

AIRLINE PILOT



SALARY

Newly qualified pilot ★★★★★

Experienced captain ★★★★★

INDUSTRY PROFILE

Industry run by a few large companies • Demand slowing due to reduction in low-cost airlines • Little chance for part-time work

JOB DESCRIPTION

Piloting an aircraft is an exciting job that offers the chance to see the world. It is also a role that carries heavy responsibilities, as pilots are in charge of an expensive aircraft and must ensure the safety and comfort of the passengers. They also work to strict schedules and standards. Before they qualify, pilots must undergo a period of intense training in order to fly a commercial aircraft.



AT A GLANCE



YOUR INTERESTS Aviation • Mathematics • Physics • Engineering • Travel and tourism • Computers • Meteorology



ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS A pilot's license is required. Pilots may train at colleges, private flying schools, or through the armed forces.



LIFESTYLE Unusual working hours go with the job, and pilots usually work in shifts. They will often spend long periods away from home.



LOCATION Travel is unavoidable. Pilots on long-haul flights typically spend a rest day at their destination before flying home.



THE REALITIES Private training for a pilot's license is costly, and there is a lot of competition for good jobs. Pilots spend most of their time in the cockpit.

CAREER PATHS

Earning a pilot's license is the first step toward a career as a pilot. With sufficient experience and flying hours, you can work toward becoming a captain. Pilots can work for passenger airlines, charter airlines, freight carriers, or private jet operators.

PRIVATE PILOT You can train for a pilot's license with a private flying school. It may take 18 months to earn the required flying hours.



ARMED FORCES PILOT If you serve for a given period of time as a pilot in the armed forces, you may be able to take a conversion course to qualify as a commercial pilot.



GRADUATE A degree in aviation studies or a similar subject will help your chances of finding a role with an airline company.



▼ RELATED CAREERS

- ▶ **AEROSPACE ENGINEER** *see pp. 190–191*
- ▶ **AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER** *see pp. 216–217*
- ▶ **AIRLINE CABIN CREW** *see pp. 308–309*
- ▶ **HELICOPTER PILOT** Usually flies as the sole pilot, servicing oil platforms, police forces, and rescue teams, and carrying out other survey work. The training required to fly helicopters is costly and intensive. Fewer companies operate helicopters than airplanes, so job opportunities are more scarce.



Pilots train on flight simulators once every year to renew their flying license.

SKILLS GUIDE



An ability to understand and remember technical and procedural information.



Excellent skills in spoken and written English, the international language of the aviation industry.



An ability to remain focused under pressure and to think quickly to resolve problems.



Manual dexterity, sharp eyesight, a good level of physical fitness, and excellent coordination.



Confidence and communication skills to interact with the crew in a calm and efficient manner.

AIRLINE PILOT Major airline pilots fly larger planes on long and short routes. Regional pilots fly smaller planes on shorter routes.



CORPORATE JET PILOT Flies smaller planes, often to smaller airports for private customers.



CARGO PILOT Flies cargo planes, often overnight when airports carry fewer passengers. Shifts are usually fairly predictable, allowing for greater stability in home life.



AIRLINE MANAGER Works as a manager for an airline or for an airport. The job does not involve much time spent in the cockpit.



FIRST OFFICER Shares duties with the captain in flying the plane. After five to ten year's experience, you can progress to captain.



CAPTAIN Following rigorous training and selection, you can become captain, taking overall control of commanding the aircraft.



INSTRUCTOR Trains new pilots on simulators, and works on airline company guidelines.

