

A PRACTICAL STUDENT WORKBOOK

Your first 30 days of flight training

A flexible plan for getting organized, building a study habit and making every lesson easier to learn from.



Venture West aircraft at Falcon Field. Photograph from the school's website.

Plan by readiness, not by a countdown

Use the weeks as planning blocks. Your instructor will set the actual lesson sequence, pace and flight decisions. Weather, availability, paperwork and your progress may change the order. This is not a promise of solo or any certificate within 30 days.

Planning block	Useful outcome
Before you start	Documents, medical questions and schedule clarified
First lessons	Understand the briefing, controls handover and debrief
Between lessons	Study one assigned topic and bring useful questions
End-of-month review	Agree on progress, costs and the next training focus

My goal for the first month:

01 / BEFORE THE AIRPORT

Remove avoidable surprises

Contact the school before your first visit so you arrive with the right expectations and required documents.

- ☐ Confirm your appointment, meeting location and arrival time.
- ☐ Request the identity and training-eligibility document checklist.
- ☐ Ask whether a headset is provided and which materials to bring.
- ☐ Understand billing, cancellation, refund and aircraft-rental terms.
- ☐ Set realistic lesson blocks and study time on your calendar.

Three different preparations

Student certificate: ordinary dual instruction does not require it, but solo does. Coordinate the application and processing with your instructor. [1]

Medical pathway: for the usual initial private-airplane route, address the appropriate FAA medical before solo. Discuss individual history and required records with an Aviation Medical Examiner. Do not change treatment to meet a training date. [2,3]

Training security: the provider verifies applicable eligibility before covered training. Ask which citizenship/nationality evidence or FTSP process applies to you; do not assume a receipt is clearance. [4]

Documents or appointments to arrange:

Who will confirm I am ready to start, and how?

02 / YOUR FIRST LESSONS

Know what the lesson is for

Before flying, ask for the objective and how you will know you are improving. After flying, turn the debrief into your next preparation assignment.

Lesson stage	What to ask or record
Prepare	What should I read, bring or review before arriving?
Brief	What is today's objective? What are the relevant limits?
Fly	How will we transfer control? How should I say I am unsure?
Debrief	What improved? What needs attention? What comes next?
Record	Review the training entry with your instructor.

FAA instructional guidance emphasizes a clear, positive exchange of controls and useful learner feedback. Speak up when you do not understand, feel overloaded or feel unwell. Your instructor can adjust the lesson. [5]

Today's objective:

One thing that improved and one point to discuss:

Assigned preparation for the next lesson:

03 / BETWEEN LESSONS

Build a study loop

A short, focused session is easier to connect to flying than an unplanned evening of videos.

Try this routine with your instructor

Recall: read your last debrief and explain the lesson objective in your own words. **Learn:** work through one assigned topic. **Apply:** solve a fresh example or explain a diagram. **Ask:** write down what you still cannot explain.

Use the FAA's free Pilot's Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge for foundational subjects, alongside your chosen course and the aircraft references your instructor assigns. Ask which chapter matters next. [6]

Practice the right thing

For procedures, use only the sequence and references your instructor has approved. Resolve uncertainty before repeating a guessed sequence. Home simulation should have an agreed purpose; do not assume it earns training credit.

Study session	Topic / resource	Question to bring
Session 1		
Session 2		
Session 3		

The concept I can explain more clearly now:

04 / REVIEW THE MONTH

Measure useful progress

A changing lesson objective can make progress feel uneven. Review specific observations rather than comparing your hour total with another student's.

- ☐ Can I describe the purpose of each recent lesson?
- ☐ Do I know which tasks need less prompting and which need more work?
- ☐ Do my instructor and I agree on the next priority?
- ☐ Are my records, planned expenses and actual charges up to date?
- ☐ Does the lesson schedule still fit my available time?

Solo is an instructor readiness decision with required knowledge, training, documents and endorsements. It is not an automatic reward for reaching a number of lessons. Ask what you still need to demonstrate consistently. [7]

Review item	What I learned / next action
Training progress	
Study routine	
Costs and scheduling	
Support or explanation needed	

Question for my instructor at our next review:

05 / KEEP MOVING FORWARD

Your next 30 days

Set a small number of priorities you and your instructor can revisit. Training plans work best when the next action is clear.

Priority	Action and person to ask	Review date
Training		
Ground study		
Scheduling / documents		

As training develops, use the Private Pilot Airplane ACS with your instructor to connect knowledge, risk management and skills. Certification also depends on applicable experience, testing and endorsement requirements. [8]

Sources & further reading

Primary sources checked October 13, 2026. This workbook is educational planning guidance for a U.S. private-airplane student, not flight instruction or an eligibility determination.

- 01 [FAA: Becoming a student pilot](#)
- 02 [14 CFR 61.23: Medical certificates](#)
- 03 [FAA: Know Before You Go - medical preparation](#)
- 04 [49 CFR Part 1552: Flight Training Security Program](#)
- 05 [FAA Instructor Handbook: Techniques of flight instruction](#)
- 06 [FAA: Pilot's Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge](#)
- 07 [14 CFR 61.87: Student solo requirements](#)
- 08 [FAA: Private Pilot Airplane ACS](#)

Read the complete preparation guide at flyvwa.com