ENGLISH STORY PODCAST

English at the Airport

Check-in, security, and boarding phrases you need

EPISODE 09 | LEVEL A2-B1

Listen and read with Mia and Jake. Then practise useful English for check-in, security, boarding, delays, and finding your gate.

Today's Small Win
Choose a place and say: “I'm flying to Chicago.” Then add: “I'd like a window seat, please.”

Episode Guide

What you will learn

• How to check in and talk about your luggage.

• How to understand security instructions.

• How to ask for your gate and understand a delay.

• Useful phrases for boarding and speaking on the plane.

Word Box

luggage	the bags and suitcases you take on a trip
boarding pass	the paper or phone ticket that lets you board
gate	the airport door where you wait for your flight
delay	when something happens later than planned

Say It Like This

“I'm flying to Chicago.”

“Could you tell me where the gate is?”

“Is this the right gate for Chicago?”

“What time does boarding start?”

“Excuse me, my flight is delayed. What should I do?”

Listen & Read Transcript

Read along while you listen. Audio-performance tags have been removed for easier reading.

JAKE	Mia, wait. Where is my passport?
MIA	It's in your hand, Jake.
JAKE	Oh. Okay. Now I'm ready for the airport.
MIA	Hello everyone, and welcome to the English Story Podcast. I'm Mia.
JAKE	And I'm Jake, the man who almost lost his passport.
MIA	Today we're learning English at the airport. You will hear the exact words you need at check in, at security, and at the gate.
JAKE	By the end of this episode, you'll be able to ask for help, understand the announcements, and feel calm at the airport, even if English is not your first language.
MIA	And before we start, a quick tip. You can read the full transcript of this episode on our website, and listen to the audio while you read. The link is in the description, along with our free ebooks.
JAKE	Lots of valuable help, and all of it is free. So make yourself comfortable, get a cup of tea, and just listen to us talk.
MIA	Let's start with a small truth. Airports can feel stressful. There are many signs, many people, and many fast announcements.
JAKE	But the English you need is actually small and repeated. The same short sentences appear again and again.
MIA	Exactly. So if you learn a few of them, the airport becomes much easier.
JAKE	Okay, it's time for our Word Box. These are four useful words for today. Listen, and then repeat after us.
MIA	The first word is luggage. Luggage is all the bags and suitcases that you take on a trip.
JAKE	Luggage. For example, my luggage is very heavy.
MIA	The next word is boarding pass. A boarding pass is the paper or the phone ticket that lets you get on the plane.
JAKE	Boarding pass. For example, please show your boarding pass at the gate.
MIA	The next word is gate. A gate is the door in the airport where you wait for your plane.
JAKE	Gate. For example, our flight leaves from gate twelve.

MIA	And the last word is delay. A delay is when something happens later than planned.
JAKE	Delay. For example, there is a delay, so the plane leaves one hour late.
MIA	Let's say them one more time. Luggage.
JAKE	Luggage.
MIA	Boarding pass.
JAKE	Boarding pass.
MIA	Gate.
JAKE	Gate.
MIA	Delay.
JAKE	Delay.
JAKE	Great job, everyone. You will hear these words again in the story.
MIA	Now let's go to the airport. First, we are at the check in desk. I will be the airline agent, and Jake will be the traveler. Are you ready, Jake?
JAKE	Ready. I have my passport, and it is in my hand.
MIA	Wonderful. Let's begin.
MIA	Good morning. Where are you flying today?
JAKE	Good morning. I'm flying to Chicago.
MIA	Great. May I see your passport, please?
JAKE	Sure. Here you are.
MIA	Thank you. Are you checking any bags today?
JAKE	Yes, I have one suitcase. And I have this small bag, which I want to take with me on the plane.
MIA	That's fine. Please put your suitcase on the scale. It is twenty kilos, so there is no problem.
JAKE	Good. I was a little worried.
MIA	Would you like a window seat or an aisle seat?

JAKE	A window seat, please. I love looking at the clouds.
MIA	No problem. Here is your boarding pass. Your flight number is two one seven, and your gate is gate twelve. Boarding starts at four forty.
JAKE	Gate twelve, and boarding is at four forty. Thank you. Could you tell me where security is?
MIA	Yes. Go straight, and then turn left. You will see the signs.
JAKE	Thank you very much.
MIA	Have a nice flight.
JAKE	Let's pause for a moment. Did you notice how short and clear the sentences were?
MIA	Yes. And Jake used some very useful ones. "I'm flying to Chicago." And, "Could you tell me where security is?"
JAKE	Notice that after "Could you tell me," we say "where security is." We do not say, "where is security."
MIA	That's a very good tip. In a polite question, the word order is a little different. "Where is the gate?" becomes, "Could you tell me where the gate is?"
JAKE	Both are correct. The second one is just softer and more polite.
MIA	Now, let's go to security. Jake is in the line, and the officer is waiting.
MIA	Good morning. Please put your bag and your laptop in the tray. And please take off your shoes and your jacket.
JAKE	Okay. Do I need to take out my liquids?
MIA	Yes. Please put them in this clear bag. Any small bottles go in here.
JAKE	Here you are. I only have a small bottle of water, and I'm sorry, it's almost full.
MIA	That's a problem. Liquids must be small at security. You can drink it now, or you can throw it away.
JAKE	I'll drink it now. It's a very good bottle of water.
MIA	Thank you. Now please walk through here, with your hands down.
JAKE	Like this?
MIA	Yes, that's perfect. You can take your things from the tray. Thank you, and have a nice day.
JAKE	Thank you. You too.
MIA	And now we are at the gate. A voice speaks over the speaker.

