

6.5 Booking systems

Syllabus 2026 - 2028

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Characteristics, uses, advantages and disadvantages of online booking systems, including the travel industry, concerts, cinemas and sporting events

Characteristics of an online booking system

- Customers use a website or app, available 24 hours a day
- A central database holds every seat, room or ticket and shows what is available in real time
- Customers choose a date and seat, enter their details and pay online
- The database is updated at once, so the same seat cannot be sold twice (no double booking)
- A confirmation, e-ticket or QR code is sent by email or SMS

Uses

Industry	Example
Travel	Flights, trains, buses, hotels and car hire.
Concerts	Tickets for concerts and shows, with seat selection.
Cinemas	Choosing a film, time and seat in advance.
Sporting events	Match tickets, often with a QR code that is scanned at the gate.

How a seat is booked

- The customer searches for the date, event and number of seats
- The system checks the database and shows the seats that are free
- The customer picks a seat, which is locked while the customer pays
- After the payment is accepted, the seat is marked as booked and a confirmation is sent
- If the customer does not pay in time, the seat is released again

Advantages	Disadvantages
+ Customers can book at any time and from anywhere	- Needs an internet connection and a device
+ No travelling or queuing, and confirmation is instant	- Payment details could be stolen, and fake sites exist
+ Prices and seats can be compared, and seat plans can be seen	- The website may crash when many people book popular events
+ Fewer staff are needed, so costs are lower, and tickets are paperless	- No personal advice from a person, and extra booking fees may apply
	- A fault could still cause a double booking or lost bookings

EXAM TIP

If asked how double booking is avoided, say that the central database is updated immediately and the seat is locked, so it cannot be selected by another customer.

Key terms

Term	Meaning
Real time	Information that is updated immediately as things happen.
E-ticket	A ticket stored or sent electronically, for example as a QR code.
Double booking	The same seat or room being sold to two different customers.