

Topic 4 FAQs

1. How is the helicopter like a hummingbird? Both the helicopter and the hummingbird can hover and move in any direction.
2. What other kinds of VTOL are there besides helicopters? A more airplane-like aircraft with VTOL capabilities is the Harrier “jump jet.” The Harrier, developed in England, has fixed wings. It uses directional thrust (swiveling nozzles) to direct the jet stream from its engine downward for vertical flight and backward for horizontal flight.
3. What is the largest helicopter? The world’s largest helicopter is the Russian Mil MI-12, called “Homer.” It has a span across its two rotors of 67 m (220 feet) and is over 37 m (121 feet) long.
4. How fast can a helicopter go? The fastest a helicopter has ever flown is 402 km/h (249 miles per hour). This record was achieved in a specially adapted Westland Lynx in 1986.
5. What does compressed air have to do with a helicopter lifting off? Compressed air helps a helicopter lift from the ground. When a helicopter’s rotor blades spin, they push air down. The air is squeezed between the rotor blades and the ground. This compressed air pushes up against the rotor blades and helps the helicopter rise.
6. Why are skids used more than wheels for landing gear? Skids are used mainly because they weigh less than wheels. On larger, more powerful helicopters, wheels are used because of their convenience. It is hard to move a helicopter with skids when it is on the ground.