MIA	Attention, please. Passengers on flight two one seven to Chicago. Your flight is delayed by forty minutes. The new boarding time is five twenty. We are sorry for the delay.
JAKE	Oh, a delay. Excuse me, could I ask a question? Is this the right gate for Chicago?
MIA	Yes, this is gate twelve. You are in the right place.
JAKE	And what time does boarding start now?
MIA	Boarding starts at five twenty. You can sit over there, and wait. There is also a coffee shop nearby, if you are hungry.
JAKE	Thank you. That's helpful. I am a little hungry.
MIA	Of course you are.
JAKE	Let's stop here. Did you notice the new word? Delayed. The flight is delayed. That means it's late.
MIA	And the useful question was, "What time does boarding start now?" You can use it every time there's a change.
JAKE	Also, remember the polite openers. "Excuse me." "Could I ask a question?" They help you start a conversation kindly.
MIA	Now let's get on the plane. The flight attendant is walking through the plane with a small cart.
MIA	Good afternoon. Would you like something to drink?
JAKE	Yes, please. Could I have some orange juice?
MIA	Of course. Here you are. And would you like chicken or pasta for lunch?
JAKE	Pasta, please. Thank you.
MIA	You're welcome. Please keep your seat belt fastened while you are sitting.
JAKE	Okay. Excuse me, could I have a blanket? I'm a little cold.
MIA	Yes, of course. I'll bring one in a moment.
JAKE	Thank you very much. You are very kind.
MIA	Notice how Jake used the same kind words again. "Could I have," and "please," and "thank you."
JAKE	Yes. These small phrases work everywhere. At a hotel, at a restaurant, and on a plane.
MIA	A few hours later, the plane lands. Jake walks to the baggage claim, which is the place where you pick up your luggage. He waits, and waits. And then he sees his suitcase on the belt.

JAKE	There it is. That blue suitcase is mine.
MIA	But imagine that his suitcase did not come. What could he say at the information desk?
JAKE	I think I could say, "Excuse me, my suitcase didn't arrive. Could you help me, please?"
MIA	Perfect. Short, polite, and clear. And the staff will ask for your boarding pass, so keep it with you.
JAKE	And that is a very good travel tip. Keep your boarding pass in a safe place until you finish your trip.
MIA	Now it's time for our segment called Say It Like This.
JAKE	Here are five phrases you can use at any airport. Repeat after us. I'm flying to Chicago.
MIA	I'm flying to Chicago.
JAKE	Could you tell me where the gate is?
MIA	Could you tell me where the gate is?
JAKE	Is this the right gate for Chicago?
MIA	Is this the right gate for Chicago?
JAKE	What time does boarding start?
MIA	What time does boarding start?
JAKE	Excuse me, my flight is delayed. What should I do?
MIA	Excuse me, my flight is delayed. What should I do?
MIA	Very good. Now you have five small phrases, and each one helps you travel with more confidence.
JAKE	And now it's time for our Mini Story. This is a short story with today's new words inside it.
MIA	Our story today is about a man called Ravi. Ravi was flying to visit his grandmother, and he hadn't seen her for two years. He was very excited, and a little nervous.
MIA	At the airport, Ravi checked his luggage, and he got his boarding pass. He looked at it. The gate was gate twelve. He walked to the gate, and he sat down. But a few minutes later, he saw a new sign. The gate had changed.
MIA	Ravi felt worried. He didn't want to miss his flight. He remembered his English lesson, and he asked a woman at the desk, "Excuse me, could you tell me where the new gate is?" The woman smiled and said, "It's gate fifteen, just down the hall."

