



The big debate

Should people stop traveling by air?

Flying lets us see the world, but it's harmful to the environment.

What you need to know

- Worldwide, there are 717 airlines operating more than 102,000 daily flights to and from 3,921 airports.
- When jets and planes burn fuel, they emit greenhouse gases, like carbon dioxide, that get trapped in the atmosphere and warm the planet.
- Carbon emissions contribute to climate change, rising temperatures, and extreme weather patterns.
- A 2020 report found that 1% of people account for 50% of carbon emissions from commercial flights.



Air travel offers a quick and popular way of traveling anywhere in the world. In 2024, there were about 876 million airplane passengers in the US, including nearly 108 million Americans who flew to another country. More than 72 million people traveled from other countries into the US. People travel to visit family and friends or to explore and experience different cultures. There's a cost to all this flying, however. Planes burn fossil fuels that release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, contributing to climate change. They also give off nitrogen oxides, which further pollute the air. What do you think? Should people stop traveling by air?

Yes—there are better ways to travel

Flying is terrible for the planet. Although only about 11% of people in the world travel by air, it still has a huge environmental effect. That's unfair to the planet and to people who don't fly but are paying the price through climate change. And there are more interesting ways to travel than planes. Traveling by train, bus, or boat allows you to truly see the world rather than just the clouds through a tiny plane window. Besides, it's not essential to fly far away all the time. Every state in the US has something to offer, from beautiful beaches to national parks and excellent museums, that can be reached by ferry, road, or rail.

No—we can fly more sustainably

Flying to faraway places opens up the world, offers adventure, and makes it possible to meet people who are different from us. And it's a necessary part of modern life. In June 2025, there were nearly 52 million immigrants (people who came from another country) living in the US. That's a lot of people who need to fly home to see their family and friends in other countries. Takeoff and landing produce the most emissions, so we can find ways to reduce the environmental harm of air travel, like flying less often and choosing direct flights. And since the weight of luggage increases emissions, we could also pack lighter.

YES

Three reasons people should stop traveling by air

- 1 Flying is bad for the environment because planes release greenhouse gases. It's time to change our ways.
- 2 Other modes of travel are more exciting and adventurous and let you see more along the way.
- 3 There's plenty to see close to home, which is great for communities and businesses.

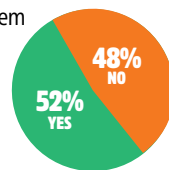
NO

Three reasons people should not stop traveling by air

- 1 Traveling by plane makes it possible to explore the world and learn about different cultures.
- 2 Millions of people in the US need to fly to visit family and friends in other countries.
- 3 We should focus our efforts on flying more sustainably, like flying less often, booking direct flights, and packing less.

LAST WEEK'S POLL

Last week we asked if we should try to live on other planets. Your votes on moving farther out in our solar system were split: 52% of you said yes, and 48% said no.



What do you think?

Now that you've read a bit more about this issue, visit kids.theweekjunior.com/polls so you can vote in our debate. Vote **YES** if you think people should stop traveling by air or **NO** if you don't. We'll publish the results next week.

The goal of the big debate is to present two sides of an issue fairly in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on this page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties.