

Airport English – Video

This lesson will give you useful airport English words and phrases you can use at the airport.

When's the last time you flew somewhere? Did it go smoothly, or was it stressful?

For your next flight, let's make sure you can communicate at every stage of your journey. This lesson will show you the airport English vocabulary you need to do that.

1. Checking In

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/asian-man-airport-check-in.webp>)

Justin: Hello.

Stephanie: Hello there! Where are you flying to today?

J: I'm going to London.

S: Okay, and have you checked in online already?

J: Yes, I have, but I was wondering: could I change my seat? I have an aisle seat, but I'd really like a window seat if that's possible.

S: Let's have a look. Can I have your passport please?

J: Yes of course.

S: Thank you. One minute, let me check whether there's another seat available... Yes, we can do that, sir.

J: Excellent.

S: Do you need a paper copy of your boarding pass?

J: No thanks; I have it on my phone.

S: And do you have any bags to check in?

J: No, I only have a carry-on bag.

S: That's fine. You just need to put this tag on it.

J: Like this?

S: That's perfect! Well, you're ready to go. Enjoy your trip!

J: Thank you very much.

Can you remember what questions the employee asked the passenger? She asked:

Where are you flying to today?

Have you checked in online already?

Can I have your passport please?

Do you need a paper copy of your boarding pass?

Do you have any bags to check in?

These are common questions. You might hear the same ideas with slightly different words; for example:

Do you have your passport?

Do you need to check in any bags?

However, even if the words are different, the idea stays the same! Most of these questions are simple; you can just give a yes/no answer. However, you might have some questions of your own. Can you remember what the passenger asked for? He asked:

Could I change my seat?

Can you think of any other requests you might have as a passenger? You might ask:

Can you confirm that I have a vegetarian meal?

Do you have any seats in the exit row?

Exit row seats have more legroom, so they're often more comfortable!

Get more practice with this Oxford Online English listening lesson on Checking in At The Airport (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/checking-in-airport>).

This time, check-in went smoothly, but what if everything doesn't go so well?

2. Dealing With Problems at Check-In

Justin: I'm sorry ma'am, but this bag is overweight. The limit is 23 kilos. You either need to take some things out, or pay for the excess.

Stephanie: How much is the excess?

J: It's fifty euros for a bag up to 32 kilos.

S: That's expensive! I'll try to take some things out. [...]

S: I'm sorry, but the flight is delayed by at least two hours.

J: So, when do you expect the plane to leave?

S: Right now, we expect it to depart at 10.30pm. I do apologize for the inconvenience.

J: Well, I guess there's nothing we can do.

S: Thank you for your patience. You can check the departure boards for updated boarding times and flight information. [...]

J: I'm sorry, but your flight has been cancelled due to bad weather.

S: But, I really need to be in London tomorrow afternoon. When's the next available flight?

J: Let me see what we can do... We do have a flight leaving tomorrow morning that I can switch you to.

S: What time in the morning?

J: It leaves here at 7am, and arrives at 10.

S: Okay, that will be fine.

J: Right, here's a printed confirmation, and again I am very sorry for the trouble.

S: That's okay; it's not your fault. Are there any hotels (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/hotel-english>) near the airport?

J: Yes, of course. If you go to the customer service desk, just over there, you can claim a voucher for a hotel and meals.

S: Excellent, thank you.

J: You're welcome.

In this section, you saw three different problems. What were they? Your baggage might be overweight. Your flight might be delayed... or even cancelled. If your bag is overweight, you either have to repack it, or pay excess baggage charges. With delays and cancellations, you might have no choice but to wait. However, the airline generally needs to give you hotel vouchers (<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/v/voucher.asp>) or meal vouchers if you have to wait a long time for your flight. Have you ever had problems like this? What happened? Hopefully, your next flight will go smoothly. Let's move on to using airport English during the next step in your journey.

3. Security

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/airport.webp>)

Stephanie: Is this your bag, sir?

Justin: Yes, it is.

S: We need to search it. Do you have any liquids?

J: No problem. No, I don't think so.

S: I'm afraid we need to take this bottle. You're allowed containers up to 100ml maximum.

J: Okay, sorry, I completely forgot.

S: And this Swiss knife has to go, too.

J: But, it's important to me!

S: I can take it, or you'll have to go back and check this bag.

J: Well I don't have time for that; I guess you'll have to take it.

S: Very well, sir. Here's your bag.

J: Thanks.

S: Excuse me, I'm really late for my flight, can I go to the front of the line?

J: Okay, come forward quickly. Make sure everything is out of your pockets, and please place laptops in a separate tray. Please step over this way, ma'am.

