

The Plastic Plane's First Flight

Lee Powell:

The plastic plane is finally airborne. The Boeing 787 makes its first flight as the world's first commercial plane constructed largely from lightweight composite materials. Other planes are mostly titanium and aluminum. Boeing says the 787 will be quieter, produce lower emissions, and use twenty percent less fuel than other planes. It says passengers will ride in a more comfortable cabin with better air quality and larger windows.

Randy Neville:

The airplane flew great. There were no surprises, and the airplane did exactly as we were expecting, and that's goodness from the-from the pilot viewpoint.

Lee Powell:

But this first flight will be one of many before passengers step on board. A half dozen 787s will endure nine months of testing, subjected to conditions well beyond those found in normal airline service. The two-member crew on this first 787 performed basic checks during the roughly three-hour flight, a flight cut short because of bad weather on the ground.

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Getting the 787 off the ground has been a challenge for Boeing... ill-fitting parts and other glitches pushing back delivery dates five times, costing the aerospace giant credibility and billions of dollars.

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This version of the wide-body jet will carry some 250 passengers about nine thousand miles. All Nippon Airways of Japan is the first customer, expecting their 787 late next year.

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Lee Powell, The Associated Press.

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