

Product reviews

AS A STUDENT, I grabbed the chance to test the Transair-Oxford course. I am 23 hours into my PPL training and it's one of the best experiences of my life... until I step out of the aircraft and have to start studying for the exams. I found the Air Law study and exam incredibly dull but worthy. I studied for this using the books and a small amount of groundschool. I passed first time, but only just.

I am now studying for my Navigation exam and I was keen on using anything that would help the learning process. I live a busy life, and with two children under four and a third on the way, I find it difficult to find the time to study at home. Having the training on my laptop is a fantastic benefit. The odd lunchtime, train journey (go easy on the sound level, the first time I did this the whole carriage could have passed the Nav exam), even when sitting in a traffic jam. Nothing, however, is as portable as a book, but where I give the thumbs up to this course is that I find the explanations in books to be a great remedy for insomnia. The CBT course keeps it interesting and gets across the message in a responsible and informative way.

Among the most useful sections are the mock exams, where technology is used to best effect. You can save your answers, and on any questions you get wrong, you have the chance to go back and take that part of the course again. You then retake those questions you answered incorrectly. It seems to me a great way of ingraining the answers in your brain—and unlike the tests in books, you can take them as many times as you like.

The big question is, 'Would I be able to pass the exams just using this aid?' I don't doubt that more capable pilots than me could manage that, but I'm not one of them. For me it's a big benefit, but I'd still rather my flying instructor explained things to me, and I would always want to have the books to refer to as well.

I'm recommending it at my club. It's not cheap, but when you compare it to the £5k that I'm paying to learn, it's not a lot to help ensure that I don't end up having to resit exams. —Sam Spurdens.



see the results on releasing the parcel. This really is a marvellous way to demonstrate this phenomenon, and it would certainly stick in the mind of the student.

Similarly, the Aircraft General and Principles of Flight CD is equally good. The four-stroke cycle, for example, is well demonstrated, with a reciprocating piston and valves opening and closing. Another excellent explanation (with diagram) is that of magneto impulse coupling. I am less impressed with the explanations of gyro instruments, where better use could be made of computer technology, especially in the description of precession. Purists will also note that in the explanation of the Turn Needle, the gyro is shown spinning the wrong way (it must spin 'up and away' for the instrument to work).

The first groundschool subject is usually



Air Law and Operational Procedures, since students need to pass this exam in order to fly their first solo. As this is not the most exciting syllabus, I was keen to see if Oxford has made any efforts to lighten the subject. I am disappointed. This CD is little better than the textbooks with a turgid litany of rules and regulations. Perhaps there is no way to make Air Law interesting but I feel the CD could have added some explanation of relevance or context. For example, the Rights of Way rules (powered aircraft/airships/gliders/balloons) are listed, but what is not mentioned is that these rules are simply based on relative manoeuvrability. With this knowledge the rule becomes very simple. A few misprints ('Open IFR' instead of 'Open FIR' and 'VRF' instead of 'VFR') suggests even the author was dozing off.

