

From London to L.A.

03

A long flight across the Atlantic

by

Eric de Runge





SETTING OFF



ERIC DE RUNGE

Age 32

Nationality Dutch

Trip London to L.A.

Si eres de los que viajan mucho, seguro que algún que otro problema habrás tenido con un vuelo... ¿Un retraso? ¿Se te ha perdido el equipaje? ¿Te ha tocado sentarte junto a un plasta que no para de hablar desde el despegue hasta el aterrizaje? ¿Una turbulencia propia de una montaña rusa? ¿O pasajeros borrachos como cubas en el asiento de atrás?

Son muchas las cosas que te pueden pasar en pleno vuelo, y lo peor es que ¡no hay salida! Solo te queda aguantar estoicamente y tomártelo con mucha paciencia y buen humor; como el que demuestra Eric, el protagonista de la siguiente historia.



Pista 3

Vocabulary

¹dealsacuerdos,
negocios²allocated

asignados

³aisle

pasillo

⁴knowing lookmirada de
complicidad⁵grumbling

malhumorados

⁶laptopordenador
portátil⁷winks

guiña el ojo

So, I'm flying from London to L.A., something I did about once a month, back in those days. I get to Heathrow in plenty of time and **check in**. Then I go and have a drink in the business lounge. I take my drink to a table by the window, **sit down**, and **look out** the window — I love watching planes **taking off** and landing. It's been a tough week — a couple of deals **fell through** at the last minute. And L.A. will be really busy too; but for the next few hours, I'm going to **sit back** and be **taken care of**.

They call our flight on time, and everyone — except me — joins the queue. Why do people do this? We already have our tickets, our seats are allocated²... Why **line up**? It's an eleven-hour flight to L.A. — I'm not in any hurry to get on that plane!

When there are only a few people left to board, I join the queue and show my boarding pass — aisle³ seat (for my long legs), back row (usually more space there). When I find my seat, I find I got lucky: four whole seats in the middle section, just for me. Across the aisle, there's an Indian guy who looks pretty happy too — he's got the three seats to himself. We exchange a knowing look⁴, then start to **settle in**. I've got a lot of papers to **get through** before my first meeting in L.A, so I **get them out of** my briefcase and start reading.

Departure time comes and goes, and we're still sitting on the ground.

Eventually, we hear: 'Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. This is your captain speaking. Sorry for the delay, but we are **waiting for** a passenger. We will be **taking off** as soon as possible. I appreciate your patience. Please undo your seatbelts and leave the aisles clear.'

I smile at my fellow traveller — 'Typical,' he says. We **go back** to our reading — no point **stressing out**, nothing we can do. Some of the passengers a couple of rows ahead are complaining, but I **tune them out** and **get on with** my work.

About 20 minutes later, the captain comes on the line again: 'We are very sorry to inform you that, due to engine trouble, we will have to change aeroplanes. Please disembark by the rear and forward doors. I can assure you that we will be on a new plane and **taking off** again as soon as possible. Please **bear with** us while we try to rectify the problem.'

Grrr. Oh well, there's nothing we can do. I join the long line of grumbling⁵ passengers as they **head back** to the boarding lounge. I **head straight for** the bar and **ask for** a beer and a sandwich — it looks like we could be in for a long wait. I **sit down**, **open up** my laptop⁶ and **log on** — might as well use the time well!

I'm just **finishing off** my third sandwich and my fourth beer when they **call** us **back** to the plane. And guess what?! It's the same plane! Same plane, same seats, ready for take-off.

'Wonder what happened to the engine trouble!' I say to my companion as we **do up** our seatbelts.

'I guess they **dealt with** it. It's best not to ask too many questions.' He winks⁷ at me.

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12 We sit on the ground for about another hour — I guess they're still fiddling with⁸ the engine! Luckily, the AV⁹ system is working, so I sit back, put on the headphones and check out the movies.

13 After about half an hour, I take them off again, to have a word with one of the passengers sitting nearby. He's started abusing¹⁰ one of the flight attendants — he's really tearing into her. As I approach, the noise dies down a little — I'm just over two metres tall and I tower over the little chap¹¹!

