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How Airplanes Fly

Visual lesson



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Air Is a Pusher

At the park you watch a heavy plane glide across the sky and wonder why it doesn't drop like your ball. Hold your flat hand out of a moving car window and feel the air push it up and back. Air is not empty — it is real stuff that pushes!





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Curvy Wings Catch a Lift

Look at the long wings sticking out from the plane's sides — flat underneath and gently curved on top, like the back of a spoon. As the plane rushes forward, air splits and races over and under each wing, and the wing gets pushed upward. Curvy wings catch a lift!

> **TALK ABOUT IT**
> Where does the wing get pushed?

Push Back to Go Forward

The plane only flies if it moves fast, so something must pull it forward. The engines grab air, squeeze it, and blast it backward very hard — so the air pushes the plane forward, just like a balloon zooming when you let it go. Push back to go forward!

TALK ABOUT IT

Why does the plane go forward?





Wide and Flat Rides More Air

Here's a prediction: if you drop a flat sheet of paper and a crumpled ball of the same paper, which lands first — or do they tie? Make your guess, then we'll see. A wide flat shape leans on more air, just like a wing.

TALK ABOUT IT
Which lands first?

Teamwork: Speed Makes Lift

The flat sheet floated slower because its wide surface leaned on more air. Many people think the engines lift the plane straight up, but that's not quite right — engines only make speed, and the wings turn speed into lift. To land, the pilot slows down so the wings catch less air and the plane settles gently.

> **TALK ABOUT IT**
> Engines lift the plane straight up.





You Understood Flight

Here's a true wow fact: a big passenger plane can weigh more than forty elephants, yet smooth fast wings still hold it in the sky! Planes fly because engines push them fast and curved wings ride the pushing air upward. Air is strong, wings are clever — and now you know the sky's secret too!

Check your wonder

1 **What is air, really?**

- **A.** Empty nothing
- **B.** Real stuff that pushes

2 **How does a plane get its lift?**

- **A.** Engines lift it straight up
- **B.** Curved wings ride the pushing air

3 **Why does the engine push the plane forward?**

- **A.** It blasts air backward, so air pushes it forward
- **B.** It pulls the sky toward it

ANSWERS 1-B 2-B 3-A

1. Yes! Air is a pusher, not nothing. 2. Right! Curvy wings catch the lift. 3. Exactly — push back to go forward, like a balloon!

THE END

Visual lesson

Put your child in this story

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