

Boeing Dreamliners grounded worldwide

18th January, 2013



Boeing's state-of-the-art Dreamliner passenger jet has been grounded in Japan, India, Chile and the USA amid safety concerns. The airliner has been hit with a

spate of technical malfunctions in the past month. These range from cracked windshields, brake and electrical problems, and fuel spills. A battery fault found on Wednesday on one of Japan's All Nippon Airways (ANA) planes forced the flight to make an emergency landing. A Japanese transport official described the incident as "highly serious," which means there could have been an accident. Japanese authorities have suspended all Dreamliner flights until further notice. Japan's airlines have 24 of the 50 Dreamliners Boeing has sold to date.

The Dreamliner is expected to revolutionize the aviation industry. Its lightweight design, fuel efficiency and advanced safety features mean airlines have been queuing up to buy it. Boeing says it is investigating the issues but expressed confidence in the aircraft's safety. A company official has put the difficulties down to "teething problems" associated with a brand new airplane. Boeing CEO Jim McNerney said: "We will be taking every necessary step in the coming days to assure our customers and the travelling public of the 787's safety and to return the airplanes to service." He added: "Boeing deeply regrets...the inconvenience to [our customers] and their passengers."

Sources: BBC / Telegraph.co.uk / The Guardian

Writing

Compare and contrast travelling by airplane and travelling by train.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

state-of-the-art / passenger jet / grounded / malfunction / emergency landing / serious / aviation industry / fuel efficiency / safety features / teething problems / regrets

True / False

- Boeing's Dreamliner has been grounded in just four countries. T / F
- An oil spill forced a plan to make an emergency landing on Wednesday. T / F
- An official said an incident involving a faulty battery wasn't so serious. T / F
- Almost half the world's Dreamliners fly out of Japan. T / F
- Boeing is having problems finding airlines to buy the Dreamliner. T / F
- Boeing said it is confident the Dreamliner is a safe airplane. T / F
- A Boeing official put the problems down to the aircraft being new. T / F
- Boeing has yet to make an apology to customers or passengers. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. state-of-the-art | a. convince |
| 2. amid | b. defects |
| 3. malfunctions | c. waiting in line |
| 4. forced | d. as a result of |
| 5. suspended | e. supposed |
| 6. expected | f. nuisance |
| 7. queuing up | g. shelved |
| 8. step | h. cutting edge |
| 9. assure | i. action |
| 10. inconvenience | j. made |

Discussion – Student A

- Do you think the "teething problems" excuse is an acceptable one?
- Do you think airlines will lose confidence in Boeing?
- What is your national carrier like?
- Do you have an 'airplane routine' or 'in-flight habits' when you fly?
- What should Boeing do for the affected airlines?
- Do you think flying has got better or worse over the years?
- What should Boeing do to compensate passengers?
- What questions would you like to ask Boeing's CEO?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. state-of-the-art | a. industry |
| 2. hit with a spate of | b. landing |
| 3. fuel | c. further notice |
| 4. make an emergency | d. Dreamliner |
| 5. suspended all Dreamliner flights until | e. up to buy it |
| 6. revolutionize the aviation | f. in the aircraft's safety |
| 7. airlines have been queuing | g. problems |
| 8. expressed confidence | h. technical malfunctions |
| 9. teething | i. the inconvenience |
| 10. Boeing deeply regrets | j. spills |

Discussion – Student B

- Do you worry about airline safety?
- What do you think of the problems the Dreamliner is having?
- Would you like to fly on a Dreamliner?
- Why do you think the airplane is having so many problems?
- How safe do you think flying is?
- What do you like and hate about flying?
- Which airlines would you recommend (or not) and why?
- Do you think flight attendants like flying?

Spelling

- tteas-fo-teh-tra Dreamliner
- safety nncsceo
- a spate of ieachnlt malfunctions
- cracked deidswilshn
- make an egyrneemc landing
- Japanese iaioethrtus
- the itonviaa industry
- fuel iinyfcfe
- uqnegiu up to buy it
- ighenett problems
- taking every aenyrsecs step
- nnieenvinceoc to our customers

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. d	3. b	4. j	5. g
6. e	7. c	8. i	9. a	10. f

Role Play

Airline CEO - You are furious Boeing sold you so many defective airplanes. Tell the others three reasons why. You want Boeing to give you back your money. You will buy airplanes from Airbus instead. You also want compensation – Boeing has damaged the image of your airline.

Boeing boss - You understand the anger of airlines. However, they are making it a bigger problem than it really is. Tell the others three reasons why. You can't issue refunds. Airlines understand new planes have teething problems. You cannot pay compensation to airlines or passengers.

Passenger - You missed your own wedding because your flight was canceled. You want Boeing to pay for a new wedding, including all the costs your guests incurred. You are very unhappy with Boeing. Tell the others three reasons why. You want to know why Boeing sold faulty airplanes.

Aviation safety official - You believe Boeing's Dreamliners are the safest planes in the world. Tell the others three reasons why. All new airplanes have teething problems. Airlines know this, passengers should understand this. Tell Boeing's boss (s)he must compensate all passengers and airlines in full.

Speaking - Flight

What's best about flying? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| • legroom | • meeting other passengers |
| • airplane food | • duty free shopping |
| • the service | • entertainment console |
| • landing | • inflight magazines |

Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	F	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.