

Private Pilot Ground School Frequently Asked Questions

Program Description

AVI 3805 Private Pilot Ground School

4.0 Cr Hrs

Covers the fundamentals of aerodynamics, weight and balance, aircraft systems, radio navigation, meteorology, federal regulations, aeronautical charts, flight planning and decision making. Course is designed for those who desire a better understanding of flying and aircraft, or as preparation to take the computerized Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Private Pilot Airman Knowledge Test and flying lessons from a certificated flight instructor or accredited flying school. Note: This course requires extensive outside reading and homework. Purchase of instructional materials is required. Flying lessons are not included as a part of ground school, but are available through other sources.

Questions and Answers Relevant to Private Pilot Ground School

What is private pilot ground school? Why do I need it?

Getting your private pilot license is like getting your driver's license, whereas you must pass a knowledge exam (now computerized) covering a variety of aviation subjects before you can take the actual oral exam and practical flying skills test. However, before you can take the computerized exam, you must demonstrate your knowledge in many areas and receive an endorsement from an authorized instructor that you are indeed competent to take (and pass) the exam. WATC's Private Pilot Ground School prepares you for taking the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Private Pilot Airman Knowledge Test (the computerized exam). Becoming a private pilot requires intensive study in many aviation knowledge areas. These knowledge areas are tested by the FAA through the computerized exam. Passing this exam is a prerequisite toward obtaining the private pilot license. These knowledge areas are very important, but there is usually not enough time during flight training to cover them in the depth needed to pass the computerized Airman Knowledge exam. Ground school provides students with the time and in-depth coverage required of these knowledge areas to successfully pass the exam.

How do I get started? What WATC course do I need to enroll in?

Enroll in the Private Pilot Ground School course to prepare you for taking the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Private Pilot Airman Knowledge Test (the computerized exam).

How hard is this course?

This course requires extensive reading and homework assignments. There are daily quizzes, a mid-term and a final exam. Students with a final exam score of 80 percent or better will receive the instructor's endorsement to take the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Private Pilot Airman Knowledge Test (computerized exam).

What textbooks do I need?

Textbooks used for the class are the Private Pilot Part 61 Kit by Jeppesen¹ (#JS302008) and the Dallas Sectional Aeronautical Chart by the National Aeronautical Charting Office (NACO) of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Kits are available at the Southside Education Center (SEC) bookstore. The aeronautical chart is available at any local airport and is not required until later in the course. It must be purchased separately.

Can I start taking flying lessons while I am still taking ground school?

Yes, but some flight instructors recommend that you finish ground school before starting flying lessons. Ground school requires a tremendous amount of reading and homework exercises. If you decide to start flying lessons while you are enrolled in ground school, wait until you have completed the sessions on aircraft systems and aerodynamics. This will make your first flight lessons more relevant and easier to understand.

What is the FAA Private Pilot Airman Knowledge Test?

A very extensive, 60-question, multiple-choice, computerized exam that covers various aviation subjects. The test is administered via computer at select testing facilities. Minimum passing score is 70 percent. Private pilot applicants must provide the flight examiner with evidence of passing this written exam before they are allowed to continue with the practical exam.

Questions and Answers Relevant to Flight Training

What is the FAA?

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is the agency that governs general aviation and commercial aviation.

What are the requirements to become a private pilot?

To solo the aircraft, you must be at least 16 years old, be able to read, speak, write and understand the English language and hold at least a third-class medical certificate. Additionally, to get your private pilot certificate, you must be at least 17 years old and complete specific training and flight time requirements described in the Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs), pass a knowledge test (the computerized exam) and successfully complete a practical test that consists of oral quizzing, performing pilot operations and executing maneuvers in the airplane.

How do I get a third-class medical certificate?

Pass a physical exam administered by a FAA-authorized aviation medical examiner (AME). At the time of your examination, you can request a combination medical certificate and student pilot certificate. For a listing of AMEs near you, contact any FAA facility or Flight Standards District Office (FSDO). Your flight instructor or fixed base operator (FBO) should be able to recommend one.

