



## Basic Navigation

NEXT



While you might not use applied navigation skills directly on the job as an air traffic controller, it is important to have a well-rounded aviation education, and this includes background knowledge of the concept of navigation.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Knowing the vocabulary and principles a pilot uses will serve you well in developing a better understanding of your job and how it fits into the overall aviation picture.

Knowledge of basic navigation and the methods used by pilots will also provide you with guidelines to issue realistic clearance instructions.



## Purpose

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This lesson covers the basics of navigation, the methods of navigation used by a pilot, and times, speeds, distances, and other factors associated with navigation.



# Objectives

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In this lesson, you will identify:

1. Reference lines of the earth and their purpose
2. Great circle route, distance, and direction measurement
3. Methods of time conversion and acronyms used with time
4. Magnetic variations and headings
5. Basic methods of navigation
6. Basic calculations for time, speed, and distance
7. Effects of wind on flight
8. Effects of altitude and temperature on speed

You will meet the objectives in accordance with the following references:

- FAA-H-8083-25, Pilot's Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge
- Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM)



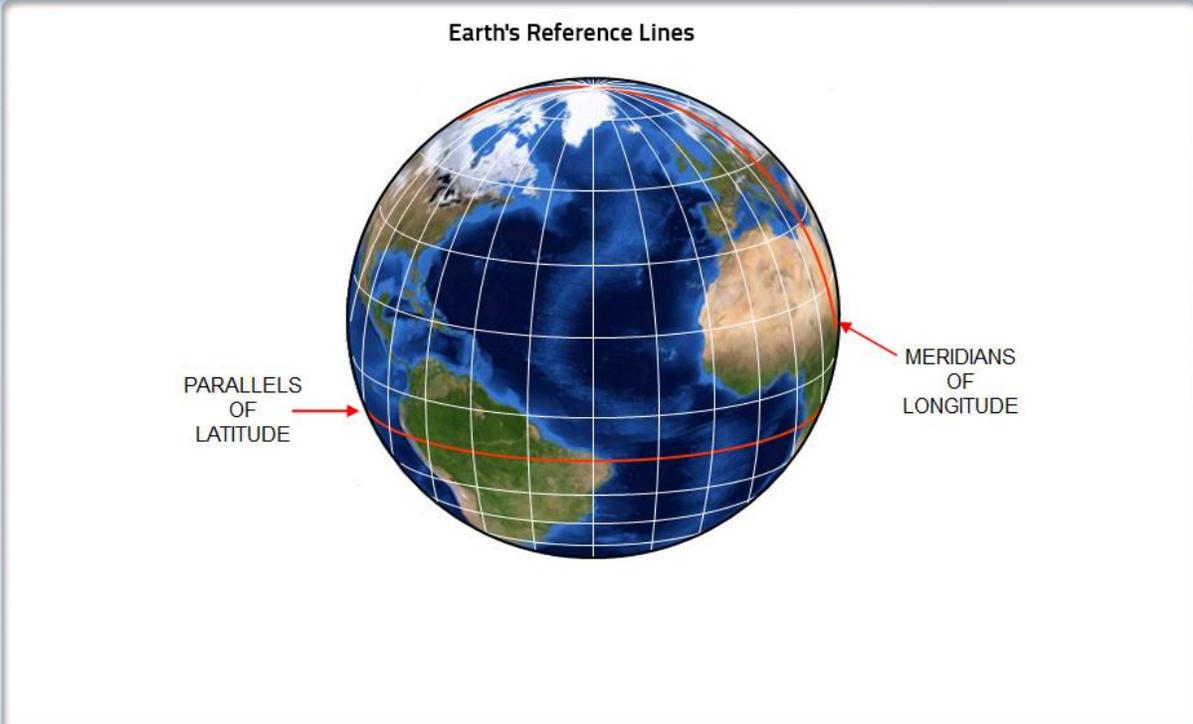
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## Reference Lines

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### Earth's Reference Lines



PARALLELS OF LATITUDE

MERIDIANS OF LONGITUDE

LEARN MORE

The earth is considered a true sphere divided by imaginary reference lines called latitude and longitude.

- Parallels of latitude run east and west.
- Meridians of longitude run north and south and connect the earth's poles.

These imaginary reference lines appear on the globe as a series of circles.

Reference: FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14



## Reference Lines

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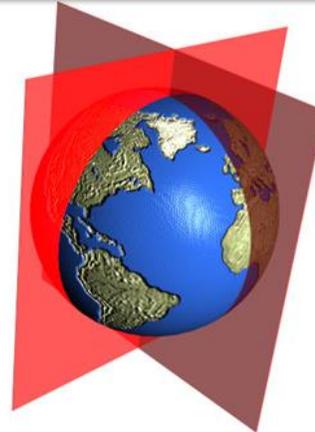
### Great Circle



The equator is a great circle.

The equator is an imaginary reference line around the earth that is midway between the earth's north and south poles from which north-south distances are measured. The equator is a great circle.

A great circle is a circle formed on the surface of a sphere by the intersection of a plane that passes through the center of the sphere; specifically, such a circle on the surface of the Earth an arc of which connecting two terrestrial points constitutes the shortest distance on the earth's surface between them.



Any meridian is half of a great circle.

The circles whose planes run through the center of the earth are known as great circles.

- Any two opposing meridians of longitude make a great circle (each meridian is half of a great circle).
- Only one parallel of latitude is a great circle, the equator.

"An Invitation to Fly," Chap. 11 <http://www.merriam-webster.com>

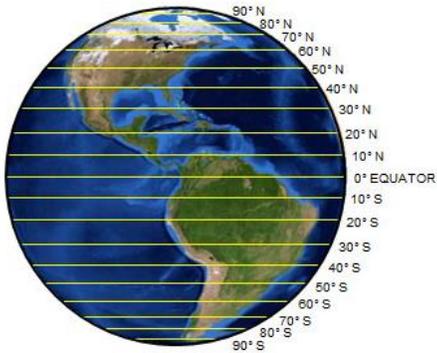


# Latitude and Longitude

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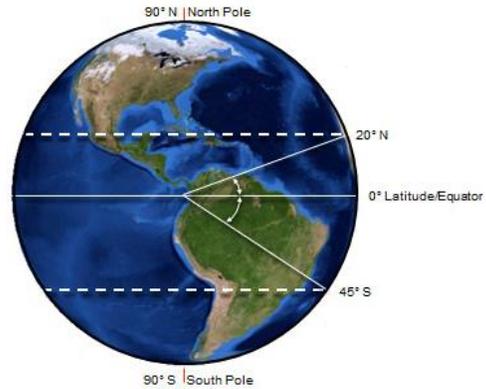
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## Parallels of Latitude



Parallels of latitude are a series of smaller east-west circles referred to as small circles.

