

## Airbus

The world's biggest passenger plane has been unveiled in France. Will the Airbus change the future of aviation?

1 Which airline do you prefer to use? Why? Discuss your answer with a partner.

2 Match the adjectives with their opposites. Create sentences with some of these adjectives.

large beautiful big cheap	small short low old
new fast high long	expensive slow ugly

3 Scan the article and underline any adjectives, or their comparatives and superlatives, from exercise 2.

**The battle for the skies** In Toulouse, France, a ceremony attended by politicians and journalists saw the unveiling of the new Airbus, the largest civilian airplane ever made. Built in France, UK, Germany and Spain, the double-decker plane is longer than a football field. The tail is seven storeys high. You can park seventy cars under the wing! It can carry up to 850 passengers. One airline wants to have fewer passengers and use the extra room to install a gym and a casino. There is even potential to include private cabins, cocktail bars and showers.

Around 60 airports worldwide are changing their runways to cope with the bigger planes. A wingspan of nearly 80 metres means the A380 is too large for most airport docking bays! These alterations will cost millions of dollars. Airports preparing for the plane include New York (JFK), Los

Angeles, Tokyo, Seoul, Hong Kong, Bangkok and Frankfurt. Singapore airlines will be the first to fly the new Airbus, sometime next year.

Each Airbus costs \$260 million. The Airbus Consortium's rival, Boeing, has launched its new aeroplane, the smaller Dreamliner which costs £120 million. The two companies clearly have differing visions of the future of air travel. The resulting competition could mean cheaper tickets and faster airlines. Airbus says its planes will be cheaper to operate than Boeing. However, it can only fly to major airports, so the smaller Boeing planes may win more customers, as they can fly directly to more airports and passengers will not have to transfer. Which company will win the battle for the skies – or will the two aeroplanes simply serve different markets?

4 Read the article again. Describe the new Airbus. What are the differences between the Airbus and the Dreamliner?

5 Find words in the article from their definitions.

- (a) announcing something officially (Paragraph 1)
- (b) a long road that is used by planes when they land and take off (Paragraph 2)
- (c) changes in something or someone (Paragraph 2)
- (d) a group of companies or people who have agreed to work together (Paragraph 3)
- (e) the activities of companies that are trying to be more successful than others (Paragraph 3)
- (f) someone's idea of how something should be done, or how it will be in the future (Paragraph 3)

Definitions from or based on *Macmillan Essential English Dictionary*. Text © Bloomsbury Publishing Plc 2003

6 Work in small groups. You are the management board for an airline which is going to buy the new Airbus. Decide on the number of passenger seats (*between 600 – 850*) you will install. Choose which facilities you would include on your plane: *private cabins / a gym / cocktail bar / showers / casino* (Note: one facility = 50 seats). Present your design to the rest of the class and give reasons for your choices.

<b>Number of seats:</b>	<b>Facilities:</b>
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