




OXFORD Business English

English for  
Aviation

for Pilots and Air Traffic Controllers


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EXPRESS SERIES



OXFORD

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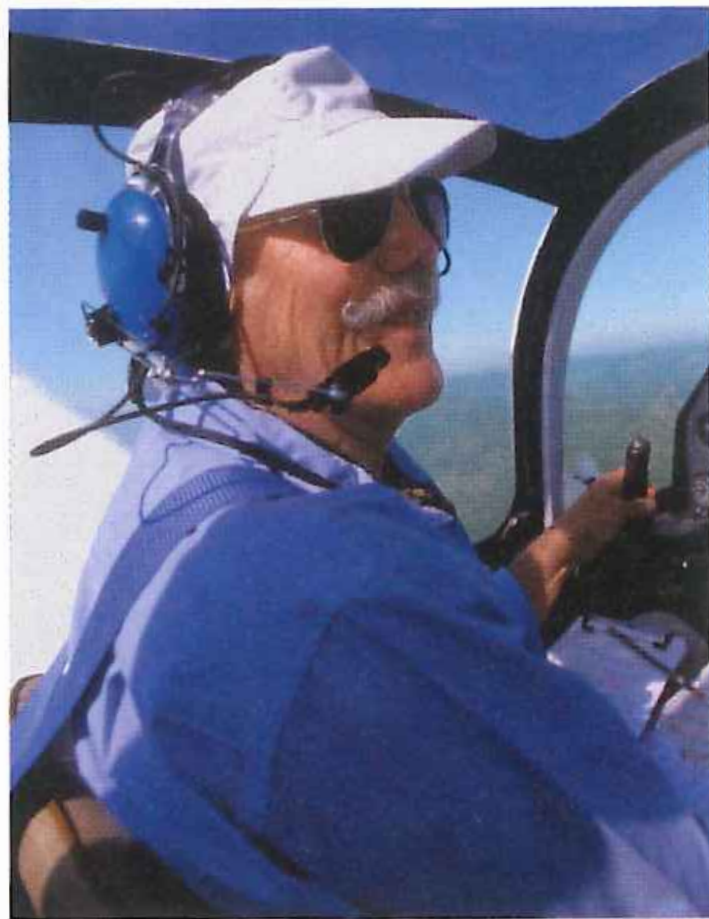
1

Introduction to air communications

STARTER

Use arrows (↔) to link the people who talk to each other.

PILOT G-SC27



PILOT FLIGHT 71



CABIN CREW FLIGHT 71



TOWER CONTROLLER



CO-PILOT FLIGHT 71



PASSENGERS FLIGHT 71



COMPREHENSION

1 Air communications are vital for the safety of air travel. Listen to the two exchanges and answer the questions.

- 1 a Which stand is 363 on?  
b Where does the controller think 363 is?  
c Which numbers and letters are incorrectly pronounced?
- 2 a Which flight level is X7420 climbing to?  
b What is the altitude of X7420?  
c What two words does the controller confuse?

Look at the six language areas on page 2. Listen again to the two exchanges and look at the transcripts on page 84. Find an example of a difficulty with each language area.



Discuss these questions with a partner.

- 1 Have you had any similar experiences?
- 2 What communication problems have you had when talking to foreign pilots or controllers?



PRONUNCIATION

2 Listen and repeat.

| ICAO ALPHABET AND NUMBERS      |             |   |               |   |               |
|--------------------------------|-------------|---|---------------|---|---------------|
| A                              | Alpha       | K | Kilo          | U | Uniform       |
| B                              | Bravo       | L | Lima          | V | Victor        |
| C                              | Charlie     | M | Mike          | W | Whiskey       |
| D                              | Delta       | N | November      | X | X-ray         |
| E                              | Echo        | O | Oscar         | Y | Yankee        |
| F                              | Foxtrot     | P | Papa          | Z | Zulu          |
| G                              | Golf        | Q | Quebec        |   |               |
| H                              | Hotel       | R | Romeo         |   |               |
| I                              | India       | S | Sierra        |   |               |
| J                              | Juliett     | T | Tango         |   |               |
| 0                              | <u>zero</u> | 4 | <u>f</u> ower | 8 | ait           |
| 1                              | wun         | 5 | fife          | 9 | <u>n</u> iner |
| 2                              | too         | 6 | six           |   |               |
| 3                              | tree        | 7 | <u>s</u> even |   |               |
| oo (hundred) <u>h</u> undred   |             |   |               |   |               |
| ooo (thousand) <u>t</u> ousand |             |   |               |   |               |
| . (decimal) <u>d</u> ayseemal  |             |   |               |   |               |

| British CAA                       | ICAO/Global                         |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| FL 100 = flight level one hundred | FL 100 = flight level one zero zero |



3 Listen to the sample message and repeat.

London Control, Express 164. Flight Level 100. Heading 345. ETA Belfast 0839.