Where can I obtain pilot training?

Visit your local airport or contact any certificated flight instructor (CFI). Most flight instructors and flight schools operate at airport facilities called fixed base operators (FBOs). Many flying clubs, like the Boeing Employees' Flying Club (BEFC) offer flight training to their members.

How is a syllabus used in pilot training?

A syllabus provides structure to pilot training by organizing flight and ground lessons. It ensures that no procedures are overlooked and allows you to view your progress. Most instructors teach from some form of syllabus.

When can I start taking lessons?

Anytime. But you must hold a student pilot certificate before you can solo (fly alone) in the aircraft and hold at least a third-class medical certificate.

How much does pilot training cost?

Each flight lesson consists of an aircraft rental fee and a fee for your instructor's time. Some flights will be solo flights. Based on 55 hours of flying time (40 hours is the minimum) and other expenses like charts, medical exam fee, ground school, exam preparation and examiner fees, plan on spending around \$4,200–\$5,200. Like everything else, fuel costs, insurance rates, and inflation may affect aircraft rental and instructor fees. See your FBO, flight instructor or flying club for any additional information.

How long does it take to become a private pilot?

Four to six months, depending on weather conditions and scheduling of the aircraft and your flight instructor's time. Plan to fly at least twice a week to facilitate (make the best use of) your training.

What are flying lessons like?

Excluding cross-country flights, most lessons last two hours. An hour to an hour and a half is spent in the aircraft. The other half-hour is spent in pre- and post-flight discussion with your instructor. The lesson format usually consists of a weather check, a preflight discussion of maneuvers to be performed, a visual check of the aircraft using a checklist, engine runup and takeoff checks using a checklist, review of previously learned maneuvers, introduction and practice of new maneuver, debrief and post-flight discussion, logbook endorsement and study assignment for next lesson.

What is the training course sequence?

Presolo, First Solo, Cross-Country, Pass Knowledge Test, Practical Test Preparation and Pass Practical Test.

What are my privileges as a private pilot?

As pilot in command (PIC) of an aircraft, you are directly responsible for, and are the final authority as to, the operation of that aircraft. You can fly virtually anywhere within the United States, Canada, Mexico and the Bahamas. You can carry passengers, but you cannot charge them for the flight. You can share expenses like gas and oil. You cannot fly for hire or compensation, but you can fly in connection with your business such as an aircraft salesperson.

What kind of aircraft can I fly?

Generally, simple single-engine land aircraft in good visual weather conditions. You can fly more complex single engine aircraft later, if you receive additional training and an instructor's endorsement. You cannot fly helicopters or floatplanes, multi-engine airplanes or jets, because they require much more specialized training and an additional pilot certificate or rating.

Does my private pilot certificate expire?

No, but to continue to exercise the privileges of that license, you must meet certain currency requirements. Your medical certificate must be current. You must complete a flight review every 24 calendar months. And to carry passengers, you must perform at least three takeoffs and landings in an aircraft of the same category and class within the preceding 90 days.

Who can I contact for more information?

For enrollment in Private Pilot Ground School, contact:

Wichita Area Technical College
Aviation Tech Center
7603 E. Pawnee, Wichita, KS 67207
316.652.2800

Ask about other courses:

- Introduction to Flying — for beginners or those not sure about learning to fly
- Instrument Pilot Ground School — for private pilots only

For information about the courses, contact:

Mark J. Ross
316.209.6152
E-mail: mross@watc.edu

For flying lessons:

Flying lessons are available throughout the area from many fine Fixed Base Operators (FBOs), Certificated Flight Instructors (CFIs) and flying clubs. For information on a typical flying club, you can contact the Boeing Employees' Flying Club (BEFC) by visiting their Web site at <http://www.befc-wichita.org>.

¹ Jeppesen Sanderson, 55 Inverness Drive East, Englewood, CO 80112-5498. Private Pilot Manual, 1997–2001. ISBN 0-88487-238-6; Part No. JS314500-005.