FAA-H-8083-25, Chap.14



Parallels of latitude are:

- Parallel to equator
  - The equator is 0° latitude.
- Equal distance apart and used to measure distances north and south of the equator.
  - The North Pole is 90° north latitude.
  - The South Pole is 90° south latitude.



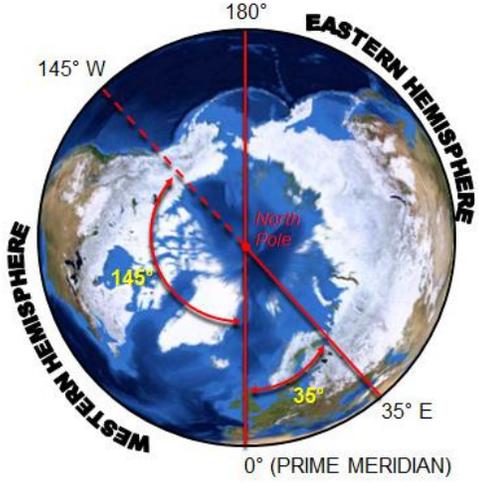
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## Latitude and Longitude

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### Meridians of Longitude

LEARN MORE

Longitude lines are used to measure angular (circular) distance east and west of the Prime Meridian.

The Prime Meridian (also called the 0° Meridian, or Greenwich Meridian) is the reference line used to measure longitude.

- Longitude is numbered from zero degrees (0°) at the Prime Meridian to 180 degrees east and 180° west.
- 180° east longitude and 180° west longitude are the same meridian.

References:

- FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14
- FAA-H-8083-25 “An Invitation to Fly,” Chap. 11

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## Coordinates and Measurement

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### Coordinates

LEARN MORE

The places where meridians and parallels cross are called coordinates.

Coordinates describe the positions of a navigational point on the Earth's surface, consisting of:

- Parallels of latitude
- Meridians of longitude

Coordinates are used:

- In pilot charts and maps
- To describe blocks of airspace
- For airborne navigation systems

Reference: FAA-H-8083-25 "An Invitation to Fly," Chap. 11



## Coordinates and Measurement

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### Circular Measurement

A circle = 360 degrees ( $360^\circ$ )

1 degree ( $1^\circ$ ) = 60 minutes ( $60'$ )

1 minute ( $1'$ ) = 60 seconds ( $60''$ )

Example: 129 degrees, 40 minutes, 16 seconds is written as  $129^\circ 40' 16''$

Parallels and meridians are divided into degrees, minutes, and seconds.

Latitude is always stated before longitude.

Parallels of latitude are used for measuring degrees of latitude north and south of the equator.

Meridians of longitude are used for measuring degrees east and west of the Prime Meridian.

FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14: "An Invitation to Fly," Chap. 11

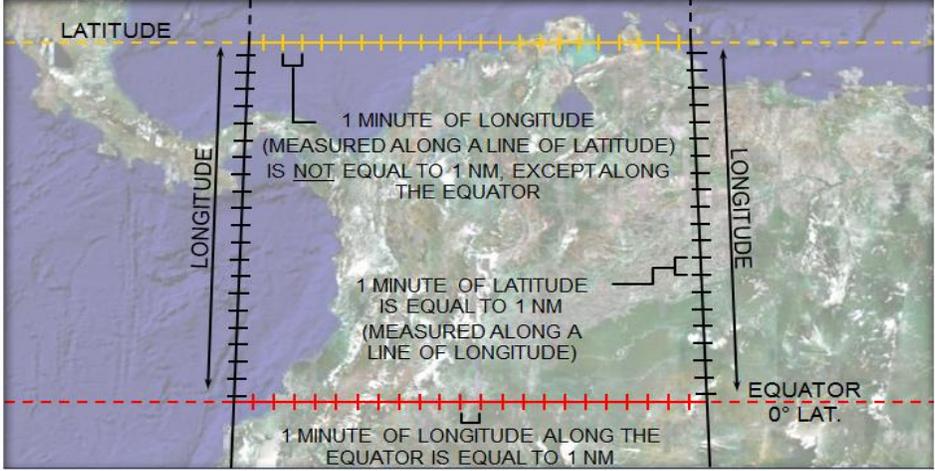


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## Coordinates and Measurement



**Measurement of Distance**

[LEARN MORE](#)

Because of the geographic location of the U.S., to determine any location on any U.S. chart, latitude readings increase from bottom to top, and longitude readings increase from right to left.

- Therefore, in the United States, latitude/longitude is read from bottom to top, right to left.

**Example:** 29°40'16"N, 45°30'15"W indicates 29 degrees, 40 minutes, 16 seconds north latitude, 45 degrees, 30 minutes, 15 seconds west longitude.

Longitude **cannot** be used as a scale to measure distance except at the equator.

- One minute of longitude along the equator is equal to 1 nautical mile.
- Meridians converge toward the poles.
  - Distance between lines changes.

Coordinates in ATC:

- Are written without degrees or minute symbols
- Do not include seconds

**Example:** 3427N10536W

*Note: Some publications list latitude/longitude using the system decimal.*

**Example:** 34-27.73N 105-36.93W

References:

- FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14
- FAA-H-8083-25 “An Invitation to Fly,” Chap. 11

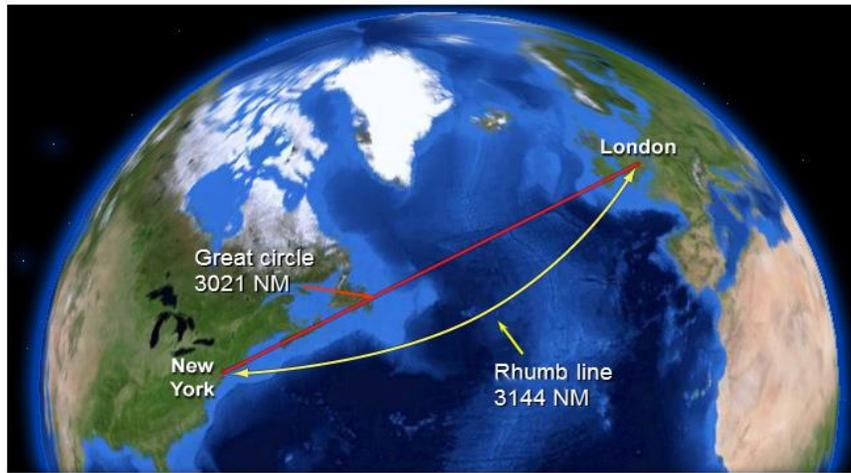


# Navigation Routes

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## Great Circle Route/Rhumb Line



A great circle route is the shortest distance between two points on a sphere, such as the earth.

