At the airport

A Departures

This is the usual sequence of activities when you get to the airport.

First you go to the **check-in desk** where they **weigh your luggage**. Usually you are permitted 20 kilos, but if your bags weigh more, you may have to pay **excess baggage** (= you pay extra). The airline representative checks your ticket and gives you a **boarding card** for the plane with your seat number on it. Then you go through **passport control** where an official **checks** [NOT ~~controls~~] your passport, and into the **departure lounge**. Here, you can also buy things in the **duty-free**, e.g. perfume, alcohol and cigarettes. About half an hour or forty minutes before **take-off**, you are told to go to a gate number, e.g. gate 14, where you wait before you **get on** the plane. When you **board** (= get on) the plane, you find your seat. If you have **hand luggage**, you can put it under your seat or in the **overhead locker** above your seat.
The plane then **taxis** (= moves slowly) towards the **runway**, and when it has permission to **take off**, it accelerates along the runway and takes off.

Note: The verb **to taxi** is generally only used in this context.

B The flight

You may want or need to understand certain announcements; these come from the **captain** (= the pilot) or from an **air steward or stewardess / cabin crew / flight attendants** (= people who look after the passengers):

Please **fasten your seat belt** and put your seat in the **upright position**.
We are now **cruising** (= flying comfortably) at an **altitude** (= height) of 10,000 metres.
May we **remind** passengers (= ask passengers to remember) that there is no smoking until you are inside the **terminal building** (= where passengers arrive and depart).
The **cabin crew** (= air stewards) are now coming round with **landing cards**. (These are cards you sometimes have to fill in when you enter certain countries.)

C Arrival

When the plane **lands** (= arrives on the ground), you have to wait for it to stop / come to a halt. When the doors are open, you **get off** the plane and walk through the **terminal building** and go to the **baggage reclaim** where you collect your luggage. You then **pass through customs** (green = nothing to declare; red = goods to declare; blue = European Union citizens). If you are lucky, you can then get a bus, taxi or train to the centre of town without waiting too long. You can also **hire** a car (= **rent** a car) at most airports.

Note: In British English you normally **hire** something for a short period, e.g. hire a room for a party, and **rent** something for a long period, e.g. a flat; for a car, you can use both words.

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