



---

*This is not a word for word transcript.*

- Rob:** Hello and welcome to 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English, I'm Rob and with me today is Rosie.
- Rosie:** Hi there.
- Rob:** In our programme today we're talking about airports. I'm sure many of us have used one. They are a **departure point** for great adventures and they are amazing crossroads for people travelling across the world.
- Rosie:** Big airports are necessary too for a country's trade. But why are we talking about them today?
- Rob:** Well, airport expansion has been in the news and particularly plans to expand Hong Kong International airport which could turn it into the World's biggest.
- Rosie:** OK Rob, I guess that links in to this week's question!
- Rob:** It certainly does. My question for you this week is about the current World's biggest airport. This is in terms of size, not the number of flights. What do you think it is?
- a) Denver International airport in the USA
  - b) Dubai airport in the United Arab Emirates
  - c) King Fahd International Airport in Saudi Arabia
- Rosie:** I have no idea but I am going to say King Fahd International Airport in Saudi Arabia.
- Rob:** OK, we'll find out at the end of the programme. Now let's talk more about the expansion of Hong Kong International Airport, also known as Chek Lap Kok airport.
- Rosie:** The airport was only opened in 1998 and was built on an island made by **land reclamation**. The airport is seen as a major **contributor** to the Hong Kong economy.
- Rob:** That's right. Let's hear from BBC correspondent Juliana Liu about the airport's importance. How does she describe the provinces of southern China?

**Juliana Liu, BBC correspondent**

*Hong Kong's airport is one of the busiest in the world, transporting fifty four million passengers a year and more cargo than anywhere else. And because it's so close to the booming provinces of southern China, those traffic figures are only expected to go up.*

**Rosie:** So Hong Kong's airport is one of the busiest in the world. She used the word **transporting** – which means moving – fifty four million passengers a year.

**Rob:** And it transports lots of **cargo** too – cargo is another word for freight or goods. But it's set to move more goods and people because it's close to the booming provinces of southern China.

**Rosie:** **Booming.** That means the economy is growing rapidly. With a growing economy there will be more demand for flights to move people and cargo. That's why the government wants to make an enormous expansion of the airport.

**Rob:** Other countries around the world are also talking about expanding their airports.

**Rosie:** Yes, this is something that is being considered in London. The government is now considering building a new runway at Heathrow or even building a completely new airport altogether, possibly in the middle of the Thames estuary.

**Rob:** But building projects like these are very expensive and they involve making decisions based on predictions for the future.

**Rosie:** Well let's hear more from Juliana Liu about what's involved with expanding Chek Lap Kok Airport. How does she describe the size of the building project?

**Juliana Liu, BBC correspondent**

*The project is likely to cost more than 17 billions dollars, much more than the existing airport. It will be an enormous undertaking. Much of the space needed for the runway does not yet exist, so it must be reclaimed from the sea.*

**Rob:** The project sounds very expensive; more than 17 billion dollars! That's more than the existing airport cost to build so maybe that gives you the idea of how big it really is going to be.

**Rosie:** She described the size of the project as an enormous **undertaking**; a very big commitment. One of the **tasks** – or jobs – that need doing is to build more land.

**Rob:** At the moment there isn't the space to build a runway so new land must be reclaimed from the sea. They will convert the seabed into land to build on.

**Rosie:** That will be a really big undertaking! But why do they have to do that? Couldn't they build it somewhere else, maybe nearer the city centre?

- Rob:** Well, as you know, land is expensive and anyway, airports create noise and pollution which nobody wants near their house. A good **compromise** – or a fair agreement – is to build them by the sea.
- Rosie:** But even doing that in Hong Kong has raised some concerns for **environmentalists** – people who care about the environment. There is also concern about pollution which apparently is already what most people complain about in Hong Kong. And the air and noise pollution can certainly affect our health.
- Rob:** Well building new airports is always controversial but until we can develop a cleaner form of transport and a quieter one, there will be always be the need for air travel and for airports.
- Rosie:** Now Rob, it's time for you to reveal the answer to the question you asked me earlier.
- Rob:** Ah yes. I asked you, in terms of size, what is the name of the world's biggest airport? So what did you say?
- Rosie:** I said King Fahd International Airport in Saudi Arabia.
- Rob:** And you are right. It is King Fahd International Airport in Saudi Arabia. Now Rosie, would you mind reminding us of some of the vocabulary we have heard today.
- Rosie:** **departure**  
**land reclamation**  
**contributor**  
**transporting**  
**cargo**  
**booming**  
**undertaking**  
**tasks**  
**compromise**  
**environmentalists**
- Rob:** Thanks Rosie. That's all we have time for today but do join us again for more 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English soon. Bye for now!
- Rosie:** Bye bye!

## Vocabulary and definitions

departure point	place where you leave from to start a journey
land reclamation	taking areas of water and turning them into land that can be built on
contributor	something that causes something else to happen
transporting	moving people or things from one place to another
cargo	goods carried in a ship or a plane
booming	rapidly growing economy
undertaking	task or project somebody is committed to
tasks	pieces of work that somebody has to do
compromise	an agreement made between two sides in which each side gives up some of the things they want
environmentalists	a person concerned about the environment and wants to improve and protect it

### More on this story:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-17454882>

### Read and listen to the story online:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/general/sixminute/2012/03/120322\\_6min\\_english\\_hong\\_kong\\_airport.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/general/sixminute/2012/03/120322_6min_english_hong_kong_airport.shtml)