A more direct route to savings

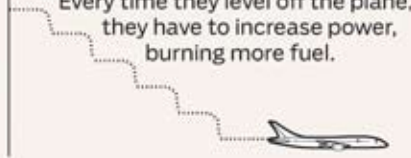
Current procedure

FUELING
Estimates of the aircraft's total payload are made, and the plane is fueled to match that weight.

ASCENT
Air traffic controllers dictate tacking maneuvers to maintain specific separation standards between aircraft.

FLIGHT
Aircraft typically follow a fixed course from one radar control to another, allowing controllers to measure the plane's speed and altitude to ensure separation from other aircraft.

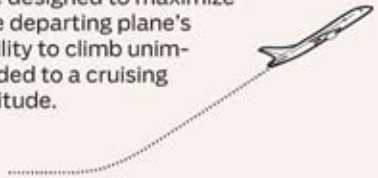
DESCENT
Pilots descend in stages, waiting for other planes and weather to clear. Every time they level off the plane, they have to increase power, burning more fuel.



New procedure

FUELING
The plane is loaded with less fuel than the initial estimate. Twenty minutes prior to departure, the pilot receives a final, more precise payload estimate and fine-tunes the fuel amount needed.

ASCENT
Advanced traffic control methods and procedures are designed to maximize the departing plane's ability to climb unimpeded to a cruising altitude.



FLIGHT
Computing weather-forecast data and the aircraft's weight and engine configuration, a pilot can chart the most efficient path between the origin and destination. This navigation practice is currently in use only on Pacific Ocean flights.

DESCENT
At a specific distance from the destination, pilots begin a continuous, gliding descent until the plane reaches 1,500 feet, following a path charted by FAA computers.

SOURCE: United Airlines

TRIBUNE