- Most direct route over the earth's surface
- Saves time and fuel
- Crosses every meridian at a different angle (constantly changing true direction)

"An Invitation to Fly," Chap. 11



# Navigation Routes

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## Rhumb Line Route

A rhumb line is a line which makes the same angle with each meridian of longitude and is longer than a great circle route.

- An aircraft holding a constant heading would be flying a rhumb line.
- Requires more time and fuel because of the greater distance traveled
- Is easier to navigate because its direction remains constant

*NOTE: A great circle route adjusts to the curvature of the earth, the rhumb line does not.*

"An Invitation to Fly," Chap. 11





## Time, Speed, and Distance Measurement

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### Measurement of Distance

#### Nautical Mile (NM):

- The NM must be used for all mileages in Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) planning and operations. It is also used in conjunction with federal airways and is used for aircraft separation rules.
- 1 NM is equal to:
  - 6,076.1 feet (Most references show 6,080 feet)
  - 1.15 statute miles
  - 1 minute of latitude

#### Statute Mile (SM)

- The SM is always used in conjunction with visibility.
- 1 SM is equal to:
  - 5,280 feet
  - 0.87NM

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FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14





# Time, Speed, and Distance Measurement

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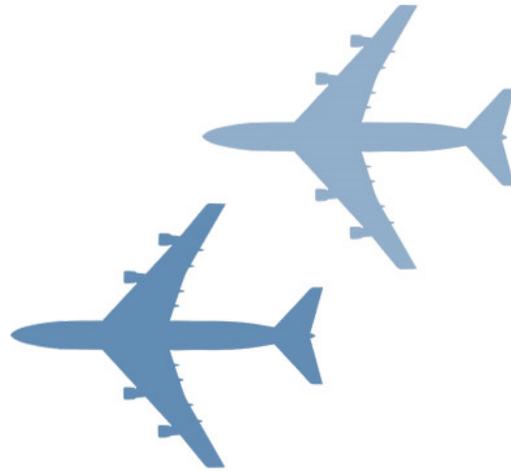
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## Measurement of Speed

### Knot (KT)

- 1NM per hour
- NMs and KTs are universal in ATC.

FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14





## Time and Distance Measurement

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### Coordinated Universal Time (UTC)



The local standard time at Greenwich, England is the time reference used in aviation operations throughout the world.

[LEARN MORE](#)

#### Measurements of Time

In this section, three measurements of time will be presented.

- Coordinated Universal Time (UTC)
- 24-hour clock
- Time Zones

#### Coordinated Universal Time (UTC)

- Also referred to as “Zulu” time when ATC procedures require a reference to UTC
- Used by the FAA for all operations, however, VFR pilots may use local time
- Eliminates confusion caused by different local times

#### References:

- AIM, Chap. 4
- FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14

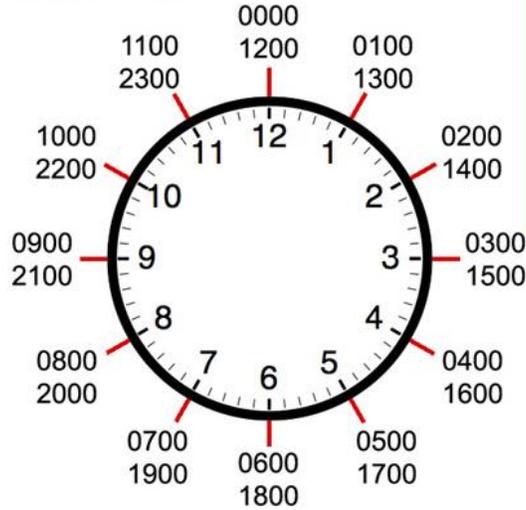


# Time and Distance Measurement

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## 24-Hour Clock



**24-hour clock**

- Avoids confusion between A.M. and P.M.
- Expressed using four digits

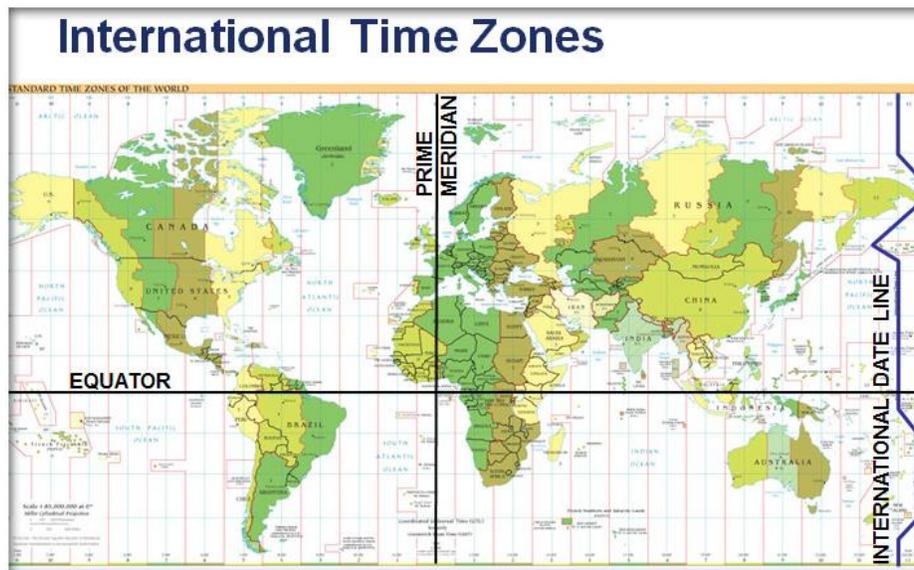
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## Time and Distance Measurement

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Time Zones

[LEARN MORE](#)

- The earth is divided into 24 standard time zones beginning at 0° longitude.
- Each zone is 15° of longitude wide starting at the Prime Meridian, with some variation due to geographical boundary considerations.
- Time in each zone is called Local Standard Time/Daylight Savings Time (LST/DST).

There are four standard time zones in the contiguous U.S.

