, it's not a cheap hobby and it's not an easy hobby. You can get yourself a driver's license in one afternoon for eight bucks and a used car for a few hundred (it might be a piece of junk, but it'll get you around town). On the other hand, pilot training can cost several thousand dollars, it can take months before you're ready to get your own plane and fly solo, and if you want to fly a three hundred dollar airplane, you'd better make sure to pack a parachute.

Because of the cost involved, many people consider hobby-flying to be a pursuit for rich people and rich people alone. Luckily, this isn't quite the case. We'll get into that in chapters four and ten. Certainly, it's not a cheap interest to have, but there are options for the less financially advantaged to pursue the dream, as well.

More important than having the money or the time, the most important thing to have when you're pursuing a pilot's license is dedication. All the money and free time in the world can't do a thing for a would be pilot who just doesn't care enough to put their all into the process of learning to fly. On the other hand, if you have enough dedication, that can make up for a lack of money and free time.

Certainly, money and time can be immensely helpful, but dedication is the deal breaker. As the saying goes, where there's a will, there's a way. Being dedicated will prove more important, in the long run, than the size of your bank account.

If you're still not one hundred percent sure you're ready to go after your pilot's license, the only advice we can offer is this: Don't waste any more time.

There are certain pilot's license requirements involving factors such as your health and, of course, mental proficiency. You only get older as time goes by, not younger, and the day when you might not be considered fit to fly is only getting closer and closer. If you're serious about getting a pilot's license, start pursuing it as soon as you can.

For quick reference, because we'll be referring to these organizations below, we'll go through the aviation administrations in all the major English speaking countries.

The FAA, or Federal Aviation Administration, is a part of the United States Department of Transportation. The group is in charge of regulating all civil flight in the US, as well as maintaining the air traffic control system put to use within the US.



In the United Kingdom, there is the EASA, or the European Aviation Safety Agency. The EASA is an agency of the European Union, and are in charge of all civilian aviation safety within the UK.

In Australia, there is the Civil Aviation Safety Authority, or CASA, and Air services Australia. Air safety is handled by CASA, while Air services Australia handles all regulatory functions. CASA is the group in charge of licensing.

Canadian pilot's licensing is governed by Transport Canada, in accordance with the Aeronautics Act, as well as Canadian Aviation Regulations, or CAR. In Canada, licensing or a permit is required for anyone acting as a crew member on any flight.

Most of the advice in this book will be applicable regardless of country, and we've done our best to research the requirements for licensing in each country, but we should recommend that you do a little independent research, as well, as these regulations are all subject to change.

Please note that this book is only intended as a guide to help you through the process of learning to fly, getting your wings, finding an airplane, and putting that airplane to use.

This book is not, and does not claim to be, a comprehensive guide for learning how to fly.



2 - ARE YOU QUALIFIED?

Before you do start pursuing a pilot's license, know that there are certain requirements that you must meet before you can even be considered eligible for a license.

These are, of course, in addition to being able to pass the written and practical tests involved in earning your pilot's license. The requirements listed below are considered general eligibility requirements by the respective regulatory committees in each country.

USA

As dictated by sec 61.103, Eligibility Requirements: General, for pilot's licensing with the FAA...

Candidate must be at least seventeen years of age. A private pilot's certificate for a hot air balloon or glider may be issued to applicants as young as sixteen years old.

Applicant must be able to read, speak and understand the English language, or else have operating limitations placed on his or her pilot certificate as necessary for safe operation of their aircraft. The limitations will be removed if the applicant can prove that they have a thorough grasp of the English language at a later date.

Applicant must hold a current, third class medical certificate. In the case of a certificate for a balloon or glider, the applicant must simply prove that they have no known medical defect which would hinder or prevent the applicant from safely operating the aircraft.

CANADA

By CARs regulations, different aircraft require different specific qualifications. In general, though, a license to operate a powered airplane requires a minimum age of seventeen, and all aircraft require CARs standard 424 physical and mental health qualification.

UK

In the UK, there are a few different levels of aviation licensing, these are...

- NPPL - the National Private Pilot License
- PPL - the Private Pilot License
- CPL - the Commercial Pilot License, and...
- ATPL - the Airline Transport Pilot License

The NPPL has less strict medical requirements than the others. A medical form for application is available at the NPPL website, www.nppl.uk.com.

AUSTRALIA

CASA requires medical qualification, but a clean driving record may also be helpful in terms of receiving licensing in Australia. CASA may give minor penalties to their licensed pilot's for traffic violations, accidents, etcetera, and penalties may be more severe if the pilot does not record the incident directly to CASA.

GETTING YOUR MEDICAL CERTIFICATE

Being medically certified may require different qualifications in different countries, however, the general rule applies that you need to find a qualified AME, or Aviation Medical Examiner.

You can quickly find an examiner within driving distance by simply referring to the following website:

www.faa.gov/pilots/amelocator/

The above website is hosted by the FAA, which is strictly the American Aviation Administration. However, the directory lists AMEs throughout the entire world, even in countries where English is not considered a primary language, so it shouldn't take too long to be certified as medically fit using the above site as a starting point.

FLYING WITH A DISABILITY

If you are suffering from a significant disability, this does not, in fact, immediately disqualify you.

The health requirements generally have to do with your ability to stay awake, aware, and in control during flight. For example, narcolepsy or severe Parkinson's disease may disqualify a potential pilot, as a seizure or a loss of consciousness will put your life at risk. However, there are hundreds of licensed pilots with disabilities that you might assume would disqualify them from becoming licensed.

If you are suffering from a disability, contact the nearest offices of your country's aviation administration and inquire as to whether or not you are qualified to fly in light of that disability.

