



WHAT'S "ALTITUDE," ANYWAY?

A simple definition of "altitude" is the vertical distance above some point or level used as a reference. The reference point can be the ground below, sea level or some other standard. We count seven different kinds of altitude, as follows:

- Indicated altitude—the altimeter reading;
- Absolute altitude—distance above the ground directly below;
- True altitude—elevation above sea level;
- Height—the distance above a certain point;
- Pressure altitude—difference between sea level ISA and observed pressure;
- Density altitude—difference between sea level ISA and observed density; and
- GPS altitude—geometric height above mean sea level.