

# Why you shouldn't be afraid of flying!

**Language Focus:** 15 words, **Level:** Intermediate - Advanced

## Are you afraid of flying?

Many people are afraid of flying in airplanes, but they shouldn't be. Flying is actually one of the safest ways to travel. In fact, when measured per mile, flying is actually **far** safer than driving, or travelling by train.

Not only is flying the safest **mode of transport**, but it is also the fastest. Just a hundred years ago if you wanted to travel from China to the United States, you would have to travel by boat for many weeks. Now, you can get there in less than 24 hours. Airplanes are also quite comfortable, and often offer in-flight entertainment, such as movies. This helps explain why travelling by plane is now the preferred choice for long distance journeys.

Of course, that doesn't stop some people from being afraid of flying. The idea of **hurtling** through the atmosphere at hundreds of miles per hour can be **intimidating** for many. One of the main reasons that people are afraid to fly is that passengers **lack** any control over the airplane, and have to place their trust **in the hands of** the pilots. Many people would prefer to **remain in control!**

"Really?", you ask.

Comparing the number of deaths caused by cars, trains, and airplanes is very difficult. Many more people drive than fly. The easiest way to compare deaths is per billion kilometers. This means, how many people will die per billion kilometers travelled? Motorcycles, for example, are very dangerous and 108.9 people will die per every billion kilometers traveled. Cars are less dangerous, with 3.1 people dying per billion kilometers.

Trains are quite safe, with only 0.6 people dying per billion kilometers traveled. Subway and metro rails are even safer, with only 0.24 people dying per billion kilometers traveled. Do you know what's even safer? Air travel! Only 0.05 people were killed per billion kilometers. This is far lower than most other forms of transportation.

Commercial flying is **especially** safe. When a commercial aircraft crashes, it gets a lot of attention. Sometimes, hundreds of people can die in a single crash. Yet part of the reason these crashes get so much attention is because they are so **rare**. In fact, aviation accidents involving **civilian** aircraft carrying 19 or more people have actually **declined** over the years. In 1972, there were more than 40 accidents. In 2014, there were fewer than ten. This is especially **reassuring** given that there are far more people

flying now than there were in 1972. Most crashes that do occur actually involve smaller personal planes, which lack the advanced features found in modern commercial aircraft.

Another reason people fear flying is “terrorist attacks”. Terrorist attacks are extremely rare, however. You are far more likely to die of the common **flu**, than you are to die from a terrorist attack. Furthermore, increased security at airports and on airplanes makes it even less likely that a terrorist attack will **bring down** an airplane.

### **The safest place to be.**

When it comes to traveling, flying is **arguably** the safest, fastest, and most comfortable way to travel. While the concept may seem scary, the modern aviation industry takes safety very seriously and modern aircraft are now extremely safe. You would be more likely to die travelling by bicycle or even on foot.

So don't worry!

As the pilot says, “**sit back, relax and enjoy your flight!**”

## *Language Focus* : **Vocabulary + Expressions**

1. **far** - (adverb) by a great amount, much
2. **mode of transport** - (noun) a method or type of transport (e.g. a train, a bus, a motorcycle)
3. **hurtling** - (verb) moving at a high speed in an uncontrolled manner
4. **intimidating** - (adjective) describing something that makes you feel frightened or nervous
5. **lack** - (verb) to not have enough of something
6. **in the hands of someone** - (expression) controlled or owned by someone, the responsibility of someone
7. **remain in control** - stay in control, keep control
8. **especially** - (adverb) to a greater degree
9. **rare** - (adjective) not common, not happening very often
10. **civilian** - (adjective) relating to ordinary citizens, not military or commercial
11. **declined** - (verb) became smaller or fewer, decreased
12. **reassuring** - (adjective) making you feel less worried
13. **bring down** - (phrasal verb) to cause to fall
14. **flu** - a sickness - a cold
15. **arguably** - (adverb) it can be argued (used when giving an opinion that you think can be shown to be true)

## Language Focus: Exercises

### Comprehension Questions

Find the answers to these questions in the article..

1. Why do many people prefer travelling by air?
2. What is the main reason many people fear flying?
3. Why do commercial plane crashes get a lot of attention?
4. What is another reason people might be afraid to fly?
5. Why are terrorist attacks unlikely to cause a plane crash?

### Comprehension Questions: True or False ?

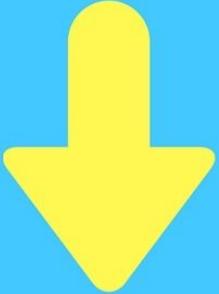
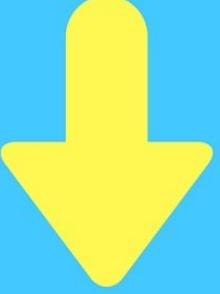
Say whether the following statements are true or false. If they are false, say why.

1. Motorcycles are the most dangerous form of travel.
2. Travelling by car is more dangerous than travelling my plane, but safer than travelling by train.
3. Subways and metro rails are the second safest mode of transportation after air travel.
4. There have been more commercial aircraft crashes in recent years than in the past.
5. You are less likely to die of a terrorist attack than you are to die of the common flu.
6. You are less likely to die on a bicycle or on foot than flying.

### Complete the sentences: EXERCISES

Complete these sentences with a **highlighted** word or phrase from the article.

1. The number of students studying music ..... last year. (became smaller or fewer, decreased)
2. I was worried about Mary but it was ..... to talk to her on the phone. (adj- making you feel less worried)
3. Russia is ..... cold in winter. (particularly, to a greater degree)
4. Bob suffers from a ..... disease. Not many people have it. (not common)
5. There were a high number of ..... deaths caused by the military invasion. (ordinary citizens or people)
6. Steven Spielberg is .....the best film director in the world. (it can be argued)
7. John went ..... down the slope the first time he went skiing. (*moving at a high speed in an uncontrolled manner*)
8. A Ferrari is ..... more expensive than a regular family car. (*much, a lot*)
9. There are many ..... of transport to choose from in my city such as buses, trams or metro trains. (*types*)
10. The people were hungry because they ..... Food. (didn't have enough)

**A**  
  
**N**  
  
**S**  
**W**  
  
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**R**  
**S**

## ANSWERS SHEET

### Comprehension Questions: **ANSWERS**

1. *Not only is flying the safest mode of transport, but it is also the fastest... Airplanes are also quite comfortable, and often offer in-flight entertainment, such as movies.*
2. *...passengers lack any control over the airplane, and have to place their trust in the hands of the pilots.*
3. *...these crashes get so much attention is because they are so rare.*
4. *Another reason people fear flying is "terrorist attacks".*
5. *...increased security at airports and on airplanes makes it even less likely that a terrorist attack will bring down an airplane.*

### True or False ? : **ANSWERS**

1. TRUE
2. FALSE: Cars are more dangerous than planes and trains.
3. TRUE
4. FALSE: in 1972 there were more than 40, and in 2014 there were less than 10.
5. TRUE
6. FALSE: You would be more likely to die travelling by bicycle or even on foot.

### Complete the sentences: **ANSWERS**

1. declined
2. reassuring
3. especially
4. rare
5. civilian
6. Arguably
7. hurtling
8. far
9. modes
10. lack