

Flight School 101 - The Purpose of Flight Training

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We all know what [flight training](#) is – but the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has actually defined it in one of their manuals - the Airplane Flying Handbook. Here is a brief description from the first chapter of this manual that defines and discusses the purpose of flight training.

Airplane Flying Handbook

The overall purpose of flight training is the learning and honing of basic airmanship skills. These skills are defined as:

- A complete familiarity with the principles of flight.
- The ability to operate an aircraft with competence and precision on the ground and in the air, and the exercise of good judgment that results in optimal operational safety and efficiency.

Learning to fly a plane has often been compared to learning to drive an automobile. But this analogy is misleading. An airplane operates in a different environment, three dimensional, so it requires a different type of motor skill development that is more sensitive to this situation:

Timing - The application of muscular coordination at the proper instant to make flight, and all maneuvers incident thereto, a constant smooth process.

Coordination - The ability to use the hands and feet together subconsciously and in the proper relationship to produce desired results in the air- plane.

Control touch - The ability to sense the action of the airplane and its probable actions in the immediate future, with regard to attitude and speed variations, by the sensing and evaluation of varying pressures and resistance of the control surfaces transmitted through the cockpit [flight controls](#).

Speed sense - The ability to instantly sense and react to any reasonable variation of airspeed.

[A pilot](#) becomes one with the airplane instead of simply the operator of a machine. An accomplished pilot demonstrates the ability to assess situations quickly and accurately and analyze the correct procedure to be followed under the circumstance; to understand the probable results of a given set of circumstances or of a proposed procedure; to exercise care and due regard for safety; to gauge accurately the performance of the airplane; and to recognize personal limitations and limitations of the airplane and avoid approaching the critical points of each. The development of airmanship skills requires effort and dedication on the part of both the student pilot and the [flight instructor](#), beginning with the very first training flight where proper habit formation begins with the student being introduced to good operating practices.

Each aircraft has its own particular flight characteristics. The purpose of [training](#) is not to learn how to fly a specific make and model airplane - it is to develop skills and safe habits that are transferable to any aircraft. Basic airmanship skills serve as a firm foundation for this. The pilot who has acquired necessary airmanship skills during training, and demonstrates these skills by flying training-type airplanes with precision and safe flying habits, will be able to easily transition to more complex and higher performance airplanes. You should also remember that the goal of flight training is safe and competent piloting, and passing required practical tests for pilot certification is only incidental to this goal.

This information is important for [flight training students](#) and prospective flight students alike. The definition above more accurately describes the exciting career you are about to undertake.