Qantas to launch non-stop Sydney–New York flights

LEVEL B2


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I. WARM-UP

1. What is the longest flight you have taken?
2. Do you prefer a stopover or a non-stop journey? Why?
3. What helps you stay comfortable on long flights?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

route
a regular path or journey that a plane, bus or train follows

disclose
to share information publicly that was not known before

premium
higher quality or price than the standard option

margin
the percentage of income that a company keeps as profit

demand
how many people want to buy or use something

simulator
a machine or program that copies real conditions for training

wellbeing
a state of being healthy and comfortable

cabin
the inside area of an aircraft where passengers or crew sit

III. READING

Qantas says travellers will be able to fly non-stop between Sydney and New York in about 18 hours from mid-2028. The route is part of Project Sunrise and follows direct Sydney to London flights planned for October 2027.

It would be the first commercial direct service from Sydney's Kingsford-Smith airport to New York's JFK. Qantas has not disclosed prices for the new route but has suggested direct fares could be about 20% higher. Tickets are due on sale in August 2027.

In July, a test aircraft flew 24 hours 24 minutes from Melbourne to Toulouse. Each aircraft adds a wellbeing zone between the economy and premium economy cabins, with guided exercise videos plus snacks and drinks. The 238-seat layout includes six first-class suites, 52 business, 40 premium economy, and 140 economy.

The airline expects Project Sunrise and sustained premium demand to lift earnings by $400m over five years, raising its profit margin from 4% to 10%. It is training 360 pilots on an A350 simulator and preparing 1,200 cabin crew for the new aircraft.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **The Guardian***: "Qantas announces 18-hour direct flights...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. When are the non-stop Sydney–New York flights due to start?
2. How long will the new direct flight take?
3. What special area will the new aircraft include?
4. When will tickets for the route go on sale?
5. What profit margin is Qantas aiming for?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Would you pay more to avoid a stopover? Why or why not?
2. What features matter most to you on an ultra-long flight?
3. Should airlines add more space or keep prices lower?
4. How might direct flights change Australia–US travel?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Wish / if only

Use wish + past simple for wishes about the present (unreal now). Use wish/if only + had + past participle for regrets about the past.

"Many people **wish Sydney were** *closer to New York."*
"If only the airline **had started** *training crew earlier."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each sentence with the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. Many travellers wish they (know) ___ the new fares already. _____
2. I wish the route (exist) ___ when I visited Sydney. _____
3. Cabin crew wish they (have) ___ more rest between trips. _____
4. Passengers wish they (sleep) ___ better on long flights. _____
5. If only I (be) ___ in Toulouse when the test flight landed! _____

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.


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I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8–10 minutes warm-up, 10 minutes vocabulary, 12–15 minutes reading, 10 minutes comprehension, 10 minutes grammar, 12–15 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach or check: non-stop, route, disclose, premium, margin, simulator, wellbeing, cabin; highlight key numbers and dates before reading.
- Run a first skim read for main facts, then a scan for figures; pair-check answers before whole-class feedback. No sensitive content is expected; if prices feel personal, let students discuss the news rather than their own spending.
- Differentiate by product: stronger students summarise Project Sunrise in three sentences; others underline all numbers and turn them into one-sentence facts.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Take a quick poll, then pair students with opposite views to exchange reasons.
2. Board three feature types (seat, food, activity) and ask for one concrete example of each.
3. Split the room: Team Space vs Team Price. After 3 minutes, switch sides and rebut.
4. Elicit two changes (business, tourism). In pairs, add one benefit and one risk for each.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Writing: In pairs, draft a 70-word onboard announcement explaining the wellbeing zone rules.

Research: Create a one-slide comparison of two ultra long routes, including time and aircraft.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Wish / if only

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

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IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. When are the non-stop Sydney–New York flights due to start?
   From mid-2028.
2. How long will the new direct flight take?
   About 18 hours.
3. What special area will the new aircraft include?
   A wellbeing zone with exercises, snacks and drinks.
4. When will tickets for the route go on sale?
   August 2027.
5. What profit margin is Qantas aiming for?
   About 10%, up from 4%.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each sentence with the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. Many travellers wish they ___ the new fares already. **knew**
2. I wish the route ___ when I visited Sydney. **had existed**
3. Cabin crew wish they ___ more rest between trips. **had**
4. Passengers wish they ___ better on long flights. **slept**
5. If only I ___ in Toulouse when the test flight landed! **had been**

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Use wish + past simple for wishes about the present (unreal now). Use wish/if only + had + past participle for regrets about the past. (Examples constructed.)

"Many people **wish Sydney were** *closer to New York."*

"If only the airline **had started** *training crew earlier."*