

5 Reasons to Become a Pilot

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Becoming a pilot requires [flight training](#), financial investment, and a lot of time and energy. There are so many reasons to become a pilot, including the learning opportunities, the awesome job description of a pilot, the job opportunities available to pilots, and the rewards and benefits of becoming a pilot.

What will I learn?

- Aircraft systems: the systems of an aircraft and their functions including electrical, hydraulic, oxygen, fuel, navigation, and flight controls.
- Aerodynamics: the principles of how the airplane lifts off the ground and how it functions in the air. This includes the lift and drag the airflow causes on the airplane.
- Charts and Navigation: how to read and use aviation maps and global positioning systems.
- Meteorology: the principles of weather processes and forecasting, and how to acquire and interpret information on weather concerning your flight.
- Regulations: [The National Airspace System](#) (NAS) has regulations on how to operate aircrafts and airports, these regulations are important to learn as you are required to follow them.

What do pilots do?

Pilots responsibilities vary greatly. They are highly trained and skilled aviation professionals who fly airplanes and are responsible for several different aspects of aviation. These include:

- Airline Pilots carry an average of 200 passengers plus cargo for major or regional airlines.
- Flight Engineers assist pilots, monitor and operate instruments and systems, conduct minor in-flight repairs, and assist with [air traffic control](#) and cabin crew communications.
- Military Pilots fly under government contract, it involves combat and non-combat operations.
- Commercial Pilots can do many things like dusting crops, spreading seed, testing aircraft, flying passengers to cargo areas, firefighting, tracking criminals, monitoring traffic, rescuing and evacuating.
- Air Cargo Carriers are air freight carriers, they carry cargo and equipment to designated destinations.
- Business, Commuter, and Corporate Air-Taxi Travel are chartered aircraft services that operate on-demand.

- Flight Instructors teach students in ground-school classes, simulators, and in planes.

What job opportunities are there?

Employment of aircraft pilots and flight engineers is projected to grow 12 percent from 2008 to 2018. Job opportunities are more readily available for experienced pilots with the regional airlines and low-cost carriers, which are expected to grow faster than the major airlines. Opportunities with air cargo carriers also should arise because of increasing security requirements for shipping freight on passenger airlines, growth in electronic commerce, and increased demand for global freight. Airline pilots and flight engineers may earn extra pay for night and international flights.

What are the Wages?

According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), in May 2008:

- Median annual wages of airline pilots, copilots, and flight engineers were \$111,680. The middle 50 percent earned between \$81,580 and \$150,480.
- Median annual wages of commercial pilots were \$65,340 in May 2008. The middle 50 percent earned between \$45,680 and \$89,540.

Are there benefits?

Airline pilots usually are eligible for several different benefit programs including:

- Life and health insurance plans
- Retirement benefits
- Disability payments (if they eventually fail FAA physical examination)
- Expense allowance (per diem, for every hour away from home)
- Allowances (so pilots can purchase and clean uniforms)
- Free or reduced-fare transportation for pilots and immediate family

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