Again...

Keep in mind that you should call your national aviation administration and make your own inquiry. The information presented here has been researched and should be accurate by the time you read this, but, of course, the rules and regulations are always subject to change depending on the local government, no matter what country you lived in. This is simply the price we pay for living in a civilized society: Bureaucracy.



3 - COVERING YOUR EXPENSES

This is probably the part of the process that scares people away the most.

Many flight schools will quote a price based on the number of hours required by the country's flight administrations, but these numbers are often unrealistic. A pilot will usually have about twice as many hours training before they are truly qualified to fly solo. This can wind up with the pilot having to pay twice what they were expecting.

Even when your flight school is willing to cut you a deal, you may wind up paying a minimum of eight thousand dollars, US.

Because of this, plus the price of an airplane, private aviation is often seen as a luxury afforded only to the rich, and certainly, it is much easier an interest to afford when you have more money than you know what to do with. However, middle or working class people do have some options...

WHY DRIVE WHEN YOU CAN FLY?

A decent airplane plus flight lessons can cost as much as thirty thousand dollars on the low end. However, isn't this the average price of an SUV or luxury automobile these days?

Many aviationists manage to afford their wings by just using their airplane in place of a new car.

You can simply make payments on a plane and lessons instead of on a car, using your airplane to make longer trips (there are small, private air strips all over the place), and taking taxis, public transport, or a cheap used car for in-town transportation.

The downsides to this option are, of course, that you don't have a great vehicle for general transportation. However, a good used car can cost just a few hundred bucks, and make trips up to one or two hundred miles with no problem, even if it might not be road-ready for a cross country trip (but of course, that's where your airplane comes in).

PROFESSIONAL FLYING

If you're really, really dedicated to flying, and you are open to a major career change, many commercial airlines will offer programs wherein they provide training to promising candidates for professional piloting.

Another option is to use your lessons and airplane as an investment for a small business venture, in which case, you may be able to talk to investors or banks about getting loans.

There is certainly some demand out there for crop dusters, aviation tour guides, and other airborne professionals. Professional flight goes well beyond commercial airlines.

If flying is more than a hobby, and is, in fact, a true passion for you, this may be the best option. Besides having your expenses aided by a loan or investors, you will be making a living in your airplane. Unless you're already in love with your current career, flying for a living is a heck of a way to go after quitting your day job.

MAKING FRIENDS WITH A PILOT

Okay this is kind of a long shot, but do you know any professional flight instructors? If you can learn how to fly, that's all that matters, as the tests you will have to pass are to the standards of the aviation administrations in your country, and not the individual flight school.

If you have any options for learning to fly without paying for flight school, that will be considered just as valid as dropping ten grand on lessons.

JOINING THE AIR FORCE

This one can't be seriously recommended unless you already have some interest in joining the military, in which case, you can possibly kill two birds with one stone. After serving your term in your country's air force, you will come out a licensed pilot.

Again, we cannot recommend this for anyone not already interested in serving in the armed forces. This is a long term, high risk commitment. Do not even consider this unless you want to spend years in uniform, go through rigorous training, and perhaps risk your life fighting for your country.

How to get your Pilot's License with Flying Colors



TAKING OUT A MORTGAGE

This is sort of a tricky one, and you should have a plan to make the money back before taking a mortgage out on your home. This is best coupled with a flight based business idea. After the lessons and the airplane, there is relatively low overhead for flight based businesses, as you only need to fuel and maintain your aircraft, and perhaps pay for storage fees at an airstrip. Flight based businesses can also be fairly lucrative, as licensed pilots who are willing to take customers for a quick air tour of the city, dust crops, or make small trips to nearby cities are somewhat few and far between.

AVIATION SCHOLARSHIPS AND LOANS

Scholarships and educational loans aren't just for the scholarly. Check out websites like www.aopa.org/info/certified/funds.html and look into finding sponsorship for flight school

Mainly, just keep an eye and an ear open, be on the lookout for good deals on flight training, and be on the lookout for ways to secure funding for your training.

We'll say it again, where there's a will, there is a way. If you are truly dedicated to learning to fly, financing will be a hurdle to jump, not a dead end. There is money out there through grants, loans, investors, scholarships, and so on, and all you have to do is find it. And remember that if one source turns you down, there are a million other options.

4 - HOW TO SELECT THE INSTRUCTOR OR SCHOOL THAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU

So let's say you've decided it's the right time to learn to fly, you've secured funding for your flight training, and you're ready to find a school.

There are a number of options out there for flight school. Even within a hundred or so miles of your home (depending on where you live), you're likely to find maybe a half a dozen different instructors or schools. It may seem like a hassle trying to narrow it down.

You should equip yourself with a basic checklist of requirements for selecting your flight school...

- Reputation
- Distance from home
- Facilities
- Price
- Experience of the instructor(s)

We'll be going down the list in rough order of least to most important. One of these qualifications may be more important to you than it is to the next trainee, so this is only a rough estimation of how important each qualification will be to the average pilot-to-be.

REPUTATION

With any good flight school, you should probably be able to find some information online either on the school's official website, or on chat forums related to learning to fly.

We mark this as the least important only because you should make your own assessment of the school when you visit to discuss the possibility of training there. A bunch of negative reviews should be a red flag, of course, and a bunch of positive reviews should, at the least, mean "give these guys a chance", but it all comes down to your judgment. You're the one putting up the money and you're the one learning to fly, so your opinion is the most important.

Still, we recommend doing some quick online research. If you're getting nothing but consistently negative reviews for a specific school or instructor, it may be best not to waste your time with them.

