



Teaching classes E and G airspace:

As a DPE I find that more than a few Private Pilot applicants are confused about E & G airspace. And I used to struggle to teach it before I figured out the cause of the confusion and came up with a solution.

The cause of the confusion is that classes B, C and D have vertical wall boundaries, that is, the separation from adjacent airspace (except class A) is vertical. Students want to carry that same vertical concept into the division between E & G. The end result is that I am often (incorrectly) told that class E is inside the magenta shading at non-towered airports, and the area outside is class G.

The way to teach this so that students get it right is to very specifically tell them that while the boundaries between B, C, D and E are in fact vertical; the boundary between E and G is HORIZONTAL. Then use an analogy that they can grasp. Tell them that everywhere outside of B, C and D there is a thin "blanket" of class G down at the ground (G is for "ground") with a very thick layer of class E all the way up to class A. Then tell them that the only thing that changes is how thick the thin blanket is, and the thickness changes at the magenta shading. And tell them why it changes thickness; to protect aircraft to a lower altitude when they are doing instrument approaches into airports with the magenta shading. Students always learn (remember) better when they understand why something is the way it is.

Yeah, I know, in places where nobody lives the class G goes up to 14,500, but because very few people live there very few students train or fly there either.

Larry Bothe, MCFI

*Larry Bothe is an FAA Designated Pilot Examiner, FAASTeam Representative and Gold Seal Instructor in the Indianapolis, IN FSDO area. He is also a Master Certified Flight Instructor as designated by Master Instructors, LLC and has over 6500 hours in more than 70 types of aircraft. He may be contacted at [LBothe@comcast.net](mailto:LBothe@comcast.net).*