

The new Airbus

Production of the first Airbus A380, the world's largest civilian aircraft, has just begun in France. Will the new super-airliner change the future of aviation?

1 Complete the fact file on the new Airbus. Your partner will provide the missing information.

Airbus A380: Fact File	
Dimensions	Length: 73 metres Height:
Number of passengers	Typical capacity: 555 Maximum capacity:
Number of engines	Four
Approximate cost
Building the Airbus	Parts of the Airbus will be built in France and Germany. The tail-fins will be built in Spain and the giant wings in the UK.
Assembling the Airbus	The Airbus will be assembled in one of the largest factories in the world in

2 Read the article on the future of aviation.

Is big beautiful?

The new European Airbus is set to challenge the long dominance of Boeing's 747 in the jumbo jet category. Airbus believes the new plane will transform air travel by offering passengers more space. The Airbus can take a third more passengers than a jumbo jet, and so is less likely to fly with empty seats.

Airbus predicts that in the future there will be bigger planes flying to about 60 big airports around the world. Passengers can then go from these hubs to

smaller cities. Given the pressure to limit airport expansion, larger planes will make better use of take-off and landing slots, and make sensible use of resources such as fuel and the use of flight crews.

Already, orders for the 555-seater giant aircraft have been placed by Air France, Korean Air, Lufthansa and Qantas. The European consortium producing the plane is hoping that it will be a business success, and change the face of flying forever.

3 Summarise the main points for your partner.

4 Discuss the following questions with your partner and report your ideas to the class.

- (a) Would you fly on the new Airbus, or would you prefer to fly on the 7E7?
- (b) Can you predict the future of air travel? Will it be closer to the Airbus or the Boeing vision?