DISTANCE FROM HOME

If you have to drive too far, paying for gas alone may become as much an expense as your training itself.

If at all possible, you don't really want to drive more than thirty minutes to your flight school on a regular basis. You don't want to sacrifice things like your instructor's experience or a good price in the name of scraping a few minutes off your driving time, but you don't want to spend half your day in the car, either.

Check sites like Google maps (and cross-reference to make sure it's all up to date) and find a school that is quick and easy to get to, with minimal traffic.

FACILITIES

Okay, you don't need much in the way of facilities when it comes to a flight school. Most will have a room for testing and studying, as well as a decent airstrip and some aircraft to train in.

What you should look for is a flight school with relatively up-to-date equipment and well maintained aircraft. This is mostly a safety concern. Take a look at the birds you'll be flying before signing up.

Understandably, you're probably not an aircraft engineer and wouldn't know how to spot a poorly maintained engine on sight. You can probably tell how well an aircraft is taken care of simply by observing it, though. If the instructor takes care of his or her airplanes, they're probably going to be kept clean and properly stored in a hangar.



PRICE

This may be a deal breaker depending on what you have in the way of funding. Of course you don't want to pay too much, but please, don't sacrifice your peace of mind for the sake of a better deal. You absolutely need a safe aircraft and an experienced instructor, more than you need to save an extra hundred to a thousand dollars.

If cost is important to you, look for the lowest price, take a look at the facilities and instructor, and if you don't like what you see, move on to the second lowest price, and so on, until you feel you'll be safe and well informed at that particular flight school.

Again, price is important, but your health and your education as a pilot are even more important.

INSTRUCTOR EXPERIENCE

This is maybe the most important part of settling on a flight school. Ideally, your instructor should have quite a few years of experience behind them. If they haven't been flying for a decade or longer, there should probably be someone a little higher up at the school with a little more experience.

When you talk to your potential instructor-to-be, ask to see qualifications, ask about their history in piloting, ask about their training methods, etcetera.

Know as much as you can about the school and the instructor before signing up. You want someone who has been flying for several years, who has already trained dozens of students, and who you can get along with.

IT'S YOUR CHOICE

The above list should help you to narrow down your options to a few that you'd feel comfortable training with, but it really comes down to your personal preference and choice.

Remember, this is your dream, not somebody else's, and what might be a perfect school for someone else might just not be right for you.

Before signing up for any school, get familiar with it first. Look into every area of the school. The instructors, the price, the equipment, the aircraft. Ask a lot of questions of everyone who works there and make sure you have a good grasp of what kind of school it is.

This is a big investment and a big decision. That doesn't mean you have to stay up nights on end worrying about which school to sign up with before you finally jump in, but don't make the decision without first doing some research and taking a day or two to give it some time and thought, comparing it with the other options you have before you.



5 - PRE-FLIGHT JITTERS, AIRSICKNESS, AND ANXIETY

Even if you've been on dozens of airplanes in your life, there's a unique anxiety that comes with flying when you're the one in the pilot's seat. It's not so much fear of flying as it is fear of taking control. After all, you are taking your life into your own hands when you get behind the controls of an airplane, or a road vehicle, for that matter.

Of course, there are other personal hang-ups that go along with learning to fly as well. Most people who have decided they'd love to get their wings have gotten over general fear of flying and airsickness, but to cover our bases, we'll talk about dealing with those problems, as well.

Interestingly, outside of general fear of being up in the air, the fear of flying in a commercial airplane and the fear of flying on your own may be mutually exclusive. People who are afraid of flying in a commercial airline are usually scared of having control taken away from them, meaning that they can get behind the wheel of any vehicle in the world and feel safe, since their fate is in their own hands. Anxiety over taking control of the plane tends to be just that, anxiety over taking control. There are people who insist on flying everywhere themselves because they just don't feel comfortable putting their fate in someone else's hands, and likewise, there are people who love to fly in commercial airlines, but are too nervous to ever try piloting for themselves.

In extreme cases, it may be necessary to seek the assistance of a therapist or other professional who can help you through intense anxiety. You should consider this if your anxiety goes beyond a simple butterflies in the stomach kind of feeling. If you feel honestly nauseous, if you can't stop shaking, if you break into a cold sweat at the idea of giving flying a chance, you should really talk to a professional before moving forward.

The advice given below is intended more for the kind of general anxiety we all feel when coming face to face with a new, intense experience like controlling an airplane for the first time.

CONQUERING PRE-FLIGHT JITTERS

First of all, let's list what not to do...

- Obsessively monitor weather reports for weeks before your first flight
- Engage in luck-rituals, such as wearing your lucky underwear or baseball cap



- Sedate yourself with alcohol or cold medicine (a little liquid-courage is great if you're on a commercial airliner, but it is absolutely the last thing a pilot should have in their system)
- Basically, anything you do as a direct response to your anxiety that does not, actually, address that anxiety, is only going to validate your fear and cause you to become more anxious, not less so.
- Rather, what you should consider is a series of simple relaxation tricks that can help you conquer anxiety. You probably have a few of your own, for example, if you find tea helps to calm your nerves, or if reading a book helps you simmer down a little, give that a try.
- Many trainees find that, once they're up in the air, they can easily get lost in the sheer thrill of flying, and forget all about their anxieties forever. The toughest part for first-time-fliers is, more often than not, getting into the cockpit in the first place, so below, we'll list some proven relaxation methods you can put to work to quell anxiety.

THE RIGHT WAY

TAKING A WALK

You may be surprised how effective a quick walk can be in calming yourself down. Getting any exercise allows your mind a moment to relax and releases endorphins which can help you to cool off a little.