14 'Sorry to butt in, but what's going on here? I think you need to cool down a bit,' I say to the angry man.

15 Sensing a new audience, he latches onto me, and starts shrieking¹² about meetings he'll be late for, a lunch he's missed and how he's going to sue¹³ the airline. He's clearly had a few drinks and he is swearing¹⁴ both at the flight attendant and at me.

16 'Look, that kind of language isn't called for,' I say. 'What you need to do is calm down and stop upsetting all the other passengers. This young lady can't do anything to help you — unless she's a mechanic. Are you a mechanic?' I ask her. She smiles, and shakes her head. 'There you are, then. Why don't you fill out the feedback form in the back of the inflight magazine, and draft¹⁵ an angry email that you can send off as soon as we arrive? In the meantime, please don't pick on the staff who are only trying to help.'

17 He grumpily turns away and gets out the airline magazine, looking for the feedback form (I hope there is one!).

18 Finally, about five hours behind schedule, we take off. A quiet cheer goes up from a little group nearby.

19 No long after take-off, the flight attendant wheels her trolley back to us. 'What would you like, Gentlemen?' We both order drinks and she throws in a few bags of nuts as well.

20 'We got lucky!' I say to the guy across the aisle, 'They started at the back.'

Vocabulary

⁸ **fiddling with**
jugando,
toqueteando

⁹ **AV**
audiovisual

¹⁰ **abusing**
haciéndoselo pagar
a ella; pegarle
la bronca

¹¹ **chap (col.)**
tipo, tío

¹² **shrieking**
chillar, gritar

¹³ **sue**
poner una
denuncia,
demandar

¹⁴ **swearing**
insultando,
diciendo
palabrotas

¹⁵ **draft**
redactar un
borrador





Vocabulary

¹⁶swap
intercambiamos



'I can see you're an optimist,' he says. 'Five hours late and you think we're lucky!'

'Yeah, I guess you could say I'm an optimist! Name's Eric, by the way, Eric de Runge.'

'Mine's Ravi,' he says, and he reaches across the aisle to shake hands.

'What takes you to L.A., Ravi?,' I ask him.

'Business,' he says, 'always business.'

'You go often?' I ask him.

'Depends on the clients, but I guess I go about once a month.'

'Hey, so do I! What a coincidence! What line of business are you in?'

It turns out that Ravi and I both work in the field of information technology; in fact, we're both involved in after-sales work. As we talk, we find out that we have a lot of contacts in common. We swap¹⁶ opinions about some of them and find that we agree on most! It even turns out that we've both come up against Robert King — the meanest and nastiest client in the States!

The flight attendants come and serve lunch and our conversation moves on to our families. We both have photos of our kids in our wallets.

'This is Emile, Jenna and Fabi,' he says proudly. 'Emile and Fabi are twins, as you can probably see...'

'They're totally identical. Can anyone tell them apart?'

'I can, and the rest of the family can. But they're always getting mixed up at school. I think they rather enjoy it.'

'My God, Ravi — they all take after you! Have you got a photo of your wife anywhere? Do they take after her at all?'

He shows me a photo of his wife and we both agree that they look much more like Ravi!

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Vocabulary

¹⁷acquaintances
conocidos

36 'It's a big responsibility, isn't it, having a family; knowing that you have to
look after them...'

37 'Yes, it is hard. I do this job so that I can take care of them all... but then
they have to put up with my endless business trips...'

38 As we chat, we discover that, although we miss our families, we also
anticipate our trips to L.A. with pleasure. We both like seeing friends and
acquaintances¹⁷ in L.A.

39 '...and I must confess that I don't really mind having a few days' break
from the family! It makes me enjoy being with them even more when I
return!'

40 As the flight attendant removes our trays, Ravi reclines on his three seats
and says he's going to try to get a little sleep. He seems to go to sleep almost
immediately.

41 I put a movie on and sit back and relax.

42 When the movie finishes, I get up to stretch my legs for a bit. I wander
up and down the aisle, looking at what people are watching and envying the
sleeping passengers — I can never sleep on planes. I need to be lying down
flat, completely stretched out, in order to sleep.