- Eastern
- Central
- Mountain
- Pacific

Reference: FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14

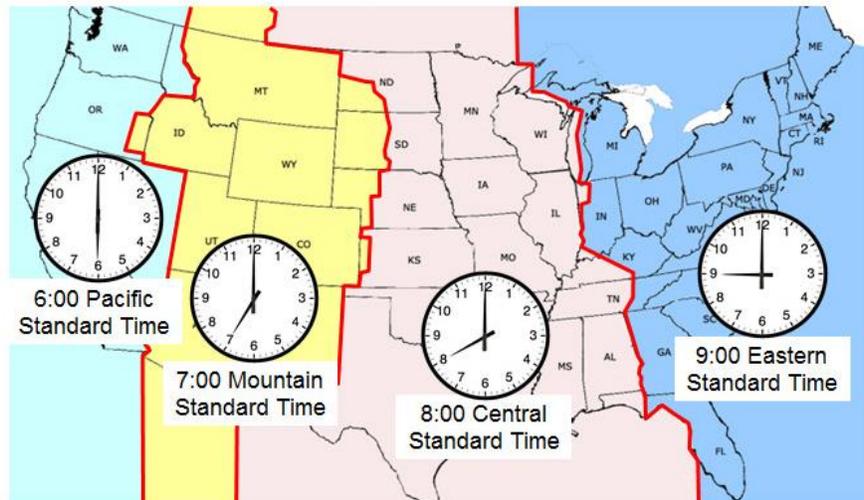


## Time Conversion

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### U.S. Time Zones



Time Conversion Factor

[LEARN MORE](#)

### U.S. Time Conversion Factors

- Eastern Standard Time, +5 hours
- Central Standard Time, +6 hours
- Mountain Standard Time, +7 hours
- Pacific Standard Time, +8 hours
- Alaska Standard Time, +9 hours
- Hawaii Standard Time, +10 hours

If Daylight Savings Time is in effect, subtract 1 hour from conversion.

To convert from LST to UTC:

- First convert to 24-hour clock
- Determine appropriate conversion factor and apply

**NOTE:** DST starts at 2 A.M. the second Sunday in March, and ends at 2 A.M. on the first Sunday in November. Some locations do not switch to DST.

Reference: FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14



# Time Conversion

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## Standard Time Conversion Example

11:00 A.M. Central Standard Time  
+ 6 hours conversion factor

---

1700Z in Greenwich, England

9:00 P.M. Central Standard Time  
+ 6 hours conversion factor

---

0300Z on the following day in  
Greenwich, England

## Daylight Time Conversion Example

11:00 A.M. Central Daylight Time  
+ 5 hours conversion factor

---

1600Z in Greenwich, England

9:00 P.M. Central Daylight Time  
+ 5 hours conversion factor

---

0200Z on the following day in  
Greenwich, England

### Time Conversion Factor

- To convert from UTC to LST:
  - Subtract conversion factor from UTC
  - Add 1 additional hour to your LST if DST is in effect

FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14



# Types Of Speed

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## Types of Speed

1. Indicated Airspeed (IAS)
2. True Airspeed (TAS)
3. Ground Speed (GS)
4. Mach Number (MACH)

There are four types of speeds used in aviation:

- Indicated Airspeed (IAS)
  - Shown on the aircraft's airspeed indicator
  - Used in pilot/controller communications
- True Airspeed (TAS)
  - Relative to undisturbed air mass
  - Used in:
    - Flight planning
    - En route portion of flight
  - If used in pilot/controller communications, referred to as "TRUE AIRSPEED." It is not shortened to "airspeed."

### Ground Speed (GS)

- The speed of an aircraft relative to the surface of the earth is true airspeed corrected for the effects of wind.

### Mach number

- Ratio of true airspeed to the speed of sound, expressed in decimal form
- Mach 0.82 or Mach 1.6

JO 7110.65, Pilot/Controller Glossary

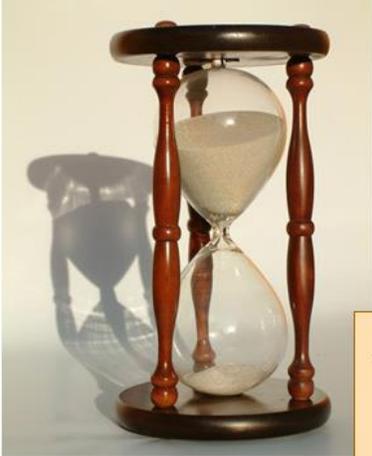
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## Time, Speed, And Distance Computation

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### Time Formula


$$\text{TIME} = \frac{\text{DISTANCE}}{\text{SPEED}}$$

**Time Formula**

Example: An airplane flew from OKC to ICT a distance of 150 miles at an average speed of 60 KTS. How long would it take?

Time = Distance ÷ Speed / 150 ÷ 60 = 2.5 hours

LEARN MORE

**Time** = Distance divided by Ground Speed ( $T = D \div GS$ )

- Time is measured in hours and minutes and must be converted to decimals in order to apply this formula. Divide minutes by 60 to get the decimal equivalent of hours and minutes.

**NOTE:** 2.5 hours is expressed as 2+30 in ATC.

Reference: FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14

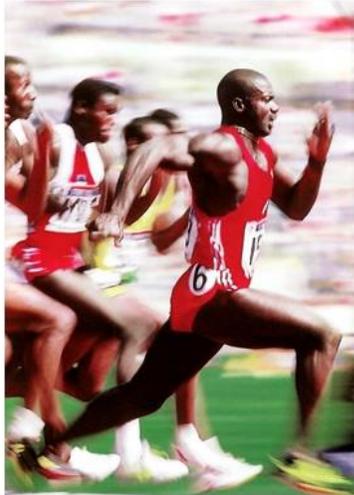


# Time, Speed, And Distance Computation

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## Speed Formula



$$\text{SPEED} = \frac{\text{DISTANCE}}{\text{TIME}}$$

Example: An aircraft flew a distance of 140 miles in 3 hours and 30 minutes (3.5 hours). What was the aircraft's speed?  
Speed = Distance ÷ time / 140 ÷ 3.5 = 40 KTS.

Speed Formula

Speed = Distance divided by Time (S = D ÷ T)

FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14



# Time, Speed, And Distance Computation

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## Distance Formula

$$\text{DISTANCE} = \text{SPEED} \times \text{TIME}$$



Example: An aircraft flew at a speed of 60 KTS for 2 hours and 15 minutes (2.25 hours). How far did the aircraft fly?

