

## FAMILY FRIENDLY AIRLINE SEATS

### UNITED AIRLINES INTRODUCES FREE FAMILY SEATING POLICY



#### Seats for the whole family

United Airlines has announced a new seat map feature to help families with children under 12 find seats together free of charge. The feature will be available for Basic Economy tickets. The new technology will find available **adjacent** Economy seats at the time of booking and provide **complimentary** upgrades to other available seats if needed. In cases where side-by-side seats are not available, customers will be able to switch to another flight to their destination with adjacent seats in the same cabin for free. No fare difference will be charged in such cases.

The CEO of United Airlines, Scott Kirby, has acknowledged the seating frustrations of families in an interview, stating that the new policy will "take a lot of the stress out of the up-front process."

However, United Polaris, First Class, and Economy Plus seats are not included in the new family seating policy change. More adjacent seat options will be available on United Airlines immediately, and the complete policy change is set to go into effect in early March.

US airline customers have long complained about the added costs associated with purchasing seats to sit together with their children on flights. In response, President Biden addressed the government's efforts to curb such fees in his State of the Union address this month, touting a **Junk Fee Prevention Act** that would also target resort fees and concert ticket fees, among others.

#### "EarlyBird Check-in"

Delta Air Lines said Monday that it does not charge family seating fees and will always work with customers on a case-by-case basis to ensure their family seating needs are met. American Airlines also offers booking tips on its website for families traveling with children under 15, noting that "the farther in advance you book, the better."

On Southwest Airlines, families with children age 6 or younger are allowed to board early – right after the "A" group of passengers. The airline's website also offers the option of **EarlyBird Check-in** for a fee that may yield an "A" group boarding position.

# Lesson 12: United Airlines Introduces Free Family Seating Policy

**Part 1: Comprehension - Read and summarize the article thinking of who, what, when, where & why.**

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## **Part 2: True or False Questions**

- a) True or False - The new United Airlines seat map feature is only available for Basic Economy tickets. T/F
- b) True or False - If side-by-side seats are not available, United Airlines will charge a fare difference to switch to another flight with adjacent seats in the same cabin. T/F
- c) True or False - The new United Airlines family seating policy includes United Polaris, First Class, and Economy Plus seats. T/F
- d) True or False - On a Southwest Airline flight children under 6 can join the "A" group free of charge. T/F

## **Part 3a: Guess the meaning of unknown vocabulary/phrases.**

- a) "Adjacent" \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b) "Complimentary" \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c) "Junk fee" \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- d) "EarlyBird Check-in" \_\_\_\_\_  
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## **Part 3b: Vocabulary in Use - Write an example sentence using the words from 3a.**

a) Adjacent:

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b) Complimentary:

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c) Junk fee:

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d) EarlyBird Check-in:

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# Lesson 12: United Airlines Introduces Free Family Seating Policy

## Part 5: Talking Points

1. Do you think it's fair for airlines to charge extra fees for families who want to sit together on flights?
2. How does the new seat map feature announced by United Airlines help address the frustrations of families with young children who travel together?
3. Do you think other airlines will follow United Airlines' example and offer free family seating policies for basic economy tickets?
4. Tell me in detail about your last flight experience. Where did you go? What airline did you use? How was their service?
5. What other types of fees have you encountered when booking flights? Do you think they are fair?
6. What do you think about President Biden's proposal to pass a Junk Fee Prevention Act? How do you think it would affect the airline industry?
7. Have you ever had to switch flights to sit with your family on a plane? How did you feel about it?
8. How do airlines handle the seating needs of families with children on a case-by-case basis?
9. What are some other ways airlines can make air travel more family-friendly?
10. Do you think airlines should offer special boarding privileges for families with young children? Why or why not?

## Part 6: Role play Scenarios

- 1. Family Booking: Customer and Airline**  
A family of four is booking a flight to visit their grandparents. They are purchasing Basic Economy tickets and want to make sure they can sit together on the plane. They need to use the new seat map feature to find available adjacent Economy seats and understand the new policy for switching flights if needed.
- 2. Frustrated Parent: Customer and Airline Representative**  
A parent is frustrated with the added cost of purchasing seats for their children on flights. They are interested in President Biden's Junk Fee Prevention Act and want to discuss the potential impact of this legislation with a travel agent or airline representative.
- 3. Single Parent: Parent and Southwest Airlines**  
A single parent is flying with a young child and wants to board the plane early on Southwest Airlines. They need to know how to take advantage of the EarlyBird Check-in option and understand the benefits of boarding with the "A" group of passengers.
- 4. European Trip:**  
A family is planning a trip to Europe and wants to fly with United Airlines. They are willing to pay extra for Polaris or First-Class seats but are concerned about the new family seating policy. They need to discuss their options with a travel agent and determine the best way to ensure they can sit together on the flight.