43 As I get back to my seat, Ravi glances up. 'The hostess just came by, so I
asked for a couple of whiskies.'

44 'That's very good of you, Ravi. Cheers!'

45 When she brought the drinks, we asked for a snack too. She brought us a
generous selection of sandwiches and nuts.

46 'I think she likes us!'

47 'Yes,' I said. 'We're the only ones on the plane who aren't complaining
about our late arrival.'



**Vocabulary**

- ¹⁸howl with
laughter
nos partimos
de risa
- ¹⁹full-blown
como Dios
manda

We drank our whiskies.

‘What have you been watching, Eric?’

‘An old one — *Life of Brian*. One of the best movies they ever made.’

‘Yeah, it’s a classic all right. What about that scene where the kings visit Brian and give him the gifts...

‘And then they realise it’s the wrong baby and they **take** all the gifts **back**...’

We howl with laughter¹⁸, order another drink, and **end up** spending the rest of the flight **talking about** our favourite Monty Python moments.

When we **touch down** in L.A — a mere 18 hours after we leave the UK — we are in the middle of a full-blown¹⁹ recital of ‘Always look on the bright side of life.’

Arms round each others’ shoulders we walk to the front of the plane singing and whistling. The flight attendants smile. A couple of them laugh at us, but then others **join in** — we’re the only cheerful passengers on the plane!

I say goodbye to Ravi as we **get off** the plane, before **heading into** the L.A. night.

‘Perhaps we’ll meet again, Eric,’ he says, as we shake hands. ‘Maybe we’ll **catch up** on our next flight to L.A.’

‘I hope so, Ravi — it’s been great,’ I say, giving him my card. ‘Why don’t you **look me up** the next time you’re **passing through** Amsterdam?’

‘I’ll be sure to do that. Bye now.’

‘Bye Ravi. Take care.’

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Chapter 3



ACTIVITIES

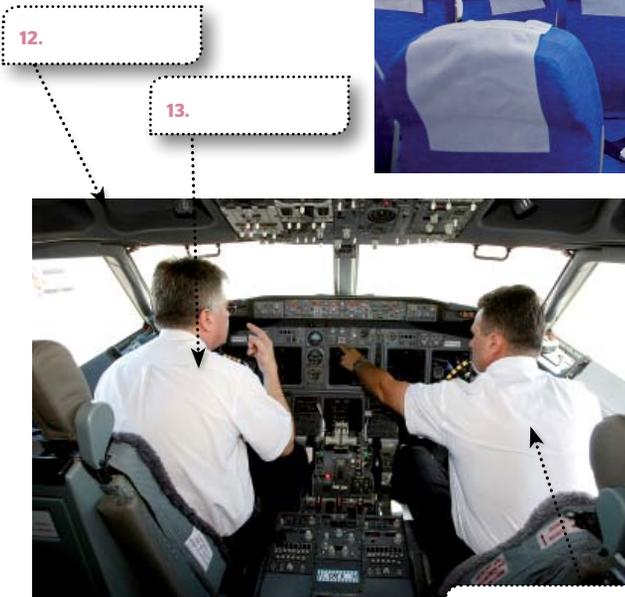
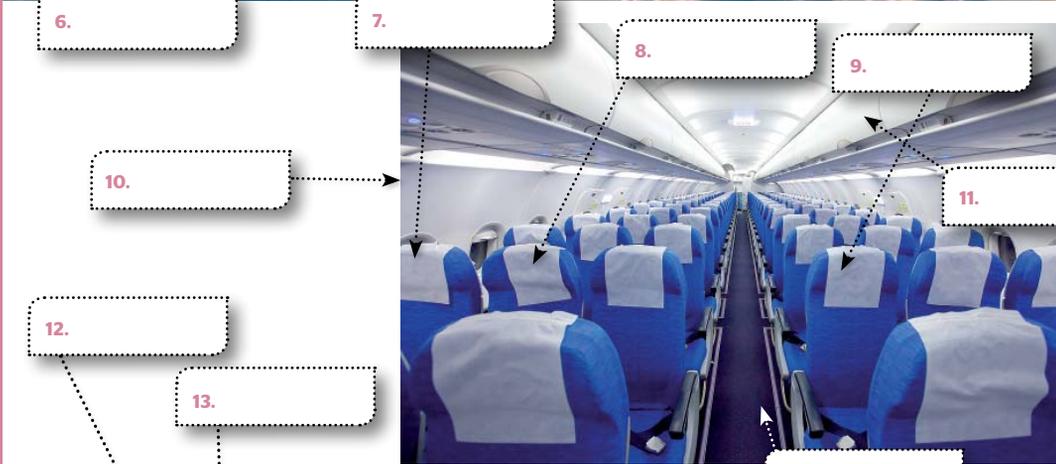
Warming up