Distance = Speed x Time /  $60 \times 2.25 = 135$  miles

### Distance Formula

Distance = Speed multiplied by time ( $D = S \times T$ )

FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14



## Time, Speed, And Distance Computation

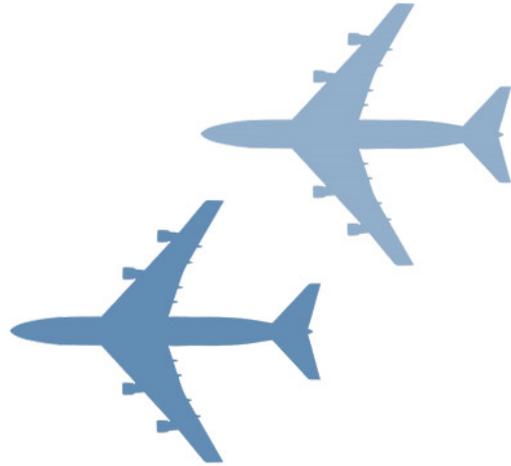
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### Additional Information

Remember that only like units can be used together in a formula.

- If you use NMs, you must use KTs.
- If you use SM, you must use MPH.
- If you use hours, you will get units per hour, and if you use minutes you will get units per minute, etc.



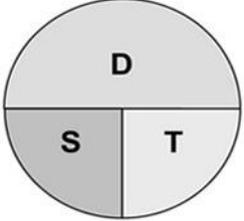

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## Time, Speed, And Distance Computation

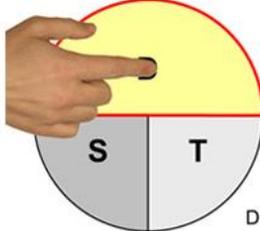
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**Finger Formula**



D = DISTANCE  
S = SPEED  
T = TIME

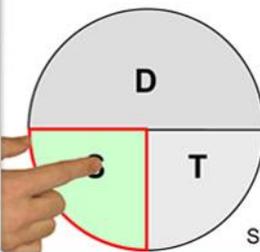
**Finger Formula**



D = DISTANCE  
S = SPEED  
T = TIME

DISTANCE = SPEED x TIME

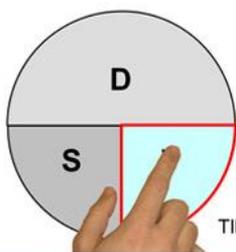
**Finger Formula**



D = DISTANCE  
S = SPEED  
T = TIME

SPEED = DISTANCE ÷ TIME

**Finger Formula**



D = DISTANCE  
S = SPEED  
T = TIME

TIME = DISTANCE ÷ SPEED

LEARN MORE

### Finger Formula

The following “finger formula” is helpful in remembering this relationship: Place a finger over the unknown you wish to find and read the correct formula.

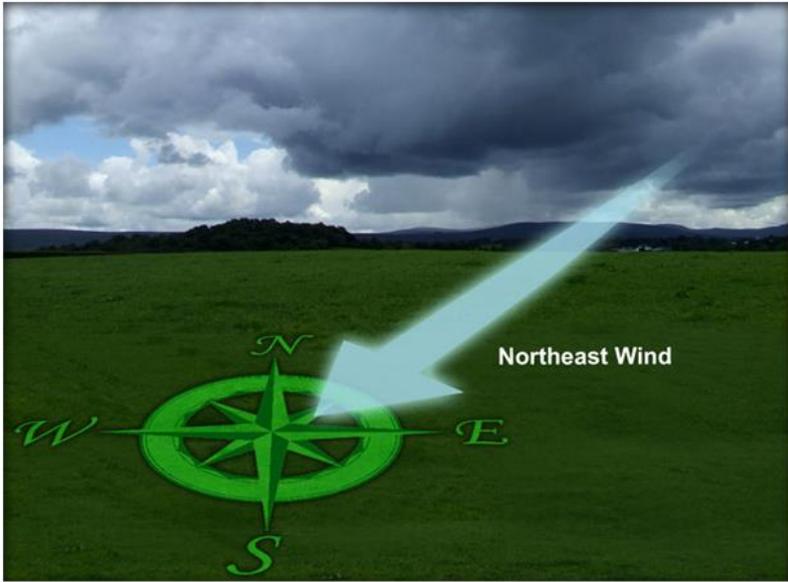
- Place finger over T and read D/S or Distance/Speed.
- Place finger over S and read D/T or Distance/Time.
- Place finger over D and read S x T or Speed x Time.

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## Factors Affecting Navigation

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Wind

LEARN MORE

Wind is a mass of air moving over the earth's surface in a definite direction.

- Wind is stated to include the following:
  - Direction from which the wind is blowing
  - Velocity in knots

**Example:** A wind report of 04025 is coming **from** 040 degrees at 25 knots.

Reference: FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14

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## Factors Affecting Navigation

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The diagram illustrates three scenarios of an aircraft's flight relative to wind conditions. In each scenario, the aircraft's True Airspeed is 120 KTS. A vertical red line marks the aircraft's position, and a yellow arrow indicates the resulting Ground Speed.

- TAIL WIND:** AIR MOVING 20 KNOTS. The aircraft's True Airspeed is 120 KTS. The Ground Speed is 140 KNOTS.
- NO WIND:** AIR NOT MOVING. The aircraft's True Airspeed is 120 KTS. The Ground Speed is 120 KNOTS.
- HEAD WIND:** AIR MOVING 20 KNOTS. The aircraft's True Airspeed is 120 KTS. The Ground Speed is 100 KNOTS.

LEARN MORE

### Ground Speed vs. True Airspeed

- Wind does **not** affect true airspeed.
- Wind does affect ground speed.
  - Increased by tailwind
  - Reduced by headwind
- Crosswind affects speed and direction of flight.