MIA	Ravi ran, and then he walked, because he was tired of running. At gate fifteen, he heard an announcement. The flight had a delay of twenty minutes. Ravi laughed. He had time for a cup of coffee after all.
MIA	Soon, he boarded the plane. He sat by the window, and he looked at the clouds. And a few hours later, his grandmother was waiting for him, with a very big hug.
JAKE	I love that story. Poor Ravi, running all over the airport.
MIA	And lucky Ravi, with a cup of coffee.
JAKE	Did you notice our words? Luggage, boarding pass, gate, and delay were all in the story.
MIA	That is why we tell stories. When you hear new words inside a story, they are easier to remember.
JAKE	Can you remember what Ravi said to ask for the new gate?
YOUR TURN	Pause and answer aloud.
MIA	He said, "Excuse me, could you tell me where the new gate is?" Short, polite, and perfect.
JAKE	And now it's time for our last segment, called Your Turn.
MIA	Okay, now it's your turn. I will describe a situation, and you will answer in your head, or out loud.
JAKE	Ready. Question one. You are at the check in desk, and the agent asks, "Are you checking any bags today?" What do you say?
YOUR TURN	Pause and answer aloud.
MIA	Here's one idea. "Yes, I have one suitcase."
JAKE	Question two. You want a window seat on the plane. How do you ask?
YOUR TURN	Pause and answer aloud.
MIA	"Could I have a window seat, please?"
JAKE	Question three. You are lost in the airport. You want to find gate twelve. What can you say?
YOUR TURN	Pause and answer aloud.
MIA	"Excuse me, could you tell me where gate twelve is?"
JAKE	Question four. You hear that your flight is delayed. How can you ask about the new time?

YOUR TURN	Pause and answer aloud.
MIA	"What time does boarding start now?"
JAKE	And one last question. Think of the next trip you want to take. Where would you like to fly? How would you say it?
YOUR TURN	Pause and answer aloud.
MIA	If you answered even a little in English, then you just practiced for a real airport. Congratulations.
JAKE	Before we finish, let's remember our four words. Luggage, boarding pass, gate, and delay.
MIA	And our most useful phrase. "Excuse me, could you tell me where the gate is?"
JAKE	And remember, you don't need perfect English at the airport. Short, polite sentences are always enough.
MIA	Before we go, here is Today's Small Win. A small win is a very small task that you can finish today, and it makes you feel good.
JAKE	Today's Small Win is this. Choose one place you would like to visit someday. Then say, out loud, "I'm flying to," and the name of that place. It only takes five seconds.
MIA	And if you want a bigger challenge, add one more sentence. "I'd like a window seat, please."
JAKE	Now, we have a question for you in the comments. Where would you like to fly next? Write one sentence, and start with, "I'm flying to."
MIA	We read the comments, and we love to see your sentences. So please write them, even if you feel shy. You can do it.
JAKE	And remember, you can read the full transcript of this episode on our website, and listen to the audio while you read. The link is in the description, with our free ebooks.
MIA	If this episode helped you today, please give it a like, and share it with a friend who is learning English. And if you haven't subscribed yet, please subscribe to the English Story Podcast, so you can find our next episode.
JAKE	Thank you so much for spending this time with us.
MIA	Keep listening, keep practicing, and remember, your English is already better than it was yesterday.
JAKE	Take care, everyone.
MIA	And Jake, where is your passport?
JAKE	My passport? Wait. Oh, it's in my pocket. Phew.

MIA	Goodbye, and see you in the next episode.

Practice Exercises

1. Match the Airport Word

1. luggage 2. boarding pass 3. gate 4. delay

A. flight leaves later than planned B. bags for a trip C. place where you wait to board D. ticket that lets you board

2. Complete the Airport Sentences

1. I'm _____ to Chicago.

2. Are you checking any _____ today?

3. Here is your boarding _____.

4. Could you tell me where the _____ is?

5. My flight is _____ by forty minutes.

6. Could I have a window _____, please?

3. Build Your Airport Check-in

Good morning. I'm flying to _____.

I have _____ bags.

I'd like a _____ seat, please.

Could you tell me where _____ is?

4. Choose the Best Answer

1. The agent asks about bags.
A. Yes, I have one suitcase. B. Bags there.

2. You want a window seat.
A. Window! B. Could I have a window seat, please?

3. You are lost.
A. Could you tell me where gate twelve is? B. Gate where?

4. Your flight is delayed.
A. What time does boarding start now? B. Why late?

Speaking Practice

5. Practise Your Answers Aloud

1. Tell the agent where you are flying.

2. Say how many bags you are checking.

3. Ask for a window seat.

4. Ask where security is.

5. Ask if this is the right gate.

6. Ask about the new boarding time.

6. Listening Check

1. Where is Jake flying? _____
2. What is his gate number? _____
3. What was the original boarding time? _____
4. What is the new boarding time after the delay? _____

Answer Key & Sample Answers

1. Match the Airport Word

1-B, 2-D, 3-C, 4-A

2. Complete the Airport Sentences

1. flying 2. bags 3. pass 4. gate 5. delayed 6. seat

4. Choose the Best Answer

1-A, 2-B, 3-A, 4-A

6. Listening Check

1. Chicago 2. Gate 12 3. 4:40 4. 5:20

Useful Airport Questions

- Could you tell me where security is?
- Is this the right gate for Chicago?
- What time does boarding start now?
- Could I have a blanket, please?