1 Marca la respuesta correcta.

- Does Eric think it is a good idea to line up to board the plane?
 A. Yes – it's the only way to get on.
 B. No, because there is always someone who pushes in front of you.
 C. No – he doesn't see the point.
- What is the *first* reason that the captain gives for the delay?
 A. Engine trouble.
 B. Too many aircraft are waiting.
 C. A passenger is late.
- When the passengers are sent off the plane, what does Eric do?
 A. He calls his wife and says that he will be late.
 B. He goes to the bar, has a sandwich and does some work.
 C. He sits in the boarding lounge and gets to know Ravi.
- What does Eric suggest when he interrupts the conversation between the angry man and the flight attendant?
 A. That the angry man should complete a complaint form.
 B. That the angry man should talk to the airline company representative.
 C. That the angry man should sit down, relax and have a drink.
- How do Eric and Ravi feel about travelling so much?
 A. Eric loves it, but Ravi misses his family too much.
 B. They both enjoy it, although they miss their families.
 C. Neither of them likes it – it's tiring and they miss their families.
- Which statement is true?
 A. Eric sleeps after lunch.
 B. Ravi sleeps after lunch.
 C. Both of them sleep after lunch.



- 2 En un libro tan viajero como este, el avión tiene un papel destacado. Coloca todos los nombres de la lista en su etiqueta correspondiente.



- rear door
- forward door
- aisle seat
- middle seat
- window seat
- nose
- landing gear
- tail
- passenger cabin
- cockpit / flight deck
- aisle
- pilot
- copilot
- overhead locker
- wing



Focus on Phrasal Verbs

TAKING OFF

3 Observa los dibujos y relaciónalos con los *phrasal verbs* correspondientes de las etiquetas.



- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| take off <input type="checkbox"/> | touch down <input type="checkbox"/> | line up <input type="checkbox"/> |
| do up <input type="checkbox"/> | put up with <input type="checkbox"/> | check in <input type="checkbox"/> |

4 Aquí tienes seis verbos. Agrúpalos de dos en dos según su significado en el texto y luego propón una traducción al español.

- | | | |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| cool down | bear with | put up with |
| take care of | look after | calm down |

1. / →
2. / →
3. / →



- 5 A. Completa las oraciones siguientes con alguno de estos verbos. Al lado de cada uno de ellos te indicamos si se trata de un verbo separable (S) o inseparable (I). Como verás, en estas frases no usamos ningún pronombre de complemento directo, así que en los verbos separables lo puedes poner tanto entre el verbo y la preposición como después del *phrasal verb*.

open up (S)

ask for (I)

take off (S)

wait for (I)

get out (S)

check out (S)

1. Eric a newspaper of his briefcase.
 2. The plane was late because they were a passenger who was late.
 3. He his laptop
 4. He his headphones
 5. He the movies
 6. Eric a beer and a sandwich
- B. Reescribe cada frase sustituyendo el texto en negrita por un pronombre. Recuerda que si el *phrasal verb* es separable, el pronombre solo puede ir entre el verbo y la preposición.
1. He took **his papers** out of his bag and started to read.
.....
 2. The captain said that the delay was due to a late passenger. They were **waiting for the passenger** to arrive because his luggage was already on the plane.
.....
 3. He turned on **his computer** and read his emails while he was waiting.
.....
 4. When he sat down, he put **his headphones** on. Five minutes later, he took **his headphones** off again.
.....
.....
 5. As he sat down, he checked out **all the movies on the plane**.
.....

