

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: Height: 24.1 metres
Number of passengers	Typical capacity: Maximum capacity: 840
Number of engines
Approximate cost	\$280 million
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
Assembling the Airbus	The Airbus will be assembled in one of the largest factories in the world in Toulouse, France.

2 Read the article on the future of aviation.

Is the new jumbo too big?

For years, the Boeing 747 has dominated the skies. Now it faces a new challenge in the shape of the European Airbus. Boeing has deliberately decided not to develop a super-sized jumbo plane, preferring to concentrate on the middle range of the airplane market. Its new Dreamliner is designed to replace the existing 757 and 767 airliners, and carries around 230-300 passengers. The first order for the 7E7 Dreamliner came from Japan's All Nippon Airways.

Boeing foresees medium-sized planes flying directly between cities, cutting down on transfers and

detours which can be time-consuming, annoying and costly for businesses.

Critics of the larger planes predict that passengers will be unhappy about the security issues which may make check-in even longer. They say that in order to make it economically viable, airlines will cram in more seats, perhaps as many as 840. While it is certain that the new Airbus will take to the skies, it is by no means sure that it will 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?