

An airport is a place where airplanes take off and land. Passengers get on and off planes, cargo and other goods are loaded and unloaded at airports. Air travel has become the main type of transportation over long distances and modern airplanes belong to the safest means of travel. Every day millions of people fly on thousands of planes all over the world. Currently, there are over 40,000 airports around the world. The largest of them are like small cities. They have hotels, restaurants, banks, post offices and other shops, as well as their own police force or fire department. Thousands of people work at an airport every day.



TYPES OF AIRPORTS

- Commercial service airports serve the big national and international airlines. Planes from all over the world take off and land there.
- General aviation airports are smaller airports that handle private, business and charter planes as well as planes that carry people to and from bigger airports.
- Military airfields are operated by the army and sometimes share space with other airports.

THE TERMINAL

The terminal is the largest building at an airport. All passengers must pass through it when they start or end their trip. At the ticket counter you receive your boarding card and your baggage is checked and weighed. Then the airline assistant will put a label with a three-letter code around your baggage. It shows the destination airport and makes sure the suitcases get on the correct airplane.



While you wait to board your plane you may spend your time at some of the many shops that are at the airport: newsstands, restaurants, gift shops or even banks. Many international airports have duty-free shops. If you are visiting a foreign country, you can buy things there without having to pay duty or import tax. Some

airports have an observation lounge where you can look through large windows and watch planes take off and land.

Before you go to your gate you must pass a security area where your passport is checked and your bags are x-rayed and checked for weapons and other things that you are not allowed to take on board. The gate is the place where you leave the airport building to get on your plane. Gates may often be very far away from the centre of the terminal. Moving sidewalks take you to those that are far away. At larger airports you are taken there by bus or train. Big airports may have up to a hundred or more gates. Arriving passengers cannot leave the terminal at once. They first go to baggage claim , a place where you get your baggage after it is unloaded from the plane.

RUNWAY

Airplanes take off and land on runways. Big passenger planes need long runways that are up to 4 or 5 km in length. They may look like ordinary paved roads but are made of a special material so that they won't crack when heavy planes land. Snow ploughs and machines that spread salt keep them snow- and ice-free in winter. Green, red and white lights mark runways so that pilots can see them at night and when visibility is bad. Airplanes use taxiways to move to the main runway or to hangars. Small trucks bring big planes out of the parking zone.

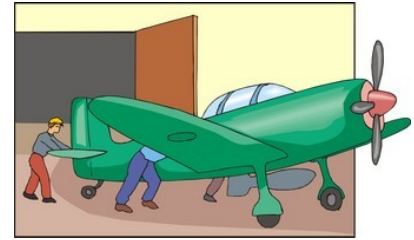
THE CONTROL TOWER



The control tower is the centre of airport traffic control. Air controllers use radar, radio, signal lights and other electronic equipment to guide planes when they take off and land. They give pilots permission to take off or tell them which runway to use. At busier airports controllers handle up to 200 aircraft per hour.

HANGARS

Hangars are buildings in which airplanes are repaired or serviced . Most airlines have their own hangars, in which they can park many jets at the same time. Most hangars are far away from terminals and runways so that they do not interfere with airport traffic .



OTHER FACILITIES

Airports have many other buildings. Food kitchens or catering companies prepare food that is brought onto planes. Large airlines often have their offices in their own buildings. All airports have big parking lots or houses and most airports are connected with the inner cities through trains or subways.

AIRPORT MANAGEMENT

Commercial airports are mostly publicly owned but they must find their ways of making money. They rent space to airlines for check-in counters or baggage areas and charge them fees for landing. Companies and firms must pay to open up shops and restaurants. In addition, the airports get lots of money from parking fees . The airport manager and his staff are in charge of running the entire airport. Various departments are responsible for finances, administration, safety, or engineering .

AIRPORT PROBLEMS

Originally , airports were built far away from city centers. They have not moved, but cities have grown a lot and today many suburbs lie near them. A lot is being done to make life more bearable for people who live in nosier airport areas. At some airports, traffic is forbidden during night hours. Airports today are getting bigger and bigger. As more and more people choose air travel as a convenient way of travelling, new terminals and other facilities must be built in order to cope with a growing number of passengers.



WORDS

administration = the whole organization
air controller = someone at an airport who tells pilots what to do
aircraft = airplane
airfield = airport
airport traffic = the taking off and landing of airplanes
arrive = to get to the place you are going to
assistant = person who works for an airline
aviation = the flying of airplanes
baggage = the bags and suitcases you have when you are travelling - *Brit. Engl: luggage*
baggage claim = the place at an airport where you get your bags and suitcases after a flight - *Brit. Engl: luggage*
bearable = difficult or unpleasant but you can manage it
boarding card = a card that you have to show before you get on a plane
business = everything that has to do with companies
cargo = goods that are transported on a ship or plane
catering = company that prepares food and drinks for airlines
charge = to ask money for something
charter = planes that travel for certain groups of people at a certain time
commercial = for profit or making money
connect = link
convenient = nice, pleasant, comfortable
cope = manage
crack = to break apart
currently = right now
department = section
destination = the place that something or someone is going to
distance = how far something is from something else
duty = a tax you pay on something you buy
engineering = here: technical things
entire = all of, the whole
equipment = tools and machines you need to do a job
facility = rooms, machines and services that are used for something
fee = the money you pay for something
fire department = the organization that works to stop and put out fires
forbidden = not allowed
foreign = different from your own
gift = present
goods = things that are produced so that they can be sold
guide = lead, show where to go to
handle = here: deal with passengers
hangar = a very large building in which airplanes are kept

import tax = the money you must pay when you bring a product home from another country
in addition = also
in charge = in control of
interfere = get in the way of
label = a piece of paper that you put around something - it has information on it
length = how long something is
load = to put something onto a ship, train or plane
lounge = a waiting room at an airport
mark = to show the position of something
means = way
newsstand = place where you can get newspapers, magazines or books
ordinary = normal
originally = earlier, at the beginning
parking fee = money someone has to pay in order to park his car
parking lot = area for parking
publicly = by the government or state
paved = to cover the surface with something hard
permission = to be officially allowed to do something
police force = the police organization in a city or town
receive = get
rent = to let someone use something for money
repair = to fix something when it is broken
responsible = in charge of, in control of
safety = not in danger
security = protection from danger
serve = to provide a place or area with something that is useful
service = repair and examine an airplane to see if nothing is broken
share = use together
sidewalk = a hard surface next to street for people to walk on
snowplough = something that is put in front of a truck or lorry to move snow away
space = room
spread = here: throw out
staff = the people who work there
suburb = part of a city that is far away from the centre
taxiway = the small road that an airplane moves on to get to a runway
traffic = the planes that take off and land
unload = to take something off a ship, train or plane
various = different
visibility = how much or how far you can see especially in bad weather
weapon = something that you use to fight with or attack someone, like a gun or a knife
weigh = how heavy something is
x-ray = to photograph the inside of something