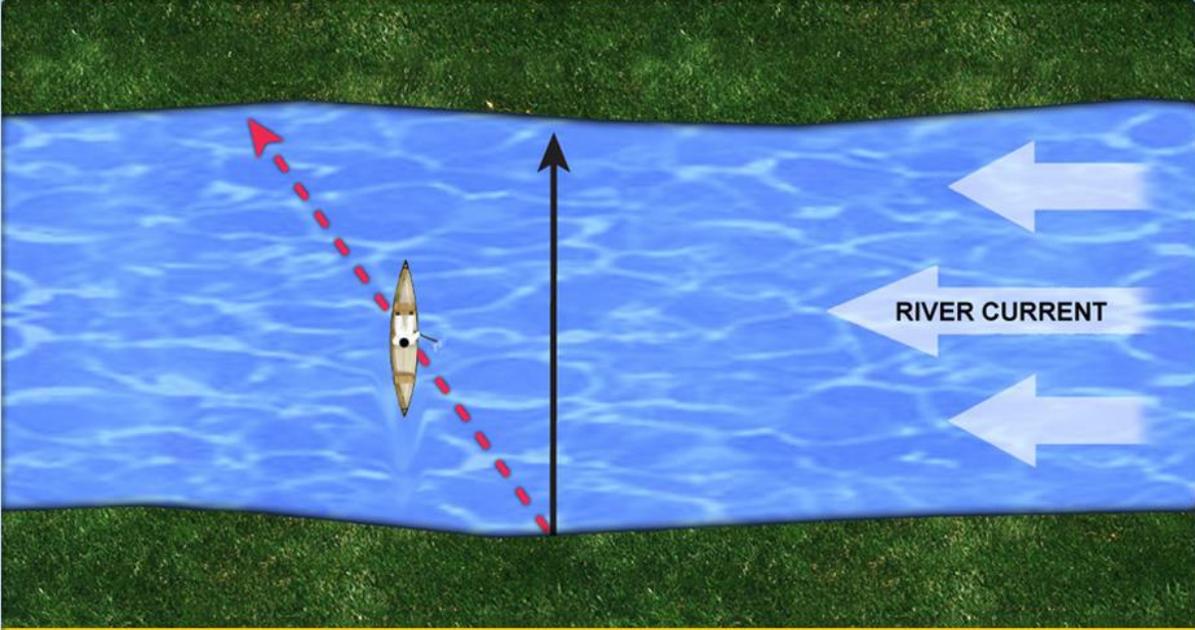
Reference: FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14

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## Factors Affecting Navigation

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Effect of Drift

LEARN MORE

An aircraft's movement over the ground is comparable to a boat crossing a river.

- If there is no current in the river, a boat starting at one shore of the river and rowing perpendicular to the river's edge would end up at a point on the opposite shore directly across from its starting point.
- However, if there is a current, the boat will be carried downstream until the boat eventually reaches the opposite shore.
- The displacement of the boat downstream is dependent upon the:
  - Direction and speed of the river current
  - Direction the boat is headed
  - Speed of the boat through the water

Reference: FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14

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## Factors Affecting Navigation

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DEPARTURE DESTINATION

WIND 360° / 20 KT

TRUE COURSE (TC)

DRIFT ANGLE

TRACK (TR)

WIND

Effects of Wind on True Course, Track, and Drift Angle

LEARN MORE

True course represents the intended path of the aircraft over the earth's surface.

Track is the actual path that the aircraft has flown over the earth's surface.

Drift angle is what any free object will do as the air moves downwind with the speed of the wind.

- This is just as true of an aircraft as it is of a balloon.
- In one hour, an aircraft drifts downwind an amount equal to wind speed.

References:

- FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14
- FAA-H-8083-25 "An Invitation to Fly," Chap. 12

AIR TRAFFIC BASICS | Lesson 15: Basic Navigation

ALL LESSONS FRAME: 30

**Factors Affecting Navigation**

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TRUE HEADING IS TRUE COURSE (TC) CORRECTED FOR WIND DRIFT

*WITHOUT* correction for crosswind drift effect

AIRCRAFT HEADING 090

WIND

10° DRIFT ANGLE

090° TRUE COURSE (TC)

ACTUAL TRACK 100°

DESTINATION

*With* correction for crosswind drift effect

AIRCRAFT HEADING 080°

10° WIND CORRECTION ANGLE

090° TRUE COURSE (TC)

ACTUAL TRACK 090

DESTINATION

TH = TC +/- WIND CORRECTION ANGLE (WCA)  
TH = 090° - 10 (LEFT CORRECTION) = 080°

Effects of Wind on True Heading and Drift Angle

LEARN MORE

True Heading (TH) is True Course (TC) corrected for wind ( $TC \pm WCA = TH$ ).

- The pilot attempts to fly True Course.
- The wind pushes aircraft off course.
- The track over ground is not a desired one.
- The difference is called drift angle.

To compensate, pilots correct heading toward direction from which wind is coming.

- Right or left of true course
- The resulting angle is Wind Correction Angle (WCA).
- The resulting heading is called the True Heading (TH).

It is the controller's responsibility to compensate for wind speed and direction when:

- Formulating estimates
- Issuing radar vectors

References:

- FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14
- FAA-H-8083-25 "An Invitation to Fly," Chap. 12

The diagram illustrates the relationship between altitude, air density, and speed. It features three horizontal arrows pointing to the right, set against a background of a blue sky and ocean. The top arrow is red and labeled 'FL350' on the left, 'Higher altitude, less dense air' in a white box in the middle, and '275 KTS Indicated' in a white box on the right. The middle arrow is yellow and labeled '450 KTS True Airspeed' in a white box in the middle. The bottom arrow is white and labeled 'Sea Level' in a yellow box on the left and '450 KTS Indicated' in a yellow box on the right. Below the arrows, the word 'Speed' is centered. At the bottom of the diagram, there is a 'LEARN MORE' button.

Pilots use performance tables to calculate their true airspeed from power settings, altitude, and temperature.

- Calculating the wind's effect on true airspeed gives the pilot groundspeed, which is then used to determine:
  - Time en route
  - Estimated Time of Arrival (ETA)

More importantly to a controller, for a constant true airspeed, the indicated airspeed decreases with increases in altitude and temperature.

- Because speeds assigned by ATC are expressed as knots of indicated airspeed, controllers need to be aware of the possible differences between true airspeed and indicated airspeed.

References:

- FAA-H-8083-25, Chaps. 6, 9
- FAA-H-8083-25 "An Invitation to Fly," Chap. 4



## Effects Of Altitude And Temperature On Speed

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### Effects Of Altitude On Speed

- In the less dense air at higher altitudes, fewer air molecules enter the aircraft's pitot tube, resulting in a lower indicated airspeed reading.
- At altitudes near sea level, there is little discernable difference between an aircraft's true airspeed and its indicated airspeed.
- At high altitudes, an aircraft's indicated airspeed is significantly lower than its true airspeed.

AIM, Chap. 4; "An Invitation to Fly," Chap. 4





## Effects Of Altitude And Temperature On Speed

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### Effects Of Temperature On Speed

As it does with increasing altitude, air becomes less dense as temperature increases.

- As a result, an increase in temperature has the same effect on speed as an increase in altitude.
- Unlike the effects of altitude on speed, the difference between indicated airspeed and true airspeed caused by changes in temperature are relatively small and are less significant to a controller.