CUTTING BACK ON CAFFEINE

If you're a coffee junkie or a big fan of cola, you may want to cut back on the day of your first flight. Of course, if you're the type who gets more anxious and angry without your morning coffee, please, for the sake of your health and the health of those around you, have a small cup! Just don't overdo it. An old actor's trick is to have a few cups of coffee before a scene where they're supposed to seem anxious or nervous. It's an effective trick because too much caffeine actually does make you anxious and nervous. If you're sensitive to caffeine, just don't have any before flying. If you're a long time java-junkie and you absolutely need your coffee, just cut back and have a small cup on the big day.

BREATHING TECHNIQUES

Here's a simple breathing technique which can help calm emotions:

Breathe in through your nose, deeply and slowly, and breathe out through your mouth while counting to ten. There are about a hundred other breathing techniques to help you relax, but it all comes down to just taking a minute to slow yourself down.

The upside of breathing techniques is that, of course, it's a very simple routine that you can do anywhere, even right in the cockpit, a minute before takeoff.

Remember that your first flights are not going to be solo. Your instructor is not going to leave you alone in the aircraft until they're sure that you're capable, so don't feel anxious about the idea of jumping into an aircraft and having no idea what to do, because that's just not going to happen.

AIRSICKNESS

Whether you have to deal with pre-flight anxiety or fear of flying or not, a lot of us get airsick from the physical sensation of flight. Usually this can just result in some mild nausea which will quickly pass, but some of us get it worse than others and may feel a need to vomit in flight.

Here are some quick tips to help avoid nausea or vomiting during flight:

- **Carbonated beverages**
Carbonated liquids can be a great way to prevent nausea. As we said above, if you have to deal with pre-flight anxiety, avoid caffeinated sodas like cola. Most root beers have no caffeine, though, and of course, club soda has no caffeine.
- **Dry crackers and lemons**
Dry crackers and lemons will dry out your mouth, and this can go a long way towards combating nausea.
- **Taking Control**
Interestingly, handing a pilot in training the controls during flight has been shown to prevent nausea on flights where the instructor is on board. If you start to feel airsick while flying with your instructor, just let them know, and, if they feel you're ready, taking control of the airplane can give you something to focus on to take your mind off of your motion sickness.
- **Medication**
Do not, repeat, do not take anti-airsickness medication, either prescription or over the counter. Most of these medications are a form of sedative and can make you drowsy or otherwise unaware in flight.

How to get your Pilot's License with Flying Colors



6 - GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR AIRBORNE EDUCATION

Now, of course, we cannot give you much information on how to actually fly a plane. There is so much to learn, and so much of it can only be learned in the field, behind the controls of an actual aircraft. It's nothing you could ever fit into a single e-Book.

Where we can help you is in general advice for how to get the most out of your training.

The most important piece of advice we can give you for getting the most out of flight school is this: Listen to your instructor!

Pay attention to everything your instructor has to say and put all of their advice to use. This e-Book should help you get the most out of your training, but your instructor is the person who holds the apple of enlightenment. Listen, listen, listen. Don't worry that you're not getting sufficient education for your money, your instructor will tell you what you need to know as he or she feels you are ready. After all, if you mess up on a take off, it's their plane that gets smashed up, not yours! It's in their best interest to turn you into the best pilot you can be.

Beyond that, we'll offer some general advice on staying motivated and staying focused.

STAYING MOTIVATED

No matter what you're studying, be it flying, martial arts, or literature, there will be times when you, well, just do not feel like it. Staying consistently motivated to stick with something is tough, even if that something happens to be one of your lifelong dreams.

We can give the obvious advice: Just stick with it anyways! But it's not always that easy. Even after investing a ton of time and money into something, it's entirely possible to just not really be into it after awhile.

Learning to fly, in most countries, requires about forty hours of experience before you're ready for your license. Depending on your training schedule, this might only be a few days a week for a month or two, though further training is often involved, and you may be spending up to eighty hours flying before you're ready to test.

Staying motivated can be accomplished in a few ways...

REMIND YOURSELF WHY YOU WANT TO FLY

It may seem like this is overly simplifying it, but any time you feel like you'd rather not bother, just take a minute and think of what you have to gain by sticking with your training regime: Career opportunities, easy transportation, or just having fun with your own personal aircraft. Whatever motivated you to start flying in the first place, just hold on to that any time you feel lethargic.

TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR PROGRESS

Just look at how far you've come so far. In the first week alone, you're going to be a lot closer to becoming a full fledged pilot than you were before.

It's easy to lose interest in, say, sticking with a regular exercise routine. After all, you have to stick with a workout program forever or risk losing everything you worked so hard for. Earning your pilot's license, on the other hand, only requires a finite number of hours before you're free to fly on your own. Having a real, tangible goal can be immensely helpful in remaining motivated.

FIND YOUR OWN TRICKS

Everybody is different. If you have any tricks that help you keep interested in a goal, use that. For example, bodybuilders will sometimes put a poster of their hero up in their workout area, reminding them of their ideal body and how hard they have to work to get there. It might seem corny, but try putting up a poster of an airplane soaring across a blue sky or something along those lines. These little motivational tricks can help you remain excited, and remaining excited is half the battle.

STAYING FOCUSED

Of course, just showing up for flight school isn't enough. Once you get to class, you're going to have to stay focused, awake, and aware. With an erratic schedule or a lot of other responsibilities, it can be hard to keep your mind in the moment. If you're dedicated, though, it's relatively easy to squash problems with remaining focused...

