

## Flight attendants grapple with 'unprecedented rise' in unruly passengers

**Level:** Intermediate

### 1 Warmer

- a. Predict the content of article by reading the title and the subtitle.
- What do you think this article will be about?

### 2 Reading the article carefully

- a. Now, read the article and see if your predictions were right. Is there anything interesting in this article? Why? Why not?

## Flight attendants grapple with ‘unprecedented rise’ in unruly passengers

**Level:** Intermediate

### ***As Americans return to the skies, the US flight authority has investigated more than 600 incidents involving badly-behaved passengers this year***

**Adam Gabbatt**

**09 August 2021**

- 1 One of the latest incidents of passengers behaving badly in American skies came on 31 July. Video from a Frontier Airlines flight showed a passenger taped to his seat, after he had acted aggressively and is said to have grabbed a flight attendant's breasts.
- 2 In the first six months of 2021, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) investigated more than 600 incidents involving passengers, nearly double the number in the previous two years combined.
- 3 There has been a new rise in incidents of passengers acting out on planes, reported the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA), as people return to flights after months away due to pandemic restrictions. More than 85% of attendants have dealt with difficult passengers in the first half of 2021. "This is the worst it's ever been. Everyone is at a stress level 10 coming out of the pandemic," Taylor Garland, from the AFA, told the Guardian. Airlines have reported 3,715 incidents in this period, many involving people who refused to wear face masks, but the AFA said there was "a lot more going on". As well as problems with masks, "alcohol, routine safety reminders, flight delays and cancellations were all common factors in unruly passenger interactions", Garland said.
- 4 In the Frontier Airlines incident, the passenger, 22-year-old Max Berry, had ordered several alcoholic drinks during the flight from Philadelphia to Miami, according to reports. A video shared on Twitter showed Berry, wearing an orange T-shirt and a baseball cap, shouting loudly, "My parents are worth more than fucking two million goddamn dollars." Later in the video Berry is seen trying to punch a flight attendant, who holds him down. In a separate video, Berry is then seen taped to a seat.
- 5 According to a Miami-Dade police report seen by the Miami Herald, Berry had earlier spilt a drink on his T-shirt and returned from the bathroom without a shirt. A flight attendant told Berry to get dressed and helped him get a shirt from his bag. Later Berry "walked around the plane for about 15 minutes", chatting with a different female flight attendant before "groping her breasts", said the police. Once the flight landed, Berry was arrested and charged with three counts of physical abuse, the Herald reported.
- 6 But on Friday the FAA suggested that passengers were not charged frequently enough with crimes. FAA Administrator, Stephen Dickson, said police were called to airports to deal with passengers every week. "Nevertheless, many of these passengers were interviewed by local police and released without criminal charges of any kind," Dickson said, in a series of letters he sent to airport officials. "We miss a key opportunity to hold unruly passengers responsible for their unacceptable and dangerous behavior."
- 7 The Frontier incident came less than a month after a woman was tied down with tape and "flex cuffs" during an American Airlines flight from Dallas-Fort Worth to Charlotte, after she allegedly tried to open the plane's doors. The woman also "physically assaulted, bit and caused injury to a flight attendant", USA Today reported.
- 8 The FAA is unable to file criminal charges but can propose fines for unruly passengers. Since 1 January 2021 the agency said it has proposed \$682,000 in fines against passengers. In one of those cases, the FAA proposed an \$18,500 fine for a woman onboard a flight from Indianapolis to Philadelphia who refused to wear a face mask and used "obscene language against the flight attendants and other passengers". The passenger was ordered to leave the plane; as she did so, she hit a woman who was holding a baby, said the FAA.

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### 3 Relying text information in speaking

a. You know that your classmate is really interested in the topic of plane travel because they are thinking of becoming a flight attendant. Your friend has not seen the article. Tell them about the most important ideas from the text. Follow the steps below.

1. What is the overall idea of the text? Circle the correct sentence a-c.
  - a) We should punish people who behave aggressively on planes.
  - b) There's been an increase in passengers behaving badly or aggressively on planes.
  - c) People are using phones to record bad behaviour of other passengers on planes.
2. What is the main idea of section 1 (paragraphs 1-3)? Circle the correct sentence a-c.
  - a) A video of an unruly passenger on a Frontier flight shows the worst recorded incident of 2021.
  - b) The FAA has reported twice as many passenger incidents as the AFA in the first six months of 2021.
  - c) As more people started flying in 2021 after the pandemic, there have been many more problems with unruly passengers.

3. Identify the main ideas of sections 2 (paragraphs 4-5), 3 (paragraphs 6-7) and 4 (paragraph 8). Write them below.

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4. What is some key information in each section that is relevant? Write it down next to each section using the space below.

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- b. Now work with a partner and take turns to role play the situation. Student A summarises, while Student B acts as the friend. Remember to use the Handy Phrase Summary below. Use your own words to express the information from the text. Do not copy sentences or phrases directly from the article.

### Handy Phrase Summary

#### Student A:

Hey, I read this article about ...

I think you'll find this interesting, ...

It was about ...

It said that ...

For example, ...

I was surprised to learn ...

Did you also know that ...?

It mentioned ...

#### Student B:

Oh, really?

What do you mean?

Did it give any details about ...?

Wow, I had no idea!

## 4 Optional homework

- a. Think of someone you know that might be interested in the topic discussed in this article.

Go back to the article and think which information from the article they would be interested in. Then, text that person and tell them about this article. Use your first language (or whatever language you use to communicate with this friend), but if you can do it in English, even better!