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"An Invitation to Fly," Chap. 4



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## Magnetic Variation and Deviation

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Geographic (True) North Pole

Magnetic North Pole

17°

Easterly variation

Westerly variation

20° 15° 10° 5° 0° 5° 10° 15° 20°

20° 15° 10° 5° 0°

Isogonic line

Agonic line

**Magnetic Variation**

LEARN MORE

Variation is the angular difference between true north and magnetic north.

- Variation is measured in degrees from true north.
- The magnetic north pole is located 1,300 miles from the true north pole, and is always moving.
- Isogonic lines connect points of equal difference between true and magnetic north.
  - Agonic line connects points of zero variation.
  - There is only one agonic line.

Reference: FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14



## Magnetic Variation and Deviation

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**Example:** "FLY HEADING TWO FOUR ZERO."

"TURN RIGHT HEADING ONE TWO FIVE."

### Magnetic Variation

#### Application

- The agonic line, zero variation, no correction is necessary.
- The isogonic lines, east/west variation, correction is necessary.
  - For east variation, subtract degrees of variation.
  - For west variation, add degrees of variation.
- Magnetic Heading (MH) is True Heading (TH) corrected for variation ( $TH \pm VAR = MH$ ).
- Magnetic directions are usually used in pilot and controller communications.
  - Exception:
    - Wind in weather reports and forecasts are given in reference to true north.

JO 7110.65, Chap. 5 FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION AIR TRAFFIC BASICS | Lesson 15: Basic Navigation

ALL LESSONS FRAME: 36

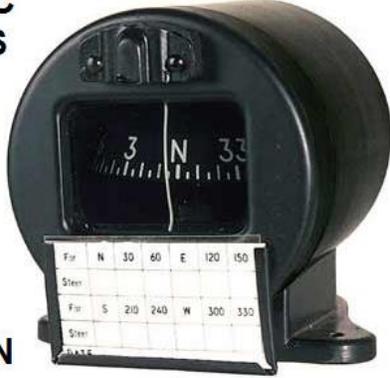
## Magnetic Variation and Deviation

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### Deviation

The error of a magnetic compass due to magnetic influence in the structure and equipment of the aircraft

**MAGNETIC COMPASS**



**DEVIATION CARD**

Is affected by:

- Electrical system
- Engine
- Aircraft structure
- Miscellaneous equipment near compass, etc.

LEARN MORE

### Magnetic Deviation

- Magnetic compass error may change as the aircraft heading changes.
- Results from magnetic influences within aircraft:
  - Electrical circuits
  - Engine
  - Other magnetized parts
- Deviation card is mounted near the compass.
  - Lists corrections
- Compass Heading (CH) is the Magnetic Heading (MH) corrected for deviation ( $MH \pm DEV = CH$ ).

Reference: FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14



## Basic Navigation Methods

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### Dead Reckoning

Dead reckoning is navigation of an airplane solely by means of computations based on airspeed, course, heading, wind direction, and speed, groundspeed, and elapsed time.

Dead reckoning is the basic method of navigation used for flying a predetermined course taking into account the effects of wind on:

- Track
- Ground speed

Apply wind correction to true course to determine:

- True heading
- Ground speed

Using the appropriate corrections, pilots can estimate how long to fly on certain headings to arrive over their destination.

- This can be done with or without reference to the ground.

FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14 AIM, Pilot/Controller Glossary





# Basic Navigation Methods

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## Pilot's Planning Sheet

In flight planning, aviation charts are used to plot and determine the following:

- True course
- Distance
- Variation

FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14

PILOT'S PLANNING SHEET														
PLANE IDENTIFICATION <i>N123DB</i>										DATE <i>11-22-96</i>				
COURSE	TC	WIND		WCA	TH	VAR	MH	DEV	CH	TOTAL MILES	GS	TOTAL TIME	FUEL RATE	TOTAL FUEL
		KNOTS	FROM	R+ L-		W+ E-								
From: <i>Chickasha</i>	<i>031°</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>360°</i>	<i>3' L</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>6° E</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>+2</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>106 kts</i>	<i>35 mins</i>	<i>8 GPH</i>	<i>38 gal</i>
To:														
To:														



## Basic Navigation Methods

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Pilotage

[LEARN MORE](#)

The determination of position by identification of landmarks from their representation on a chart.

- Pilot draws course line on chart from selected checkpoints and prominent landmarks.
- Pilot flies from landmark to landmark by visual references.
- Useful only in VFR weather
- Pilotage is the basic form of navigation for a beginning pilot.
- It is suitable for slow aircraft flying close to the ground.

References:

FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14

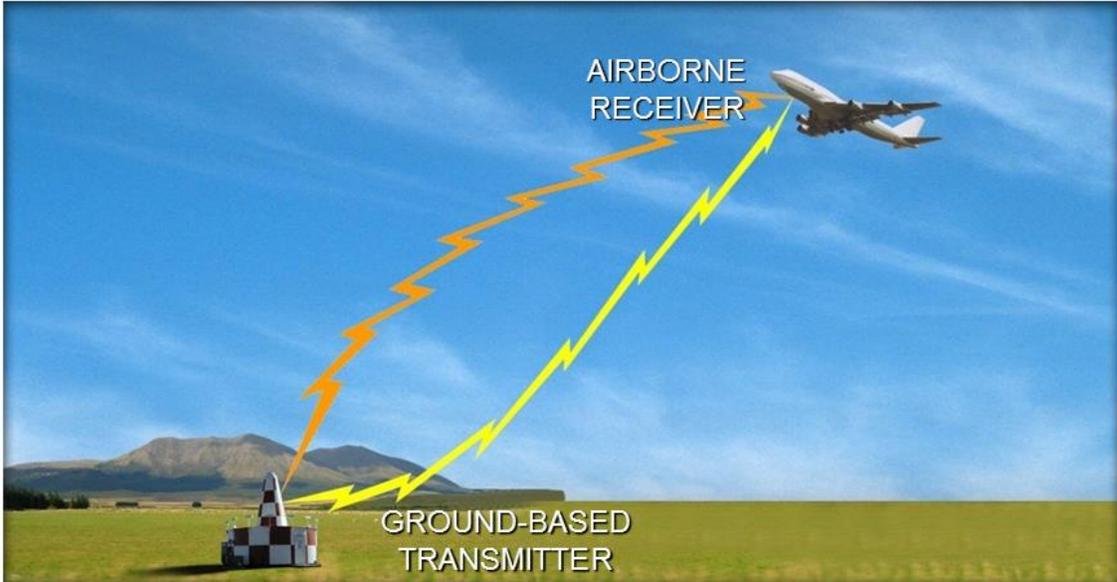
FAA-H-8083-25 "An Invitation to Fly," Chap. 12

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION AIR TRAFFIC BASICS | Lesson 15: Basic Navigation

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## Basic Navigation Methods

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AIRBORNE RECEIVER

GROUND-BASED TRANSMITTER

Radio Navigation

LEARN MORE

**Radio navigation** is a method of determining and maintaining a desired course or determining an aircraft's position by use of radio navigation aids on the ground.

