

LISTENING

TAPESCRIPT

Listen to an airline pilot talking on the radio programme and complete tasks 1, 2 and 3. You will hear the recording twice. You have 50 seconds to look through the task.

P: With me in the studio today, I have Richard, who's a pilot, and he's going to answer some of the most frequently asked questions about flying and air travel.

Hello, Richard.

R: Hello.

P: So Richard, the first question is, what weather conditions are the most dangerous when flying a plane?

R: Probably the most dangerous weather conditions are when the wind changes direction very suddenly. This tends to happen during thunderstorms and typhoons, and it's especially dangerous during take-off and landing, but it's quite unusual. I've been flying for 25 years now and I've only experienced this three or four times.

P: What about turbulence? Is that dangerous?

R: It can be very bumpy and very uncomfortable, but it isn't dangerous. Even strong turbulence won't damage the plane. Pilots always try to avoid turbulence, but it can sometimes occur without any warning, which is why we always advise passengers to wear their seatbelt all the time during the flight.

P: Which is more dangerous, take-off or landing?

R: Both take-off and landing can be dangerous. They are the most dangerous moments of a flight. Pilots talk about the critical eight minutes, the three minutes after take-off and the five minutes before landing. Most accidents happen in this period, but I would say that take-off is probably slightly more dangerous than landing. There is a critical moment just before take-off when the plane is accelerating, but it hasn't yet reached the speed to be able to fly. If the pilot has a problem with the plane at this point, he has very little time, maybe only a second, to abort the take-off.

P: Why are passengers asked to switch off their electronic devices during take-off and landing?

R: It's mainly because they don't want passengers to be distracted in case there's an emergency. It's nothing to do with the devices interfering with aircraft controls. I mean, aircraft control systems are so sophisticated now that they wouldn't cause any interference. Incidentally, that's also the reason why people have to put their tray tables up. If we had to abandon take-off or have an emergency evacuation, a tray table could cause a passenger injury or prevent other passengers from getting out easily.

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P: Is it really worth listening to safety demonstrations?

R: Definitely. I can tell you for a fact that when pilots are passengers in a flight, they always identify the nearest emergency exit and count how many rows in front or behind it is.

P: Do you ever get scared?

R: Hmm, I've been asked this many times and the answer is no, hand on heart. I've been flying since I was 16 and there's never been a single occasion where I felt scared in the air. Bear in mind you've been asking me about dangerous situations, but these are incredibly rare.

P: Thanks very much, Richard.