KEEP A CONSISTENT SLEEP SCHEDULE

If you're waking up at six am one day, ten am the next, eight am the day after that, and sleeping in til noon every weekend, your internal clock may have a hard time adjusting, so you'll be losing focus and awareness at what should be your peak hours, and starting to feel more awake just before bed.

As far as your lifestyle will allow it, keep a consistent sleep schedule. Try to go to bed at around the same time every night and wake up around the same time every morning.

LEAVE YOUR CELL PHONE ON THE GROUND

Not literally on the ground! Leave your cell phone in your car or in the flight school, though. If your phone starts ringing in the middle of a lesson, not only is it bad form, it can be severely detrimental to you actually learning something.

If you need to keep your phone on you in case of emergencies, just make sure everybody knows not to call you during your lessons unless it's a real emergency. Though, if at all possible, it's best not to take it with you, as just knowing it's there can be a bigger distraction than you might expect.

A cell phone is a reminder of all of your responsibilities and everyday distraction. Your boss calls you on your cell phone, you talk to the companies who you pay your bills to on your cell phone, your friends call you all the time and so on. To stay focused, it's generally helpful to take off the cellular leash and keep nothing on your mind but the task at hand.

EAT WELL

Don't skip breakfast. If you don't get the necessary nutrients in the morning, it can be very hard to focus on much of anything. If you're dieting, make sure that you do get some sugars and fats in your breakfast, as they are a necessity for proper brain function.



7 - PASSING YOUR TESTS WITH FLYING COLORS

There are actually a few different tests you'll be needing to take, including your final exams. If you haven't been paying close attention to your instructor and trying your best to keep up with the training, well, there's not a lot we can do for you at this point! The most important part of acing the exam is really to try your best during training so you're ready to pass with, ahem, flying colors, when the time comes.

What we can help you with, however, is giving you a little bit of information so you know what these tests consist of, as well as some general advice for getting into the right mindset, focusing on the test, and not getting nervous.

Firstly, you should know that every FAA licensed flight school gives the same standardized tests. The same is true in other countries, the testing is dictated by the country's respective aviation administration. There are no rogue schools giving out their own idea of what a test should be.

The exams we list below are pretty much standard around the world. Of course, each country has its own regulations regarding certain things, so we'll note these differences where they exist. Also, know that the standard exams, tests and qualifications are subject to change over time. The exams listed below are accurate as of the time of this writing and may very well be by the time you read this, but if you want to make absolutely sure, you should do a quick Google search and find out for yourself.

TRIAL INSTRUCTIONAL FLIGHT

This isn't really part of the FAA or CASA regulations or anything, but most schools will offer a trial instructional flight, or TIF, which is a quick air tour with you at the controls. The instructor on board will take care of take off and landing, but you will be allowed to get a feel for flying for most of the flight. This is more for the student's benefit, allowing you to get your first taste of flight and see if you'd like to continue. This is your opportunity to test yourself, rather than an official, mandated exam. Call your prospective flight schools about this option.

PRE SOLO, PRE AREA SOLO, AND BAK EXAMS

These three exams are multiple choice tests of about twenty to thirty questions each. There are no time limits for completion. The pre solo test is to make sure you're ready to fly solo, and the pre area solo test is to ensure that you're ready to fly solo within the designated training area.



The BAK, or Basic Aeronautical Knowledge exam focuses on the basics of, well, aeronautical knowledge. This includes general things like aerodynamics, meteorology, and navigation. All three must be completed before you are allowed to take passengers.

PRIVATE PILOT'S LICENSE - AEROPLANES EXAM

CASA, the Australian aviation administration, requires that all students pass an Aeroplane's Exam. This test is an open book exam, containing about fifty to sixty multiple choice questions, within a time limit of three and a half hours. This test must be passed before the area restriction can be lifted from your license.

WRITTEN AND PRACTICAL TESTS

In just about every country with an aviation administration, you will have to pass both a written test and a practical test as your final exams.

These tests will be fairly comprehensive, and will include:

- Pre-flight operations
- Taxiing and surface operations such as run-ups
- Takeoffs and landings
- General in flight maneuvers such as climbing and descents
- Flying at various speeds, including slow flight
- Stalling
- Emergency procedures and dealing with technical malfunctions
- Approaching a landing while dealing with (simulated) engine malfunctions

Basically, everything you've learned (or everything you should have been learning!) will be put to the test, so bring your A game on the day of the final exams.

FAA REQUIREMENTS

It should be noted that, in the US, there are a couple of requirements before you can legally be issued a pilot's license.

You must have a valid US driver's license, or, you must have a current third class or higher Airman Medical Certificate.

It should also be noted that commercial pilot's tests tend to be a little stricter. You'll still be taking the above tests, but in most countries, you must first hold a private pilot's license, you must have logged over two hundred total hours of piloting time, and the written and practical tests are much more comprehensive.



Even if you're not interested in working for a major airliner, it is worth noting that, in the US, a commercial pilot's certificate will lower a pilot's insurance premiums. Commercial pilots are trained to a higher safety standard, which looks great on an insurance application.

GENERAL TESTING ADVICE

If you remember college or high school, acing your pilot exams is a lot like that.

On the day of the exam, wake up early, eat a big breakfast, have some coffee or tea or chocolate or whatever it is that helps you focus.

Study your butt off. Beyond just paying attention during lessons, read any literature your instructor prescribes, but don't try to cram it all in the night before the exam. You want a good night's sleep before the big day.

Most importantly, don't sweat it. The fact that the final exams are the Big Test may make you a little nervous, but being nervous never helps anything, it only makes you slip up and forget things that should be second nature to you by now.