INTERACTIONS

Work with a partner to pass and record messages. If you are not sure about the message, ask for clarification. Repeat *Say again* until you have understood.

| ASKING FOR REPETITION                      |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Repeat entire message</b><br>Say again. | <b>Repeat specific item</b><br>Say again flight level.<br>Say again all before heading.<br>Say again all after flight level.<br>Say again flight level to ETA. |



Partner A File 1, p. 70  
Partner B File 8, p. 72



Listen and check. Then compare what you wrote with the information your partner read.



STRUCTURE

| QUESTIONS AND SHORT ANSWERS            |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Are you on stand C63 or C61?           | I'm/We're on stand C61.             |
| Is the radio on the correct frequency? | Yes, it is./No, it isn't.           |
| Have you set the QNH?                  | Yes./Yes, I have./No, I haven't.    |
| Has the weather improved?              | Yes, it has./No, it hasn't.         |
| Do you have the flight plan?           | Yes, I've got it here./No, I don't. |
| Do you know where John is?             | Yes, I do./No, I don't.             |
| Did the bird strike cause any damage?  | Yes, it did./No, it didn't.         |

4 Put the words in the right order to make questions. Then answer them.

- 1 you a a controller pilot Are or ?
- 2 speak other languages you Do any ?
- 3 abroad ever you been Have ?
- 4 plane travel last When by you did ?
- 5 your provide training company courses English Does ?
- 6 English in minutes the ten your last improved Has ?

| American English | British English |
|------------------|-----------------|
| airplane         | aeroplane       |

FLUENCY

5 Match the two parts of the sentences to make six reasons why international communications may be difficult.

- 1 ATCOs and pilots may speak
- 2 There may be very poor reception
- 3 Extra and unnecessary
- 4 ATCOs or pilots may sometimes
- 5 Non-routine situations have little
- 6 ATCOs or pilots may not understand
- a English words are used.
- b in their own language.
- c or no standard phraseology.
- d on the radio.
- e use plain English.
- f standard English phraseology.







**6** Listen to five exchanges. Write the number of the exchange next to the description below. Then tick how often you expect to hear each of these in your work. Then discuss your answers with a partner.

|   | always                   | often                    | usually                  | sometimes                | occasionally             | rarely                   | never                    |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a ____ standard phraseology               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b ____ non-standard phraseology           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c <u>1</u> ____ unnecessary English words | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d ____ plain English                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e ____ local language                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



**7** Listen to the exchange as a long haul flight approaches its destination. Answer the questions.

- 1 What is the main communication problem?
- 2 How did the pilot try to help the controller understand?
- 3 How did the controller deal with the situation?



VOCABULARY

**8** Listen again. From each pair of words, tick the word you hear.

- |           |           |              |         |
|-----------|-----------|--------------|---------|
| 1 violent | vibration | 5 aggressive | angry   |
| 2 rude    | unruly    | 6 ground     | around  |
| 3 hit     | hate      | 7 services   | service |
| 4 drink   | drunk     | 8 remain     | remove  |



9 What is the problem on board the aircraft? Use words you have selected in exercise 8 to make sentences.

- 1 The passenger was \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 The passenger \_\_\_\_\_ a crew member.
- 3 The pilot wanted to get on the \_\_\_\_\_ as soon as possible.

Have you ever had a difficult communication? What did you do?


Yes, I have. I had a medical emergency. The pilot asked for ...  
The controller asked me to ...  
No, I haven't.

10 Use words from exercise 6 to complete the article.

# SAFETY SENSE

Dealing with non-routine events

*Occasionally* <sup>1</sup> a pilot may be able to use \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>2</sup> phraseology for a non-routine event, but he will \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>3</sup> have to use \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>4</sup> English. In this event he had to use \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>5</sup> phraseology but tried to assist the controller by not using any \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>6</sup> English words and by using several different words with a similar meaning.