S: I'm really late for my flight, could I just...

J: Ma'am, please step over here. Stand on the marks on the floor and raise your arms above you. Do you have anything in your pockets?

S: Yes, sorry. I still have some money and my keys.

J: Please put them into a tray and come through again.

S: And where's my bag? **J:** It looks like your bag needs to be searched.

S: This is ridiculous; I'm going to miss my flight.

J: Do you have anything sharp in here?

S: No, nothing.

J: You can't take the jars on the airplane.

S: Why not?

J: It's a liquid, ma'am. No liquids over 100ml.

S: This is crazy! It's only honey!

J: I'm afraid those are the rules.

S: Fine, keep them.

Whew, a stressful experience! Let's take a look at some of the useful language from these dialogues. At the beginning, the security officer asked:

Is this your bag, sir?

Can you think of five more questions or requests that you might hear when going through security? If you want more time to think, pause the video and write down your ideas. You might be asked:

Is this your bag?

Do you have any liquids?

Do you have anything in your pockets?

You might also hear airport English requests, such as:

Please place laptops in a separate tray.

Stand on the marks on the floor and raise your arms.

As you saw, there's no point arguing when you're going through security! Now, you made it through, and you caught your plane—finally! Time to sit back and relax.

4. On the Plane

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/airplane-interior.webp>)

S: Excuse me, sir? Would it be alright if we put your bag in the overhead locker?

J: Erm... Well.. I'd prefer to keep it with me.

S: It's just that you're sitting in an emergency exit row. We can't have anything on the floor.

J: Okay, do what you must.

S: I also need to ask you to raise your window blind and make sure your seat back is in the upright position for take-off.

J: Why do I have to do all this?

S: It's standard procedure for take-off, sir. You can recline your seat and take your bag down once we're airborne.

During take-off and landing, there are certain things you have to do. Do you know what they are? You need to:

Fasten your seat belt.

Stow (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stow>) your tray table. -> Stow means put away.

Raise your window blind. -> The window blind is the screen that you can use to cover the window.

Move your seat back to the upright position. -> During your flight, you can recline your seat, and lean back. But, for take-off and landing, you need to put it back to the straight position.

Stow your luggage in the overhead locker or under the seat in front of you. -> Of course, in our dialogue, the passenger was sitting in an exit row seat, so he had to use the overhead locker.

The flight attendants (<https://work.chron.com/list-airport-jobs-5351.html>) might ask you to do one or two other things, like take out your headphones. On the last flight you took, did they serve food? It's getting less common to have food included with a flight, but let's imagine your flight includes a meal.

J: Hello, can I help you?

S: Yes, I ordered a special meal online, but it hasn't arrived yet.

J: Okay, I can go and check; which meal did you order?

S: The gluten free option.

J: Oh, I'm sorry, I think there has been a mistake. We just gave out the last gluten free meal.

S: But I ordered it online!

J: I'm so sorry, there must have been some confusion. You can have anything else from our menu.

S: I can only eat gluten-free dishes, so that's no use. Also, my screen's not working!

J: I'm very sorry about that, ma'am.

S: It's a twelve-hour flight! What am I supposed to do? No food, and no TV.

J: Ma'am, we can offer you an upgrade to business class, so that you have a working TV screen.

S: Business class? Let's go!

J: Follow me, please, ma'am.

Here, we had some problems during the flight. What other problems could you have on the plane? You might find that you don't have something you need, like a blanket or a pillow. You could get the wrong meal. You might need to change seats, because the person next to you is snoring loudly! Hopefully, none of

these things will happen to you. And if they do, you might get lucky and get upgraded to business class, like I did! Now, your plane is coming in to land. You've made it! There's just one more thing you have to do.

5. Arrival

J: Hello.

S: Hello. What is the purpose of your visit?

J: I have a business meeting (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/english-meetings>).

S: Where is the meeting?

J: It's at a law firm in London.

S: And how long are you staying?

J: Until Tuesday.

S: Okay, please put your right hand on the scanner. Thank you. Now look into the camera here... 1, 2, 3... That's great. Thank you and enjoy your stay.

J: Thank you.

This process is different around the world. Sometimes they won't even speak to you; they just scan your passport. But what did the border control officer ask here? Her first question was,

What is the purpose of your visit?

How could you answer this? You could say:

I'm here on business.

I'm just on holiday.

I'm visiting some relatives.

It is possible that they might ask you for some extra information about why you are here and your plans; for example:

Where are you staying?

What company are you visiting?

How long are you staying?

Now you should have all of the English you need for the next time you fly. We hope that this will make those stressful airport experiences a little easier! Thanks for watching!