Relax, and remind yourself that you know exactly what you're doing.

8 - SO NOW WHAT? PUTTING YOUR NEW PILOT'S LICENSE TO GOOD USE

Remember how you felt when you got your first driver's license?

Suddenly, the world is open. Suddenly, you're free. No more bumming rides from your parents, no more taking the bus or riding your bicycle. In the deepest doldrums of your teenage years, a driver's license was, if nothing else, a cure for boredom.

If you look up Licensed Pilot in the dictionary, the definition will be "Someone who never gets bored"... Okay that's not the real definition, but if you look at the real definition, it's not far off...

Pilot

pi-lot, noun

A person duly qualified to operate an airplane, hot air balloon, dirigible, or other aircraft.

So, in other words, someone who has no excuse to ever get bored.

As a licensed pilot, you have a world of options open to you. There are dozens of ways to make a comfortable living as a pilot, even without working for a commercial airline. There are hundreds of aviation centered hobbies and competitions. As a pilot, you are specially qualified to take on challenges, to enter into pursuits and adventures that those poor landlubbers might never experience (unless they want to make the same commitment you've made, that is).

A pilot's license is freedom that fits in your wallet. Below, we'll list some of the ways you can take advantage of this newfound liberty.

COMMERCIAL AIRLINES

If you don't mind working for a commercial airline, you can probably expect to make a decent, five figure salary at an entry level position, but the legendary quarter of a million dollars a year is reserved for senior pilots. The pay scale is said to ramp up quite nicely once you've been flying with an airline for awhile.

However, commercial airline employment isn't right for everyone. Many pilots prefer to make their own hours or just fly whenever they like, not whenever the airline needs them to.

How to get your Pilot's License with Flying Colors



FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR

This may remind you of the old joke that the only thing you can do with a college degree in philosophy is teach philosophy at a college, but if you just want to get into flying as a hobby that pays for itself, a part time career as a flight instructor can be a great way to pay off your pilot school loans and airplane payments. If this is something you'd like to consider, make a good impression on your instructor! There might be a position available at the very school you trained at.

The downside is that the starting pay might not be much more than fifteen to twenty bucks an hour, which may sound nice, but consider that you're probably going to be working less than five hours a day. For this reason, this is mostly recommended as a part time job to supplement your day job.

However, it's a part time job involving something you'd probably do for free, and you'll be passing your passion on to other pilots in training.

SMALL BUSINESS IDEAS

Getting your pilot's license can be the first step in becoming your own boss.

Keep in mind that you'll want to keep your expectations realistic at first. It takes time for any business to build steam. Whenever you're starting your own business, it's a good idea to use it as supplemental income at first. It can be easy to get lost in the excitement and jump in headfirst, but we recommend that you keep your day job until your new business plan starts to really show promise.

It should also be noted that your average pilot makes a relatively modest living. If you want to get rich flying, commercial airlines are the way to go. You can easily make a living as a pilot, but remember that there are hundreds of times as many middle class pilots as there are millionaire pilots.

That said, there is definite, undeniable public interest in certain business ideas that you might be able to get off the ground now that you have a pilot's license.

AIR TOURS

You don't actually need a commercial license to take a passenger or two on air tours of the local area, you only need to be qualified to take passengers.

Your target market for air tours is probably going to be people wanting to celebrate birthdays or anniversaries with something special, or just people who've never really been in an airplane, and would love to fly even though they don't have anywhere to go. You can set up a website online and advertise around town without spending too much money.

CROP DUSTING

Crop dusting is generally done with either purpose-built aircraft or converted aircrafts or helicopters. Crop dusting airplanes may also be employed as water bombers in areas which are prone to wild fires.

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in 2005 that crop-duster pilots can expect to earn an annual wage in the area of sixty thousand dollars.

SKYWRITING

Like with air touring, you can expect your target market to largely consist of people wanting to celebrate, as well as local advertisers (though you might meet the occasional client who wants to quit their job or insult their neighbor in the most dramatic way possible, and we recommend you take these jobs at your own peril). One of the most popular uses of skywriting is, of course, the marriage proposal.

Unfortunately, skywriting isn't as popular today as it was in say, the 1930's, so a skywriting career might not be the most lucrative of aviation themed businesses.

AIR SHOWS

Air shows can be held for a variety of purposes. Quite often, an air show is sponsored by the government and held to support the armed forces. Other times, though, air shows are simply commercial ventures, sort of a circus for licensed pilots to show their stuff.

Starting your own air show may be a heck of an investment. If you'd like to show off in front of a crowd of awed spectators, it may be better to look up an existing air show and see if they have room for another pair of wings.

COMPETITIONS

A way to make money and just have fun as a pilot: Competitions.

There are a variety of competitions to select from, focusing on speed, maneuvering, air tricks, and so on. Take a look around and find a competition that suits your style.

Many pilots, in fact, compete in air shows professionally. This doesn't necessarily mean winning every show, rather, many pilots hook up with sponsors. Once you've made something of a name for yourself in competition, and if you don't mind slapping a Pepsi Cola sticker on your airplane, you may be able to talk with corporate representatives who will provide you with entry fees, compensation, and fuel and maintenance costs for your aircraft.

PERSONAL USES FOR YOUR PILOT'S LICENSE

Of course, everything above is just referring to ways to make some money with your pilot's license. Don't forget that your license can also be an excellent tool in life.

Beyond flying on weekends just for fun, a personal aircraft can also help you get from point A to point B. It's been proven that airplanes are generally safer than road vehicles for personal transportation, not to mention a heck of a lot faster.

And don't forget one of the funnest things to do with a pilot's license and a personal aircraft: Show off in front of your friends and make them all jealous.