The radio transmission was good, but the controller could not understand the problem as he \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>7</sup> dealt with domestic flights and \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>8</sup> spoke to a foreign pilot. This can \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>9</sup> be a problem for controllers as they get little practice with spoken English and \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>10</sup> speak to local pilots in the \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>11</sup> language. A non-English speaker will \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>12</sup> be alone in this situation and help will \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>13</sup> be available.

Answer the questions.

- 1 How often do you use English for your job?
- 2 How often do you speak English to:
  - a non-native speakers?
  - b native English speakers?
- 3 How often do you listen to the radio or watch TV in English?
- 4 What is your best English skill: listening, speaking, reading, or writing? Which would you most like to improve?
- 5 Have you ever had difficulty trying to speak English? What was the outcome?



## PHRASAL VERBS

The meaning may not be clear from the two parts:  
*Did the tanker **break down**?*

check out • keep up • stays up • get back • come in • get to • pass over

*Approach* Wolfair 60, for the time being, yes. I'll \_\_\_\_\_<sup>2</sup> to you in a minute.

*Tower* B67, roger. OK, make a low pass over runway 23 for a landing gear check.



|   |                           |    |                             |
|---|---------------------------|----|-----------------------------|
| 1 | attempt                   | 6  | tell me                     |
| 2 | Can you see the airport?  | 7  | inspect                     |
| 3 | fly low over the runway   | 8  | Request permission ...      |
| 4 | a little more time        | 9  | Would you like to ... ?     |
| 5 | now and for a few minutes | 10 | You are on my radar screen. |

## FLUENCY

- 1 Which gear is a problem?
- 2 What does the controller suggest?
- 3 What will the pilot do if the problem remains?



14 What would you do in these situations? Compare your ideas with a partner.

Situation 1

At a foreign airport you are the pilot of a passenger jet waiting to take off from runway 09. You are number two to depart. An inbound A320 lands on runway 09 and aircraft number one ahead of you departs. All communications between the pilots and ATC are in the local language. You believe you heard wind shear and high wind speeds mentioned. You are now cleared, in English, to line up and take off. ATC do not mention wind shear.



Situation 2

You are an approach controller in a busy airport. An incoming English-speaking pilot has requested a priority landing for a heavy aircraft. He has repeated the request but you still cannot understand the reason.

Situation 3

You are the pilot of a passenger aircraft approaching runway 18. You were cleared for ILS approach and had instructions to continue. You made calls at the outer marker and 2 nautical miles but received no reply. You are now at 500 feet and see a light aircraft in the one o'clock position at the same level, passing right to left. You have heard communications in the local language.



Situation 4

You are an approach controller and have twice issued instructions to an approaching B757 but have had no response. The plane is at the outer marker and appears to be on course for landing as instructed.

TALKING ABOUT IMAGINARY SITUATIONS

I would ask about wind shear.  
I would give permission to land.

In each case what would you say to deal with the situation?



**15 Think of a situation in your experience where there was confusion or a misunderstanding.**

- 1 Who was involved?
- 2 What was the problem?
- 3 How was it resolved?

**OUTPUT****Read the report and answer the questions.****DESCENT CONFUSION**

An airliner had to divert to an alternate airport because of engine problems. The pilot did not declare an emergency but requested a descent to 2000 feet in order to re-start the engine. The plane had also lost pressurisation but the pilot was unable to explain this to ATC. Controllers were concerned that the pilot wanted to descend so low but were unable to make the pilot understand their questions. They then asked 'Can you just advise me – are you descending to use fuel?'



The flight crew misinterpreted this as 'Do you have enough fuel?' and replied 'Yes, yes. We are descending with fuel enough and everything is OK'. Because the pilot had not understood the question, the reply confused the controller even more.

Fortunately, the controller guessed there was an emergency and the aircraft was put on a 7700 squawk. He transferred the aircraft to its own frequency. The aircraft landed safely but the poor understanding and communication from the pilot was reported to the authorities.

**OVER TO YOU**

Do you know any stories of a plane making a rapid descent following depressurization? What happened?

Have you experienced a pilot needing to use fuel before landing? What was the situation?