The Checkride Prep Guide

25 questions to test whether you can **explain** the knowledge—not just recognize the answer.

A good oral exam is more than memorization.

The goal of checkride preparation is to build enough understanding that you can reason through a scenario, explain your decisions, and find the correct source when you need to verify something. Use these questions out loud. If you cannot explain an answer clearly, mark that topic for review.

How to use this guide

Pick five questions at a time. Answer without looking at notes. Then identify the weak spots. For each weak spot, review the applicable FAA source, aircraft documentation, training materials, or lesson notes. The point is not to memorize this list—it is to expose what you still need to understand.

25 Oral-Readiness Questions

1. Airspace

Explain the airspace around your airport and the airspace you expect to operate in today. What rules, equipment, communications, or weather considerations apply?

Your notes: _____

_____

2. Weather

What weather information would you review before a flight, and how would you decide whether the conditions support your planned flight?

Your notes: _____

_____

3. Aerodynamics

What causes a stall? Explain why an aircraft can stall at different airspeeds and attitudes.

Your notes: _____

_____

4. Weight & Balance

How would an out-of-limit center of gravity affect aircraft handling and performance?

Your notes: _____

_____

5. Performance

What factors affect takeoff and landing performance, and how would you account for them before a flight?

Your notes: _____

_____

6. Systems

Pick a major aircraft system and explain how it works, what can fail, and what indications or procedures you would use.

Your notes: _____

_____

7. Navigation

How would you verify your position if your primary navigation source became unreliable?

Your notes: _____

_____

8. VFR Decision-Making

Describe a situation where the legal minimums might not be an appropriate personal minimum. How would you handle it?

Your notes: _____

_____

9. IFR / Instrument Thinking

If you're instrument-rated, explain how you would prepare for an IFR flight from preflight through the approach. If not, explain the basic purpose of an instrument rating.

Your notes: _____

_____

10. Approach Plates

Choose an instrument approach plate and explain the runway, frequencies, altitudes, courses, minimums, missed approach, and any important notes.

Your notes: _____

_____

11. Regulations

Pick one regulation that affects your planned flight and explain not just what it says, but why it matters operationally.

Your notes: _____

_____

12. Alternates

For an IFR flight, explain when and why an alternate may be required and what you would consider when selecting one.

Your notes: _____

_____

13. Lost Communications

What would you do if you lost two-way radio communications? Explain the decision-making before jumping to a memorized answer.

Your notes: _____

_____

14. Emergency Planning

You have an engine problem shortly after takeoff. What are your priorities, and what information would you use to make decisions?

Your notes: _____

_____

15. Human Factors

What personal or operational factors could affect your performance today, and how would you mitigate them?

Your notes: _____

_____

16. Risk Management

Identify three risks on a typical training flight and explain how you would mitigate each one.

Your notes: _____

_____

17. Aeronautical Decision-Making

Tell me about a time when a flight plan should change because the situation changed. What cues would cause you to reevaluate?

Your notes: _____

_____

18. Aircraft Limitations

Where would you find the aircraft's limitations, and how would you use them during planning and operation?

Your notes: _____

_____

19. Documents & Equipment

What documents and equipment are required or expected for your operation, and where would you verify the requirements?

Your notes: _____

_____

20. Scenario Question

Your destination weather is deteriorating while you're en route. Walk through your options, the information you would gather, and the point at which you would change the plan.

Your notes: _____

_____

21. Checkride Standards

What standard are you being evaluated against for your certificate or rating? How would you use that standard to organize your preparation?

Your notes: _____

_____

22. Explain It Simply

Pick a concept you know well and explain it as if you were teaching it to a brand-new student pilot.

Your notes: _____

_____

23. Know vs. Look Up

Which aviation questions should you know from memory, and which information is appropriate to verify in an approved source before acting?

Your notes: _____

_____

24. The Why

Take one procedure you have memorized and explain why each major step exists.

Your notes: _____

_____

25. Your Weakest Area

What is the aviation topic you currently have the hardest time explaining? What would you do this week to turn that weakness into a strength?

Your notes: _____

_____

Your Checkride Prep Checklist

Before the checkride, ask yourself:

- ■ Can I explain the major systems relevant to my aircraft and operation?
- ■ Can I explain the regulations that directly affect my planned operation?
- ■ Can I interpret the weather information I am using rather than simply repeat numbers?
- ■ Can I explain my aircraft's performance and limitations and where I verified them?
- ■ Can I work through a scenario when the original plan stops making sense?
- ■ Can I explain the purpose behind the procedures I have memorized?
- ■ Can I use the applicable FAA practical-test standard to identify what I need to demonstrate?
- ■ Can I speak clearly about risk, alternatives, and personal minimums?
- ■ Can I admit when I don't know something and identify an appropriate source to verify it?
- ■ Can I teach a concept back to another pilot in plain language?

One final test

If your examiner changed the scenario, could you still reason your way through it? If the answer is “not yet” on a few topics, that is useful information—not failure. Those are the areas to work on next.

Need a second set of eyes?

FlightFoundry provides live, one-on-one ground instruction and checkride/oral preparation with an active CFI. Sessions are $60/hour with a 2-hour minimum ($120 per session).

Build the Knowledge to Fly.

FlightFoundry · flightfoundrytraining.com