9 - FINDING A SAFE, AFFORDABLE AIRCRAFT, TO RENT OR OWN

Okay, so you've paid off your flight school loans and you're a full on licensed pilot. Now you need an aircraft.

Another daunting hurdle, but remember, a hurdle is a hurdle, not a brick wall. Just as with flight school costs, if you're looking to make money on your pilot's license, it may be possible to secure a loan or an investor to help get your first personal aircraft.

We should stress this right off the bat, though. Do not sacrifice safety for price.

If you're driving a junky car and it breaks down, you just drive it off the road and call a tow truck. If your airplane breaks down in flight, it's still possible to make a safe landing, but more likely than not, your craft is going to suffer some serious damage, and you risk injuring yourself, as well.

It's entirely possible to get a good deal on a used aircraft, of course, but you want to feel safe in your aircraft before getting it off the ground.

SELECTING YOUR AIRCRAFT

Before selecting your aircraft, take note of what you want to fly, what is available, and what you can afford. As always, the aircraft you wind up with is going to be a compromise between these three factors.

Some things to consider would be...

PROPULSION: JET OR PROPELLERS?

Needless to say, a jet powered aircraft is a heck of a lot faster.. but it's also going to be a heck of a lot more expensive, as well as a heck of a lot more expensive to operate.

NEW OR USED?

Used airplanes cost considerably less, but tend to have more mechanical problems. Don't get the wrong idea, though. Unless you're buying a completely beat up old clunker, even a used airplane can be pretty safe. In fact, a used airplane is still safer than driving a new car.

Most of the airplanes in use in general aviation are actually more than twenty years old. The only real downside is that you'll have to spend a little more time maintaining them. If you're something of a grease monkey, though, this might be a bonus.

HOME BUILT?

Many airplanes are actually sold in kits which you can put together at the airstrip. These homebuilts tend to be cheaper to buy, cheaper to operate, faster, lighter, and, heck, a symbol of pride. If you have the time and know how, we definitely recommend giving a homebuilt model a try.

The downsides are that, if you wind up selling your homebuilt model, you may be liable for any malfunctions or damages incurred while the new owner is operating the aircraft. Buying a used homebuilt, likewise, you are at the mercy of the mechanical know-how of the seller.

CONSIDER THE AIRCRAFT'S ATTRIBUTES AS WELL

- **Performance**

Performance refers to range, as in, how far an airplane can travel before needing to refuel. You may not need a high performance plane if you don't plan on making long range trips.

- **Cruise**

Cruise refers to speed. Again, this is up to personal preference. Gauge your own need for speed and go from there.

- **Number of seats**

Keep in mind that you probably want an empty seat on each flight. For example, if you want to take yourself and two passengers, you'll want a four seater. This is because airplanes tend to work more effectively when not filled to maximum capacity.

- **Construction**

The effective difference in low or high wing construction goes like this:

- **High wing construction**

High wing construction airplanes are better for sight seeing, as the wings don't get in your way when looking out the window.

- **Low wing construction**

Low wing construction airplanes have better flight visibility if you are flying in crowded airspace.

This decision, again, comes down to personal preference. If you're looking to do air tours, high wing may be your best bet, but if you're looking to use your aircraft for transportation, perhaps low wing is a safer choice.

CONSIDER ALL THE COSTS

Even if you can afford to buy a plane in cash, consider all the other costs.

INSURANCE

You should look at both of the insurance types you'll be required to carry for an aircraft: Liability and hull.

- Liability covers any damages that may occur to other people's property in the event of an accident involving your aircraft.
- Hull insurance covers damage to your aircraft incurred through accident, vandalism, etc. Hull is usually required by lending institutions.

If you are flying a smaller, more inexpensive plane, you can expect to pay between seven hundred and two thousand dollars a year for insurance, total. You probably pay more than that for your car's insurance, which is another reason we recommend switching to your airplane for longer trips.

STORAGE

You have a variety of options for storage. On the lowest scale, there are tie downs, where they simply throw a tarp over your bird and tie it down. On the upper scale, there are hangars, of course.

Unless you just don't care about weather damage, vandalism, etcetera, we strongly recommend hangar storage. You may be able to get a great deal if you talk with a local air strip owner, but expect to pay at least \$100 US a month for a small plane.

Storage tends to cost less in rural areas, costing more and more the closer to the city the airstrip happens to be.

OPERATIONS

Operations costs include things like airport fees and fuelling. This amount will vary greatly depending on how, and how often, you use your aircraft.

MAINTENANCE

Maintenance includes not only general aircraft maintenance, which tends to cost in the area of a thousand dollars a year, but also, the annual FAA inspection and yearly tune ups. Combined, this can cost anywhere from five hundred to a thousand dollars a year.

MISCELLANEOUS

Miscellaneous costs may rear their ugly head in the form of taxes and fees, but don't expect this to cost more than a couple hundred bucks a year.

RENTALS

We should also mention that, through the right aviation clubs, it's possible to rent an aircraft for a modest fee. There's a certain pride and freedom that comes with owning your very own airplane, but if that's out of your price range for the time being, you can still put your license to use for recreational purposes. You can probably expect to spend around fifty dollars per hour, US, to rent an aircraft, on average.

Even if you're not interested in renting an airplane, you should definitely look into the local aviation enthusiast clubs, though. Networking with other pilots, you can make some great connections. You can be in the know with regards to local competitions or business opportunities for pilots, and you'll be first in line when one of your club buddies is looking to sell his old airplane, or you might have someone willing to buy when you're looking to sell yours. If you're into flying, join a club, because there are no downsides.