- 6 Usa los verbos siguientes para completar las oraciones y añade, si es preciso, el pronombre de complemento directo. Luego indica si el verbo es transitivo o intransitivo.

check in

check out

get out

turn away

- I tried to tell John I was sorry, but he just
 transitivo *intransitivo*
- I at the hotel at about 6 o'clock and went straight to my room for a sleep.
 transitivo *intransitivo*
- After sleeping for a while, I went to some of the local restaurants and clubs.
 transitivo *intransitivo*
- My boss was in a bad mood, so when she told me to
, I left immediately!
 transitivo *intransitivo*

MOVING ALONG

- « 1-12 7 a. Las afirmaciones siguientes describen hechos ocurridos al principio de la historia (párrafos 1-12). Completa las frases con alguno de estos *phrasal verbs*.

bear with

gets on

puts on

checks out

do up

gets out

lines up

goes back

gets on with

stress out

- Eric eventually to board the plane.
- Eric the plane.
- Eric his papers and starts reading.
- Eric doesn't about the problems; he just
 to his reading and his work.
- The captain asks the passengers to be patient and
 them.
- Ravi and Eric their seat-belts.
- Eric his headphones and the movies.



B. Veamos si ya dominas los *phrasal verbs* y puedes completar cada frase con la opción correcta.

El equivalente británico de **line up** es **queue up**.



- When somebody makes me wait for a long time, I.....
 - line up
 - stress out
 - check out
- When English people are waiting for a bus, they
 - sit down
 - tear into
 - line up
- James kept talking to me at the office yesterday. I asked him to stop, as I had to my work.
 - get on with
 - do up
 - get out
- I was late for dinner and my family was already their sandwiches.
 - doing up
 - finishing off
 - bearing with
- After dinner, I always go and in the lounge and what's on tv.
 - stress out; get on with
 - go back; get on
 - sit down; check out

« 15-35 8 Completa estos fragmentos del texto con la preposición adecuada.

out (x2)	for (x2)	up (x2)	off (x2)	after	
apart	across	away	on	down	onto

- An angry man latches Eric and starts shouting. Eric tells him that that kind of behaviour isn't called He tells him that he needs to calm and stop shouting. Eric suggests that the passenger fill a feedback form so that he can send an angry mail. The passenger turns and gets the magazine to look the complaint form.
- Five hours behind schedule, they take and a cheer goes from a little group. Ravi reaches the aisle to shake hands with Eric. He says he goes to L.A. about once a month, though it depends the clients.
- Eric is amazed by Ravi's twins – he doesn't think that anyone can tell them Ravi admits that they often get mixed at school. All Ravi's children take him.

En general, **fill in** se usa más en inglés británico y **fill out** en inglés americano, pero significan exactamente lo mismo.

