

Have you ever been on a long plane journey? It's quite an experience. Just getting on the plane takes a while. You have to arrive at the airport two hours before the flight. You have to check your luggage in, make your way through security, and have your passport checked and re-checked. Then you sit in the waiting room, and, well...wait. After lining up(1) with the other two hundred passengers, having your passport and boarding card checked again, and walking through the tunnel to the plane, you really need to sit down! Hopefully you can find a place in the overhead container for your carry-on(2) luggage. But be careful moving other people's bags around to make space for yours; you might get some suspicious looks or angry faces. Finally, you are sitting down and ready for the flight. You look to see who is sitting next to you. Hopefully it's someone nice, after all(3), you have to sit next to him or her for the next 9 hours! You'd better introduce yourself and be pleasant; it helps. But then, what do you do for the next 9 hours? On the long, transcontinental flights, there is usually a television screen right in front of you, with a variety of films, programs, or music to choose from. It's called the 'inflight entertainment'. All the passengers are glued to the screens for most of the journey. As I don't like to sit down for very long, I get up and walk around, and stretch. It always fascinates me how so many people can sit down for so long. Their bottoms must really suffer! Mind you, if the in-flight entertainment is good, people forget about their bottoms, and their need to move, and they simply watch and watch. What else is there to do on a plane? I am always thankful for the screens when I fly with my children, because, for their generation, watching a screen is as normal as breathing. If there were no screens, they would feel as if a part of their bodies was

missing. So thank you to the airlines for our entertainment, and apologies to our bottoms.

1. 'To line up' means to form a line in order to wait for something. In England, we still use the verb 'to queue'.

a. We had to line up to get the tickets, and then line up to get it!

b. Some people are so impatient and find it difficult to line up.

2. 'Overhead container and carry-on luggage' are two nouns used all the time when you fly. The cupboard above your seat on the plane is called your 'overhead container' because it is over your head. 'Carry-on luggage' refers to the small bag that you are allowed to take into the cabin, or room where everyone sits.

a. The overhead container was full, so I had to squeeze my bag under the seat.

b. My carry-on luggage was too big, so I had to check it in.

3. 'Afterall' is a great word that is similar in meaning to: 'if you think about it', 'if you understand all the options'.

a. I can give you a lift to the university, afterall, we both need to be there at the same time, and I have a car.

b. I recommend you include fruits and vegetables in your cooking, afterall, it's for the health of your family.