

| Rank | Question | Rating |
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| | <p>How much flight time should I expect for the average lesson? How much ground time? For an average flight lesson, you can expect about 1 hour of ground training and 1.5 hours of flight training. In the beginning, those will be reversed as there is a lot to explain early and the student can only efficiently absorb about an hour of flight training at first due to data overload. Later the ground will be less and flying more.</p> | |
| | <p>Do you teach your students to control airspeed with pitch or power? Why? An instructor who is foremost concerned with building safe habit patterns into their students flying will teach their students to control altitude with power and not with pitch. This takes a little more time to learn as it means breaking the student's bad habit of treating the throttle like a gas pedal, which invariably leads them into using pitch to fix a low altitude problem, thereby getting them into trouble. I actively teach this, because letting the student "figure it out on their own" invariably leads to the gas pedal problem.</p> | |
| | <p>Who do you use for the flight check when I am ready? Unlike instructors who only teach their students how to pass a particular chief pilot or examiner's check-ride, I like to shuffle through the available FAA Designated Examiners as I think it is important that the student be able to pass any of their check-rides. The primary goal is for the student to be safe and competent, so the check-ride is merely a formality if they are properly trained.</p> | |
| | <p>How much flight time/instruction time do you expect me to need overall? Why? You will have to contact me for a proper answer to this one as it varies widely with each student's situation. The national average of flight time is 75 hours with 2/3 of that with an instructor. There are no statistics on ground instruction time.</p> | |
| | <p>What options do you provide for separate ground study? For those whose schedule allows it, Miramar and Palomar Community Colleges offer an excellent ground school for all levels of training of about \$285. For those who do not wish to wait for the next semester, there are several flight schools that offer less extensive ground schools for \$350-1,000. My students usually opt for the integrated home study option, which I have designed to go hand in hand with the flight training as it is more flexible and tends to stick better and be more useful in actual flight situations – basically a lab class approach.</p> | |
| | <p>Are there any ways in which I can save money? Several: Fly more often, study/fly/review for each lesson, utilize active visualization between every lesson, ask a lot of questions – it is much more cost efficient to learn it well on the ground at \$25/hour than in the air at \$150/hr. Utilize a flight simulator only at the proper time and way to avoid picking up bad habits and build good ones.</p> | |
| | <p>How often do you recommend I fly? Why? For the average student who is working full time or a full time college or high school student, I recommend at least one flight per week, preferably two. The more time between lessons, the more that needs to be reviewed during the next lesson. For the unemployed non-student, every other day would be optimal. A full day is best between lesson both to study and to let the mind/body absorb what is has learned and process it to build neural pathways.</p> | |
| | <p>How many hours experience do you have teaching in small aircraft? Over how many years? Can I see your logbook? I have over 10000 hour dual flight instruction and almost as much ground instruction given. I say over because once an instructor reaches over 3000 hours it is not whether they accrue more hours, but rather whether they continue to work on improving their teaching methods and skills that counts. Frankly, I stopped counting/logging after 3500 hours except as required by regulations since I have no intention of flying for the airlines or corporate.</p> | |

