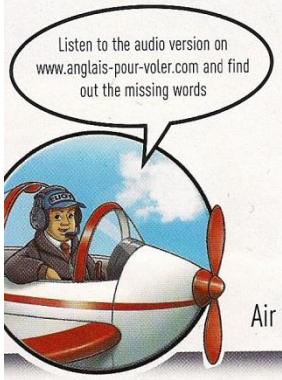
In English, please



Listening Comprehension...

KNOW YOUR AIRSPACE

DON'T BECOME AN INFRINGEMENT STATISTIC *

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Airspace classification as we know it today was established by the ICAO in 1990. At the time, the international agency defined the 7 classes of airspace every pilot is now familiar with. Air traffic services provided to IFR and VFR flights vary according to the class of airspace, which in turn entails different specifications for aircraft equipment, pilot qualifications and weather minima. The airspace designated Class A, the most restrictive, is for IFR flights only. On the other end of the spectrum, in Class G, outside Controlled Airspace, even kites can fly!

Airspace classification

Classes A, B, C, D are controlled airspace, they are clearly outlined on charts. An ATC clearance is required to enter them. All traffic is known to the air traffic controller who can therefore provide a comprehensive service. In classes A (IFR only) and B (VFR accepted), all flights are separated from each other.

In class C, IFR flights are separated from all other flights, IFR and VFR, and traffic information is provided to VFR flights. In class D, IFR flights are separated from each other, and receive traffic information on VFR flights. VFR flights receive traffic information on all flights.

Class E is also controlled airspace, but ATC clearance and radio contact are required only for IFR flights. As a result, not all VFR flights are known. ATC provides separation between IFR flights and traffic information to all flights when available.

Vocabulary

TO BOTHER	S'EMBÊTER
TO ENTAI	ENTRAÎNER
TO IMPLEMENT	METTRE EN PLACE
AN EXCERPT	UN EXTRAIT
INCIDENTALLY	D'AILLEURS
A KITE	UN CERF-VOLANT
SKETCHY	IMPRÉCIS, SOMMAIRE
THAT IS TO SAY	C'EST-À-DIRE
THEREFORE	DONC
A THREAT	UNE MENACE

Classes F and G are uncontrolled airspace. It is the place where you want to be if you don't want to bother with communications: neither a radio nor a transponder is required to operate within these aeas. Air traffic services, if requested by the pilot, reflect this lack of requirements: it is impossible to know exactly what is going on in uncontrolled airspace. Consequently, no separation is provided and traffic information can be sketchy.

Airspace infringement

Airspace infringement occurs whenever a pilot enters a controlled airspace or a restricted area (danger, restricted, prohibited, temporary reserved) without the appropriate ATC clearance to do so. Adverse weather, inadequate flight planning, lack of experience are among the factors that can lead to airspace infringement. The consequences can range from a reminder by ATC, to disruption of activities in infringed special use airspace, or even to severe loss of separation which can in turn cause injuries due to avoiding actions or wake turbulence. Incidentally, it should be noted that unlike IFR flights, a VFR flight cannot infringe Class E airspace since according to ICAO rules it does not need an ATC clearance or a radio contact to enter it.

Airspace classification in neighboring states

In each country, national civil aviation bodies organize their airspace as they see fit, most of the time implementing only part of the ICAO classes and sometimes changing the specifications to accommodate their needs. France, for example, has organized its airspace with only 5 classes : A, C, D, E and G. States can also establish special use airspace to isolate activities that could be a threat to flight safety, or to protect sensitive sites. Classification of airspace in different countries can be found in their respective AIPs, more precisely in the ENR 1.4 section. When in doubt, AIPs are the authoritative sources and should be consulted. They are available on line at **www.eurocontrol.int/articles/ais-online**.

Below are excerpts from some of our immediate neighbors' AIPs.

United Kingdom

No airspace is currently designated as class B in the UK.

As far as Class A is concerned, the particularity of the Channel Islands Control Zone, which used to be entirely Class A, and where VFR flights were given a Special VFR clearance to be permitted to fly to Jersey or Guernsey, will soon partly disappear. As of 6 March 2014, the airspace over the Channel Islands is reclassified as Class D up to FL 80. It remains Class A above FL 80.

Class C only exists above FL195 and its access to VFR flights is restricted. Class E and F are not widely used.

Regional airspace guides, usually written by local pilots, can be very helpful. They can be found, along with maps, tips and other useful information on a website dedicated to airspace infringement issues: **http://flyontrack.co.uk/links/** . The Guide to Visual Flight Rules in the UK, to be downloaded on the CAA official website, also provides great material for pilots planning a flight in UK Lower Airspace, that is to say below FL 95.

Belgium

The airspace within the Brussels FIR/UIR is subdivided into four classifications (C, D, E and G) according to ICAO specifications.

Germany

Germany has no Class A or B. A description of the airspace structure can be found at **https://secais.dfs.de/pilotservice/service/news/news.jsp** , with tips for VFR pilots who intend to fly there.

Switzerland

Switzerland has no Class A, B, or F. Most CTRs and TMAs are Class D, apart from Geneva and Zurich which are Class C. Skyguide, the company in charge of managing Switzerland's air traffic, has published a VFR guide to provide basic aeronautical information and help private pilots with ATS procedures on its website **www.skyguide.ch**

* from the CAA awareness poster at www.caa.co.uk