

A PRACTICAL STUDENT WORKBOOK

Choose an online ground school

Compare the teaching, support and total cost before you subscribe. Then connect the course to your actual flight lessons.



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

Choose the course you can learn from

A polished video library and a high practice score do not tell the whole story. Try a sample lesson on an unfamiliar topic, explain it in your own words and see whether you can solve a new example. Record what helped you understand it.

Start by asking your instructor which course fits your certificate goal and syllabus. Use one main course and selected references. Buying several overlapping subscriptions can make the next assignment harder to identify.

My certificate goal, instructor and target study schedule:

Before you subscribe

Use these pages to compare sample lessons and written terms. Keep your instructor involved, and confirm any unclear details directly with the course provider before paying.

01 / EVALUATE A SAMPLE LESSON

Six things to inspect

Use the same criteria for every option. These are suggested purchasing questions, not a formal FAA approval checklist.

Criterion	What to look for
Current content	Does it match your certificate and aircraft category? Are revisions and FAA references visible?
Clear explanations	Can you explain why an answer is correct and apply the idea to a different example?
Useful feedback	When you get something wrong, does it teach the concept or simply display the correct letter?
Instructor support	Who answers questions? How do you reach them, and what turnaround should you expect?
Accessible study	Try captions, audio, text, device layout and any offline access you need.
Flight connection	Can your instructor assign a module and connect it to your next flight?

The Private Pilot Airplane ACS integrates knowledge, risk management and skills. A useful study choice supports explanations and judgment as well as test preparation. [3]

What I understood after the sample lesson:

What I still needed explained:

02 / COMPARE THE REAL OFFER

Course comparison

Confirm the terms before checkout. Save a copy of what the provider says is included.

Question	Option A	Option B	Option C
Provider / course name			
Course price / renewal cost			
Access period / expiration			
Instructor support included?			
Knowledge-test authorization process			
Books / practice tools included?			
Test-center fee included?			
Refund / guarantee conditions			

Ask about authorization explicitly

Ask who issues acceptable test authorization, what you must complete, how it is delivered and whether it costs extra. Follow the FAA's current matrix for the test you will take. Course access by itself is not test authorization. [2]

Terms I need clarified before purchasing:

03 / MAKE STUDY USEFUL

A weekly learning plan

Choose a repeatable schedule that leaves time for questions. The outline below is a suggested routine, not a required FAA schedule.

Stage	A useful action
Recall	Review the last debrief and explain what you remember.
Learn	Complete the assigned course topic and reference reading.
Apply	Try an unfamiliar problem; explain your reasoning aloud.
Review	Record the cause of an error and ask a focused question.

Use the FAA's free Pilot's Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge and Airplane Flying Handbook as references, alongside your course. Ask your instructor which chapter and aircraft-specific material are relevant now. [4,5]

My study block	Topic / assignment	Question for instructor
Block 1		
Block 2		
Block 3		

One concept I can now explain without the answer choices:

04 / PREPARE FOR THE TEST

Readiness & test logistics

Agree with your instructor when to test. Use official FAA links to reach current scheduling and sample-test resources. [1]

The September 25, 2026 FAA testing matrix lists Private Pilot Airplane (PAR) at 60 questions, 2.0 hours and a 70% passing score; additional unscored validation questions may appear. Recheck the matrix when booking. A practice score alone is not a complete readiness decision. [2]

- ☐ I can explain concepts and work unfamiliar examples.
- ☐ My instructor or course provider has confirmed the appropriate authorization.
- ☐ My Federal Tracking Number (FTN), name and test booking are consistent.
- ☐ I have checked current identification and test-center instructions.
- ☐ I know where the center is, when to arrive and what materials it allows.

After the knowledge test

Keep the knowledge-test report and review its deficient subject areas with your instructor. Passing the test is one step; flight proficiency and practical-test requirements remain. For the ordinary private-pilot route, plan around the knowledge-test validity requirement in 14 CFR 61.39 rather than taking it without a training timeline. [2,6]

Topics to discuss before booking:

Authorization / ID / scheduling item to confirm:

05 / CHOOSE AND FOLLOW THROUGH

Your course decision

Choose the option that fits your learning needs and your instructor's plan. If a sample lesson is confusing, ask for help before assuming more videos will solve it.

Decision	My notes
Course and why it fits	
Remaining question / person to ask	
First assigned module / study date	

Keep the roles clear

Ground school teaches the knowledge foundation and may provide the appropriate test-authorization process. It does not replace aircraft-specific instruction, solo authorization or a practical-test endorsement.

Sources & further reading

Primary sources checked October 13, 2026. Course terms and FAA testing requirements can change; verify them before paying or booking.

01 [FAA: Airman Testing and official sample-test resources](#)

02 [FAA: Airman Knowledge Testing Matrix - September 25, 2026](#)

03 [FAA: Private Pilot Airplane ACS](#)

04 [FAA: Pilot's Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge](#)

05 [FAA: Airplane Flying Handbook](#)

06 [14 CFR 61.39: Practical-test prerequisites](#)

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