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How high can an airplane fly? While the atmosphere makes flying possible it also limits the possible ceiling because the pressure decreases with elevation and therefore there is less oxygen. The pilot begins to need more oxygen when higher than 12,000 feet, and oxygen may be supplied him artificially up to 45,000 feet without using extra pressure, but above that to get enough it must be supplied him under pressure. He may therefore under these artificial conditions operate at almost any height. The engine, however, can not, because while more oxygen may be supplied to it by superchargers, these have their limitations. One authority believes with the present materials 61,000 feet is the limit. New materials and design may extend this limit.