## Part 7: Writing Activity Giving advice (modal verbs & recommendations) - Your friend is traveling on a long distance flight for over 10 hours and they have asked you for some travel tips. Write a short paragraph giving some recommendations and offer them some travel advice for long journeys.

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## Part 8: Critical Thinking - Take A Seat!

Families should not be given special treatment when booking flight tickets as they pay the same fare as everyone else.

In groups discuss the statement above and think of 5 ways airlines could help keep all of their customers happy.

Then as a class share your 5 ideas and reach a consensus on the best 5.

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**Part 9: a) Below are some articles/videos for additional reading, read/watch and see if you can find similar grammar points or vocabulary.**

1. This Technicality Got Family with Infant Kicked Off Overbooked Delta Flight: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-jtaloSjd8>
2. Families Will Love New Seating Policy From United Airlines: [https://news.yahoo.com/families-love-seating-policy-united-101814655.html?fr=sycsrp\\_catchall](https://news.yahoo.com/families-love-seating-policy-united-101814655.html?fr=sycsrp_catchall)

**Answers:**

## Part 1: Comprehension

The article discusses United Airlines' new family seating policy, which helps families with children under 12 find seats together free of charge. The new seat map feature, which will be available for Basic Economy tickets, will find available adjacent seats at the time of booking and provide complimentary upgrades to other available seats if needed. The policy also includes the option to switch to another flight to their destination with adjacent seats in the same cabin for free. The article notes that the change was made in response to long-standing customer complaints about added costs associated with purchasing seats to sit together with their children on flights. The article also highlights similar policies from other airlines and a Junk Fee Prevention Act proposed by President Biden to address these types of fees.

## Part 2: True or False

A: True B: False C: False D: False

## Part 3a: Guess the meaning of unknown vocabulary or phrases.

### a) "Adjacent"

Answer: The word "adjacent" means next to or adjoining something else. In the context of the article, the new technology will find available adjacent Economy seats at the time of booking, which means seats that are located next to each other.

### b) "Complimentary"

Answer: The word "complimentary" means something that is given for free, provided as a gesture of goodwill, or given as a courtesy. In the article they talk about how the airline will give free upgrades to families who need them, if they are available.

### c) "Junk fee"

Answer: "Junk fee" is a term used to describe fees that are added to the cost of a product or service that are not related to the actual cost of providing the product or service. In the context of the article, President Biden touted a Junk Fee Prevention Act that would target resort fees, concert ticket fees, and fees associated with purchasing seats to sit together with children on flights.

### d) "EarlyBird Check-in"

Answer: EarlyBird Check-in is an option offered by Southwest Airlines that allows passengers to check in early for their flight for a fee. This can help passengers secure a better boarding position, which is important on Southwest because there are no assigned seats.

## Part 3b: Vocabulary in Use - Write an example sentence using the words from 3a. (examples)

### a) Adjacent:

The park is located adjacent to the library, making it convenient for people to enjoy reading and outdoor activities in one place.

### b) Complimentary:

When you book a stay at the hotel, you'll receive complimentary breakfast vouchers.

### c) Junk fee:

When I rented the apartment, I was surprised to find a junk fee on my bill that I hadn't been informed about, and it seemed like an unnecessary extra charge.

### d) EarlyBird Check-in:

I always purchase EarlyBird Check-In for my flights to ensure I get a good seat.

## Part 7: Writing (example)

If you're planning a long-haul trip, there are a few things you should definitely consider. First, you might want to pack some essentials like a neck pillow and earplugs, which can make your journey much more comfortable. Additionally, you should try to stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water during the flight. It's also a good idea to get up and walk around the cabin occasionally to stretch your legs and prevent stiffness. You could also bring along some entertainment like a book or your favorite movies to pass the time. Lastly, you should aim to get some rest on the plane, so wearing comfy clothes and bringing an eye mask could help you sleep better. Safe travels and enjoy your adventure!