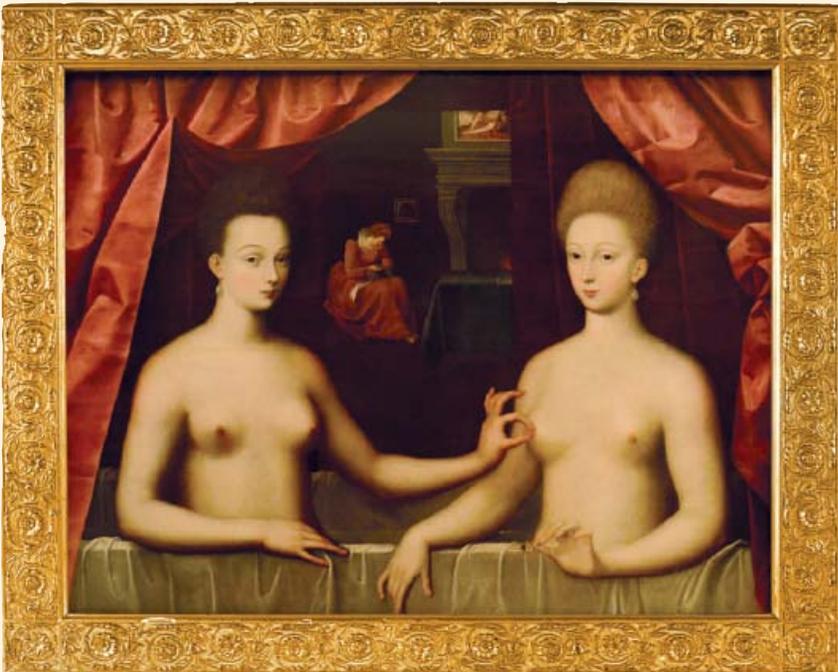


- 9 Lee este texto sobre la visita a un museo y complétalo con algunos *phrasals* del ejercicio anterior.

Last year I visited the Louvre in Paris. I don't know much about art, so when a guided group went past, I (1) them. The guide was very informative and I enjoyed listening to his explanations of the paintings.

'This painting here shows two sisters taking a bath. You can see they are sisters — it is difficult to (2) them , isn't it? These two girls were actually courtesans at the court of Louis XIV. The king liked both of them very much, but even he got them (3) sometimes. Sometimes he even took both of them to bed — it (4) his mood.'

One of the men in the group was offended by this 'extra information'. He said that kind of detail wasn't (5) , and he would prefer the guide to be more professional. The guide then got offended by the man's criticism, and the two of them started to shout at each other. I stepped in and stopped them, just before they started hitting each other. I'm a big man, so they listened to me when I told them to (6) and start behaving properly. The visitor (7) with his wife after that, telling the guide that he would (8) a letter to the tour company.





« 38-40 **10** Sustituye los verbos en negrita de estos fragmentos del texto por alguno de los siguientes *phrasal verbs*.

lie down

take away

look forward to

get back

find out

hang out with

catch up with

As we chat, we **discover** (1) that, although we miss our families, we also **anticipate** (2) our trips to L.A. **with pleasure**. We both like **seeing** (3) friends and acquaintances in L.A.

1.

2.

3.

'...and I must confess that I don't really mind having a few days' break from the family! It makes me enjoy **being with** (4) them even more when I **return** (5).'

4.

5.

As the flight attendant **removes** (6) our trays, Ravi **reclines** (7) on his three seats and says he's going to try to get a little sleep. He seems to go to sleep almost immediately.

6.

7.

11 A. Escribe la partícula que falta en cada frase.

1. Ravi and Eric end spending the rest of the flight talking about Monty Python movies.
2. They touch in L.A. eighteen hours after taking
3. Some of the passengers and crew laugh their singing but others join with the singing.
4. Ravi thinks that maybe they will catch on their next flight to LA.

B. Usa los *phrasal verbs* de la sección anterior para completar las frases siguientes.

1. I finally my friend Sara last week. We usually have dinner once a week, but I hadn't seen her for three weeks.
2. The minute the plane, some of the passengers were standing up and grabbing their bags, anxious to get off.
3. I love going to karaoke bars when there is a song that everyone likes and they all
4. I wanted pizza, he wanted sushi, but we eating Mexican!

TOUCHING DOWN

12 Traduce estas frases al inglés usando estos *phrasal verbs*.

tower over

look somebody up

end up

wait for

go up

tune somebody out

butt in

- « 5 1. *Disculpen el retraso, estamos esperando a un pasajero.*
.....
- « 6 2. *Hay unos pasajeros quejándose un par de filas delante, pero yo desconecto y sigo trabajando.*
.....
- « 13 3. *¡A ese tío le saco varias cabezas!*
.....
- « 14 4. *Perdonad que me meta, pero ¿qué pasa aquí?*
.....
- « 18 5. *Se oye vitorear a un grupillo de gente.*
.....
- « 53 6. *Nos tronchamos de risa, pedimos otra copa y pasamos el resto del vuelo hablando de nuestros momentos favoritos de los Monty Python.*
.....
- « 58 7. *La próxima vez que pases por Ámsterdam dame un toque.*
.....