

High Anxiety



The VIP lounge was filled with specially invited guests. These lucky people chatted and laughed as the final preparations were made. They posed for eager photographers. Some of the guests stood by the window and gazed at the group of pilots marching in protest outside the airport building. They were carrying placards and banners that had statements such as “Unfair!” and “Our Jobs Are At Risk” written on them. Some of the guests laughed.

A special announcement was heard over the airport loudspeakers. “Will all the guests for the first flight of Automated Airways please go to the VIP gate.” They shuffled out of the VIP room, trailing fur coats, diamond jewellery and expensive clothes. Everyone was eager for a glimpse of the aircraft itself.

When they did catch sight of it through the passenger gate, everyone remarked on how ordinary it looked. In fact, all the extraordinary aspects of the plane were hidden inside. The only clue to be seen was the absence of windows in the front, where the cockpit was supposed to be. A large band was playing on the tarmac beside the jet.

Each person was escorted to his or her seat on board. As they settled back, a strange, metallic voice came over the intercom. “Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to this, the first official flight of a fully automated jetliner.” They applauded. The voice continued. “Today, you will be carried safely across the Atlantic Ocean to New York in 1 hour, 25 minutes and 17 seconds. There is no pilot or co-pilot. This flight will be free of human error.” More applause.

The doors closed automatically. The engines powered up automatically. The huge aircraft taxied automatically from the airport terminal to the runway. It automatically built up speed, and then it took off automatically. Within minutes, it was streaking across the sky to America.

The metallic voice began once more: “Ladies and gentlemen, we have reached cruising altitude and are travelling at a speed of 4,375km per hour. You may unfasten your seat belts, and just to reassure you that nothing can go wrong... click... go wrong... click... go wrong... click...”

Question Time

A

1. Where were the guests waiting?
2. What was happening outside?
3. What was written on the placards?
4. What special event was about to take place?
5. What was so special about the aircraft?
6. Where was it going?
7. Did anyone come to see the aircraft take off?
8. How long was the flight supposed to take?
9. At what speed was the plane travelling?
10. Which ocean was the plane going to cross?
11. Who was talking to the passengers on board the plane?
12. Think of a new title for the story.

B


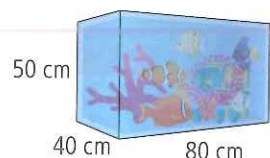
1. How do you know that the guests were rich?
2. Why were the pilots protesting?
3. Did the guests care about the pilots? How do you know?
4. What does VIP mean?
5. There were no pilots. Do you think there were other crew members on the plane? Why?
6. This was the "first official flight". Do you think there had been other flights? Why?
7. Was there anything unusual about the appearance of the jet?
8. Why, do you think, did the airline invite a group of rich and famous people to be the passengers on the first flight?
9. Who, or what, was talking to the passengers on board the plane?
10. Do some research to find the speed of sound.
At how many times the speed of sound was this plane supposed to be travelling?
11. What would have alarmed the passengers?
12. Do you think there was a second official automated flight? Why?

Think and Talk

1. Why is so much time and money spent on the training of airline pilots?
2. Why is the job of a pilot regarded as a very stressful job?
3. What would be the advantages/disadvantages of being an airline pilot?
4. Do you think that, someday, aircraft will be flown by computers instead of pilots? Why?
5. Write a newspaper report covering the event.

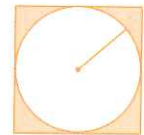
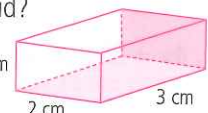
- $7,000,000 - 700,000 =$ _____
- $25 =$ _____²
- $1 \div 0.1 =$ _____
- $24 \div \frac{1}{3} = 24$ _____ _{$\div \times$} 3
- Write the numeral ten million, five hundred and twelve thousand and fifteen.

- 8% of €10.00 = € _____
- What is the place value of the 4 in 2.4 million?

- The total cost of 6 drinks is €7.20.
What is the average cost of one drink? € _____
- How many degrees is the inside angle between the hands on a clock displaying 9 o'clock?
_____°
- Tick the composite numbers.
☐ 15 ☐ 11 ☐ 21 ☐ 7 ☐ 27
- $80 \times 30 = 24 \times y$, so $y =$ _____
- $\frac{4}{5} + 2\frac{4}{5} =$ _____
- Draw to show a 270° rotation clockwise.

- Round 15.6073 to three decimal places. _____
- Write the formula to work out the area of a rectangle.
area = _____ \times _____
- $1,000 \times 0.001 =$ _____
- Tick which would be better to weigh a banana.
☐ kitchen scales ☐ bathroom scales
- What is the volume of the fish tank?
 _____ cm³
- $0.7 < \frac{8}{10}$ ☐ True ☐ False
- If there are ¥116 to €1.00, how many euro would you get for ¥580? € _____

- Simplify $\frac{18}{24}$. _____
- Write the numeral 3.65 million.

- How much are the wages if you pay time and a half for 4 hours (normal rate €10.00 per hour)?
€ _____
- $7\frac{3}{4} =$ (decimal) _____
- A _____ angle has exactly 90°.
- 6.05 km = _____ m
- $-7 + +3 =$ _____
- $9\text{ l } 45\text{ mL} = 9\frac{45}{1,000}\text{ l} = 9. _____ l$
- Tick which would be the best to measure the length of a street.
☐ ruler ☐ trundle wheel ☐ metre stick
- If it takes you 5 minutes to travel 6 km, how far will you travel in an hour? _____ km
- Which digit in the decimal 0.527 is the tenth?

- Write $\frac{49}{6}$ as a mixed number. _____
- Round 21.3689 to three decimal places. _____
- What is the radius of the circle?
_____ m

- What is the surface area of this cuboid?
_____ cm²

- $5,000 \div (50 \times 10^2) =$ _____
- Are 210 and 120 both prime numbers? _____
- What is the average of these dance scores?

9.3	8.7	8.8	9.2
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- $3.3 > 3\frac{1}{5}$ ☐ True ☐ False
- What shape is the sign?