BUYING YOUR AIRPLANE

The first step to actually buying the airplane is, of course, to find an airplane worth buying.

Your general resources for buying an airplane should be easy to guess:

WORD OF MOUTH

With word of mouth, just put in an inquiry at the local clubs. If nobody's selling just yet, they'll keep you in mind when they are.

CLASSIFIED ADS

With print classified ads, just check your local paper, nearest newsstand, or bookstore. There should be some local magazines dedicated to small aircraft where you can find people looking to sell their old aircraft.

ONLINE

On the internet, you have more resources than you can count. Beyond ebay.com, craigslist and other such sites, you can also look into specialty sites. To get you started, here are just a few such websites...

- Aircraft shopper online: www.aso.com
- Trade-a-plane: www.tradeaplane.com
- Aero trader online: www.traderonline.com/aero/index.shtml
- International Aircraft Marketplace: www.wingsonline.com/
- Airplanes online: www.airplane.com/

Once you've found someone selling an airplane, and it seems to match what you're after, the next step is, of course...

MAKING THE DEAL

The purchase process should break down something like this:

- **Phone screen**
Give the seller a call and ask plenty of questions about the aircraft in question before you decide to see it in person. On the phone, the questions you should ask should include:
 - Flight time, for both the airframe and the engine
 - The date of the last major overhaul, or the date of the last annual inspection
 - Compression readings
 - Damage history
 - Overall condition and description of the avionics
 - And of course, the price

- **Buyer inspection**

Take a look at the aircraft. Whether you're a mechanic or not, you should be able to spot obvious red flags, such as rust that's eaten through the floor, for example. When on your buyer inspection, you should take note of some of the following things...

- **The doors** - Taking a step inside the cabin, close the doors. Do they snap shut nicely?
- **The interior** - You should be able to spot anything wrong with the interior. Is it really worn out? Does it have an odor that you don't think an air freshener could handle? If you smell mildew, that may be a sign that the aircraft hasn't been taken care of very well.
- **Equipment** - Make sure the aircraft is well equipped with an emergency locator transmitter and a Mode C transponder, in addition to everything else you'd expect a decent airplane to be equipped with.

- **Test flying**

One of the most important things to keep in mind when you get in for a test flight: Does the seller refuse to get in with you? That might be a red flag! But seriously, take a quick test flight and feel out the way the airplane flies, how it lands, how it turns, etcetera. You want an airplane that runs well, but you also want one that you'll enjoy flying. When you first start the engine up, open the window and listen to the engine. If it sounds rough, turn the airplane off, hand the key to the seller, go home, and look up another seller.

- **Prepurchase inspection**

After looking the plane over yourself, flying it, and determining that it's the aircraft for you, have an experienced mechanic take a look at it. This can help to prevent buying a clunker that looked okay. When you bring in a mechanic, make sure to confirm that the aircraft's airworthiness directives are all up to date. Also, make sure that the mechanic you employ is actually familiar with this particular make and model of airplane. Ask for estimates on anything that might require some repair or tuning. A good inspection may cost anywhere from 400 to 800 dollars, US, but it is certainly worth it in the long run.

- **Title search**

Get online and do a search to make sure that the seller actually has legal rights to the plane that they are selling. You can usually find this right next to the listing of the aircraft for sale in most classified websites and print ads.

- **Transfer ownership**

Of course, transfer ownership based on whatever price and payment plan you and the seller can agree to.

If you'd like a more comprehensive guide to buying your first airplane, you may want to check out some more specialized books on the subject from your library, such as *The Illustrated Buyer's Guide to Used Airplanes*, by Bill Clarke, or the *Aviation Consumer's Used Aircraft Guide*, by Andrew Douglas.

MAKING PAYMENTS

Some of us can afford to buy anything we want straight cash. Some of us, like Bill Gates and Steve Forbes, that is. For the every day blue and white collar worker, we have to learn how to save, and we make payments.

It's often said that a contract should have each party involved getting something for what they put in. This is very true in the case of buying an aircraft. Don't settle for a price you're not comfortable with. Know the market and make sure you're not paying for more than you're getting.

Work out a payment plan you and the seller can both be comfortable with. More often than not, you can make the same sort of payments on your aircraft that you would on your car.

RESALE VALUE

To be honest, your first airplane should probably be something of a practice airplane. You may have a dream aircraft in mind, but when you're first starting it, it can be wiser to learn the ropes on an aircraft that's less sensitive or easier to maintain and operate.

But, take very good care of your aircraft. Maintain it regularly, keep it's fluids in check, do not neglect your annual inspection. Even if you don't intend to fly in this craft forever, you may eventually wind up wishing to sell your current craft to put some money towards your new bird. Keeping the resale value high is a good idea.

...SO IN CONCLUSION

As we've mentioned a few times throughout this volume, the above text is no training course for passing your pilot's exams. Rather, this e-Book is intended to equip you with the right attitude, the right knowledge, and the right way to approach getting your pilot's license, and putting that pilot's license to use.

The most important thing, if you are serious about getting your pilot's license, is to train, to train hard, and to train hard again. This is true whether you're learning to fly, learning to cook, learning to ski, or learning to knit. You won't get there unless you give it your all.

If you still have some hang-ups regarding safety or any anxiety regarding flying, just remember that, after the elevator, the airplane is considered one of the safest forms of transportation available.

Remember that this book has only listed a certain number of the things to consider, as there simply isn't enough room for all the relevant information in just one volume. Talk to your instructor, join aviation clubs, and always be on the lookout for new opportunities that will allow you to put your new pilot's license and aircraft to use