When a pilot flies from one point to another with the use of radio aids, radio navigation allows navigation over areas with too few landmarks for pilotage.

- Radio navigation can also be used as an aid in verifying an aircraft's position when navigating primarily by pilotage or dead reckoning.
- Requirements for radio navigation include:
  - Ground-based transmitters
  - Appropriate navigation receivers in the aircraft
  - Receivers and instrument displays in aircraft
  - Charts and publications
  - Additional pilot training

Reference: FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14



# Basic Navigation Methods

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## Radio Navigation

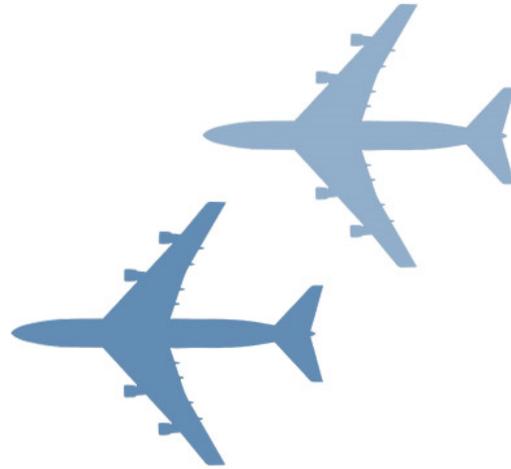
### Advantages

- All weather navigation capability
- Allows instrument approaches and landings:
  - At night
  - During bad weather

### Disadvantages

- Relies on aircraft and ground equipment that is subject to:
  - Malfunction
  - Interference

FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14





## Area Navigation (RNAV)

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**Area Navigation (RNAV) - A method of navigation which permits aircraft operation on any desired flight path within the coverage of ground- or space-based navigation aids or within the limits of the capability of self contained aids, or a combination of these.**

**RNAV uses random area navigation routes to allow a pilot to fly a direct course to his or her destination without needing to overfly a ground-based navigation aid.**

**IFR flight using random RNAV routes can only be approved in a radar environment, and ATC must provide radar monitoring (except Alaska).**

**Fixed RNAV published (T and Q) routes can be flight planned for aircraft with RNAV capability as well as departures, arrivals, and approach procedures.**

**RNAV equipment provides pilots with computed "waypoints" on the direct route the pilot has entered into the system. The pilot flies to these waypoints as if each were a ground-based NAVAID.**

AIM, Chap. 5, 7110.65 Chap.4, Pilot/Controller Glossary; JO 7400.2, Chap. 20



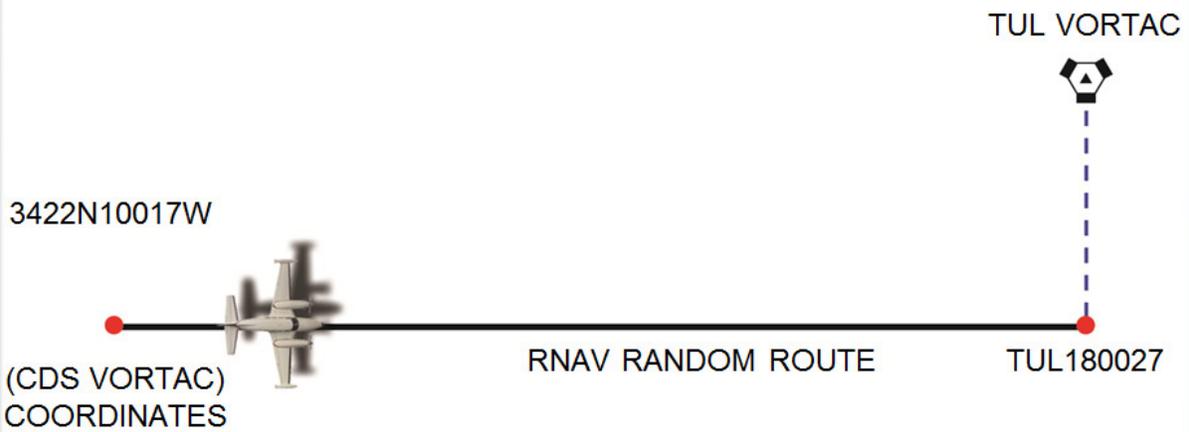


# Basic Navigation Methods

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## Waypoint



These waypoints are provided to ATC in the flight plan as coordinates of latitude and longitude or as a degree and distance fixes from established fixes.

AIM, Chap. 5

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION AIR TRAFFIC BASICS | Lesson 15: Basic Navigation

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## Basic Navigation Methods

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The diagram illustrates satellite navigation. A Communication Satellite (left) and three GPS Satellites (top) are shown in orbit. A Ground Earth Station (bottom left) is on the ground. A red beam connects the Communication Satellite to the Ground Earth Station. Yellow beams connect the GPS Satellites to an airplane in the sky. The text 'Satellite Navigation' is centered below the diagram, and a 'LEARN MORE' button is at the bottom.

Communication Satellite

GPS Satellites

Ground Earth Station

Satellite Navigation

LEARN MORE

The Global Positioning System (GPS) allows anyone with a proper receiver to determine his or her position instantaneously, with near pinpoint accuracy.

- Anywhere on the earth

GPS is based on:

- A constellation of 24 operational satellites, and several spares
- A series of earth-monitoring stations
- Receivers on the ground which use the satellites as precise reference points to triangulate their position

The advantages of GPS are:

- Provides accurate information 24 hours a day
- Is unaffected by the weather

Reference: FAA-H-8083-25, Chap. 14



# Conclusion

BACK

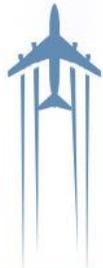
NEXT

## Lesson Summary



### This lesson covered:

- Reference Lines
- Latitude and Longitude
- Coordinates and Measurement
- Navigation Routes
- Time, Speed, and Distance Measurement
- Time Conversion
- Types of Speed
- Time, Speed, and Distance Computation
- Factors Affecting Navigation
- Effects of Altitude and Temperature on Speed
- Magnetic Variation and Deviation





# Resources

BACK

[Click here to access all the Appendices for Lesson 15.](#)