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| | <p>Where do you do your night training flights? Why? For the local night flight I take my students to Montgomery, Brown and Gillespie because it is important that they not only learn to do takeoff and landings at night, but also navigate our complicated local airspace safely at night. For the night cross country flight, I take them to Hemet over both the congested (better lit) coastal route and back over the mountains by Julian so they get a good understanding of the difficulties and how to mitigate the risks of flying over unlit terrain at night.</p> | |
| | <p>What training aids do you employ/recommend as part of your curriculum? Power Point presentations, Flash Cards, Interactive Communications CD, PC based Flight Training device, Full Flight Training Device, and Microsoft Flight Simulator.</p> | |
| | <p>Can you give me a mini ground lesson now? I don't get it. (even if you do) What do you mean? You should determine if the instructor not only explains the "what" and the "how", but also the "why" without being prompted. The why should not be because "that is what is expected on the check-ride." See if they can explain it another way when they you pretend to not understand. A good instructor has multiple ways to explain each lesson, in order to both clarify what they are teaching but also to reinforce it.</p> | |
| | <p>Do you use a syllabus to keep track of your students' progress? Can I view some currently in use and already completed? Always, with notes and subjective progress analysis to ensure that all the important areas are addressed and all weak areas are reinforced. The student gets a copy to keep track of their progress and to know what to expect. Absolutely.</p> | |
| | <p>How many students have you trained for this rating? How many have completed the training? I honestly do not keep count, but it has got to be over a hundred for the private pilot level alone. Approximately 60% of those complete the training in one shot, some who don't come back (sometimes years later) to complete it. The national average is under 40%. Flight training is not inexpensive and "life" happens, interfering with the best laid plans of mice and men.</p> | |
| | <p>What do your students score on the written test? Do you provide objective written testing of study material? My students typically score in the 90's on the FAA written test and are judged well above average by the examiners. I give the students written tests throughout the training as well as more subjective oral quizzing.</p> | |
| | <p>Do you provide stage checks with another instructor? At what levels? With whom? For the private pilot level (single or multi-engine) the student will take stage checks with a senior instructor before solo and before their check-ride. For the instrument level there is no solo flight, so only before the check-ride. The commercial level training is normally so short that only a pre-checkride stage check is needed. At any time if some skill, attitude, habit pattern, or the student's confidence level needs emphasized reinforcement or evaluation, a senior instructor will conduct a limited stage check.</p> | |
| | <p>What do you charge for flight instruction? Ground instruction? How do you calculate instruction time? \$60/hr for flight instruction and \$30/hr for ground instruction. For flights that only involve pre/post-flight discussion, but no dedicated ground training, I only charge for the flight instruction. Flight instruction time is based on the aircraft's Hobbs meter, which stops and starts with the engine. Aircraft rates are listed on the clubs page for plus one. For students that need to schedule flights later in the day (completion planned for after 4:30) or weekends (anytime) my rate is \$10 more/hr for the entire lesson. If a lesson runs long, starts late due to aircraft issues, or is rescheduled to the weekend due to aircraft issues the higher rate does not apply. It also does not apply to the required night and cross country flights as they typically run longer. Basically, I am trying to encourage students to fly during the week/ business hours with a lower rate, rather than penalize them when they cannot.</p> | |

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| | <p>Where do you do your cross-country flight training flights? Why? How many? Why? That will depend on where the student expects or wants to fly in the future and how quickly they acquire the necessary competency. I try to make the training involve Los Angeles' complicated airspace, mountainous terrain, desert flying, over-water flight, and landings at both a major and an uncontrolled airport.</p> | |
| | <p>What is your first time pass/fail rate for this rating? Overall? Last time I calculated it, it was 94% for the private level and 92% overall. The local average is 65% for the private pilot level and is very (unnaturally) consistent across the board for all of the local examiners. Of course, in order to pass, not only does the applicant have to perform every maneuver within standards, but also their judgment and oral knowledge is constantly being evaluated throughout the check-ride. It is no cake walk.</p> | |
| | <p>I understand that all experienced instructors have had students who have failed a check-ride. Why have yours? The toughest thing to teach a student is good judgment. There are ways to organize the student's thought process and to reinforce good judgment. And there are ways to detect and discourage reckless judgment and hazardous thought processes. But, occasionally, the student will make an error in judgment that will affect their flying during the check-ride. And yes, more rarely, I do miss a weakness in a particular area of training.</p> | |
| | <p>What are your goals in terms of your future flying career? When do you expect to be ready to take the next step? I have no aspirations to fly commercially. So, the student need not fear that I will go off to the airlines in the middle of their training. I thoroughly enjoy teaching and flying in small aircraft where I actually get to be on the controls instead of an autopilot. I have already achieved all of the ratings through Airline Transport Pilot, so that I can confidently teach at all levels. So my focus now is solely on improving my instructional skills. I may get my seaplane rating and tail-dragger in the future, but see no advantage to doing so right now.</p> | |
| | <p>Is this your career or do you instruct on the side? This is not only my career but also my profession. I take my job as a teacher very seriously while still trying to keep the flying fun.</p> | |
| | <p>What is your availability? Your current student load? I fly from 7 to 7, 7 days a week. I try to arrange to have one day off on the weekends when possible by clumping lessons back to back, but can, will, and do fly any day of the week. However, I cannot take students that can only fly weekends or evenings, as I need some availability for night/cross country lessons during those times for my weekday students. One or two weekday (business hour) lessons with a weekend lesson will work. As of 8/22/17 I have 5 students of various levels of activity. I have been able to handle up to a dozen with little scheduling conflict (and no life), but my student load typically fluctuates between 4 and 8.</p> | |
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