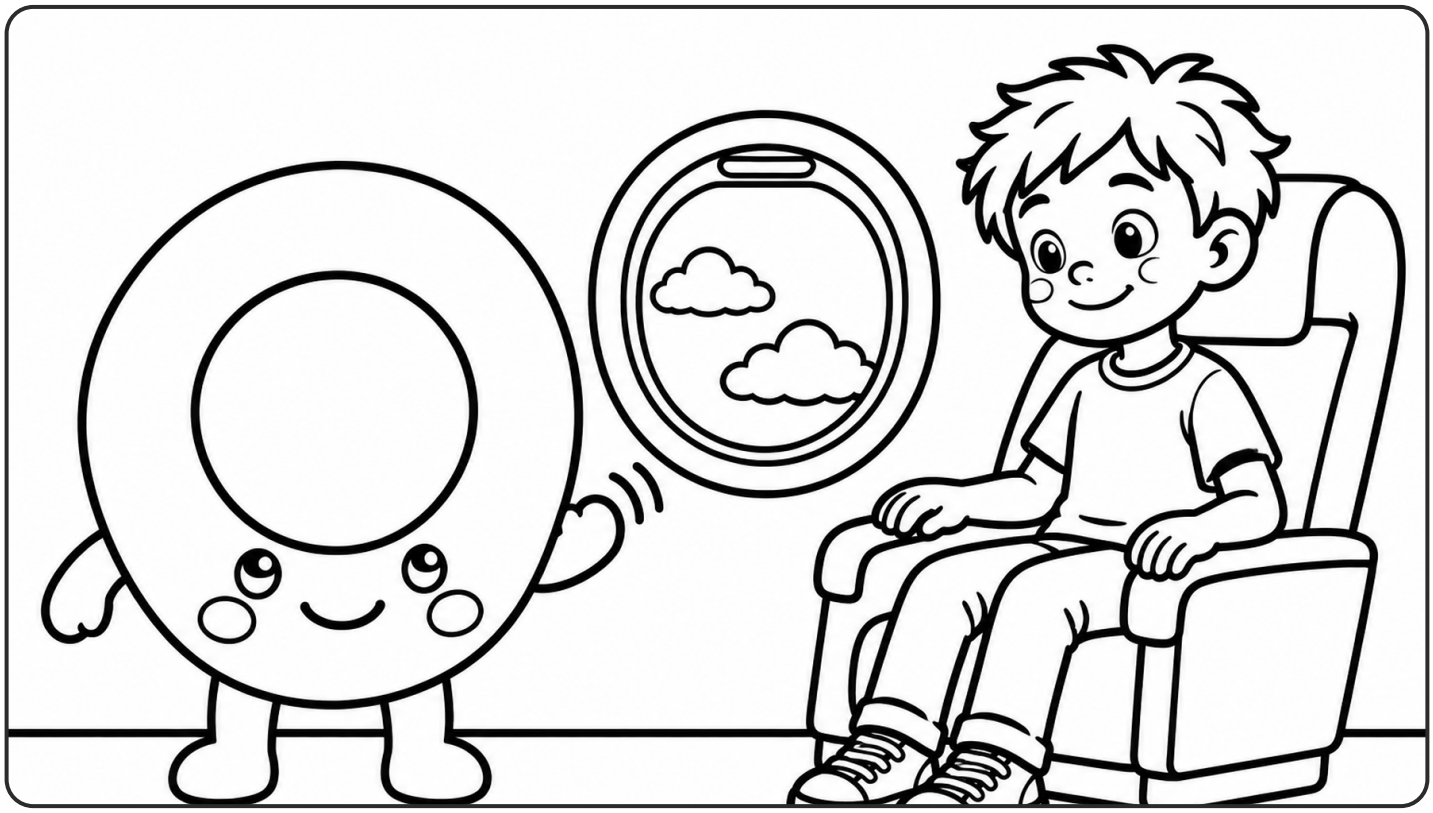
Why do ears pop on a plane?

Pop! Whoa, my ears feel funny! Why do ears pop on a plane?



Why?

1. **Air presses on us.**
   Air is all around us, and it presses on us all the time. When a plane goes up, the air pressing around you gets lower. When the plane comes down, it gets higher again.
2. **Your ear has a little drum.**
   Deep inside your ear is your eardrum, a thin piece of skin stretched tight, like a little drum. Behind it is a tiny room, full of air. On the plane, the air outside changes and the air in the tiny room does not. So your eardrum gets pushed, and your ear feels full and plugged.
3. **A tiny tube makes the pop.**
   A tiny tube goes from the tiny room down to the back of your throat. Most of the time it's closed. But when you swallow or yawn, it opens for a moment. Air moves in or out, the push is even again, and pop!

Try it! Hear the pop

You need: a sip of water

1. Next time your ears feel plugged, take a sip of water and swallow.
2. Or give a big yawn.

What happened? Can you hear the pop?

Video + more questions:
whywhywhykids.com/earpop

scan with a grown-up