

## **THE BASICS OF PILOT CERTIFICATION: AIRCRAFT CATEGORY AND CLASS**

Category and class can refer to certification of **AIRMEN** (pilots) and **AIRCRAFT**.

When we are talking about the certification, ratings, privileges, and limitations of **AIRMEN**, a **CATEGORY** is a broad classification of aircraft:

- Airplane
- Rotorcraft
- Glider
- Lighter than air
- Powered lift
- Powered parachute
- Weight-shift control.

When we are talking about the certification, ratings, privileges, and limitations of **AIRMEN**, a **CLASS** means a classification of aircraft within a category having similar operating characteristics:

- The **Airplane category** is divided into single-engine land (ASEL), multi-engine land (AMEL), single-engine sea (ASES), and multi-engine sea (AMES) classes
- The **Rotorcraft category** is divided into helicopter and gyroplane classes
- The **Lighter-than-air category** is divided into airship and balloon classes
- The **Powered parachute category** is divided into powered parachute land and powered parachute sea
- The **Weight-shift-control category** is divided into weight-shift-control land and weight-shift-control sea.

A student pilot certificate does not list category or class ratings but is instead endorsed by a flight instructor to confer privileges in specific makes and models of aircraft.

If you are training in a single-engine plane, such as a Cessna 172, when you are issued your private pilot certificate, it will be for the 'airplane' category and 'single-engine land' class.

Further reading: **FAR/AIM** [14 CFR § 1.1 - General definitions](#)



## **PRIVATE PILOT KNOWLEDGE TEST QUESTIONS**

*(Regulations under 14 CFR Part 1 - Definitions And Abbreviations)*

### **1. With respect to the certification of airmen, which is a class of aircraft?**

- a. Single-engine land and sea, multi-engine land and sea.
- b. Lighter-than-air, airship, hot air balloon, gas balloon.
- c. Airplane, rotorcraft, glider, lighter-than-air.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

### **2. As used with respect to the certification, ratings, privileges, and limitations of airmen, examples of a “category” of aircraft would be:**

- a. Cessna 150 or F16.
- b. Airplane, rotorcraft, glider, and lighter-than-air.
- c. Single-engine or multi-engine.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

### **3. With respect to the certification of airmen, which is a category of aircraft?**

- a. Single-engine land and sea, multi-engine land and sea.
- b. Airplane, rotorcraft, glider, lighter-than-air.
- c. Gyroplane, helicopter, airship, free balloon.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Answers**

- 1. a.
- 2. b.
- 3. b.