

he stated that an increase in the speed of movement or flow would cause a decrease in the fluid's pressure. This is exactly what happens to air passing over the curved top of the airplane wing.

An appropriate analogy can be made with water flowing through a garden hose. Water moving through a hose of constant diameter exerts a uniform pressure on the hose; but if the diameter of a section of the hose is increased or decreased, it is certain to change the pressure of the water at that point. Suppose the hose was pinched, thereby constricting the area through which the water flows. Assuming that the same volume of water flows through the constricted portion of the hose in the same period of time as before the hose was pinched, it follows that the speed of flow must increase at that point.

Therefore, if a portion of the hose is constricted, it not only increases the speed of the flow, but also decreases the pressure at that point. Like results could be achieved if streamlined solids (airfoils) were introduced at the same point in the hose. This same principle is the basis for the measurement of airspeed (fluid flow) and for analyzing the airfoil's ability to produce lift.

A practical application of Bernoulli's theorem is the venturi tube. The venturi tube has an air inlet which narrows to a throat (constricted point) and an outlet section which increases in diameter toward the rear. The diameter of the outlet is the same as that of the inlet. At the throat, the airflow speeds up and the pressure decreases; at the outlet, the airflow slows and the pressure increases. [Figure 2-4]

If air is recognized as a body and it is accepted that it must follow the above laws, one can begin to see how and why an airplane wing develops lift as it moves through the air.

AIRFOIL DESIGN

In the sections devoted to Newton's and Bernoulli's discoveries, it has already been discussed in general

terms the question of how an airplane wing can sustain flight when the airplane is heavier than air. Perhaps the explanation can best be reduced to its most elementary concept by stating that lift (flight) is simply the result of fluid flow (air) about an airfoil—or in everyday language, the result of moving an airfoil (wing), by whatever means, through the air.

Since it is the airfoil which harnesses the force developed by its movement through the air, a discussion and explanation of this structure, as well as some of the material presented in previous discussions on Newton's and Bernoulli's laws, will be presented.

An airfoil is a structure designed to obtain reaction upon its surface from the air through which it moves or that moves past such a structure. Air acts in various ways when submitted to different pressures and velocities; but this discussion will be confined to the parts of an airplane that a pilot is most concerned with in flight—namely, the airfoils designed to produce lift. By looking at a typical airfoil profile, such as the cross section of a wing, one can see several obvious characteristics of design. [Figure 2-5] Notice that there is a difference in the curvatures of the upper and lower surfaces of the airfoil (the curvature is called camber). The camber of the upper surface is more pronounced than that of the lower surface, which is somewhat flat in most instances.

In figure 2-5, note that the two extremities of the airfoil profile also differ in appearance. The end which faces forward in flight is called the leading edge, and is rounded; while the other end, the trailing edge, is quite narrow and tapered.

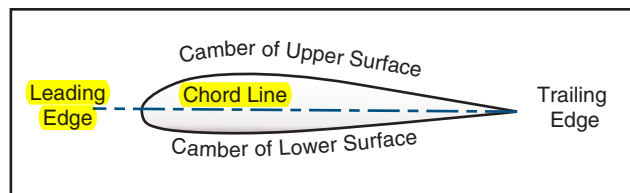


Figure 2-5. Typical airfoil section.

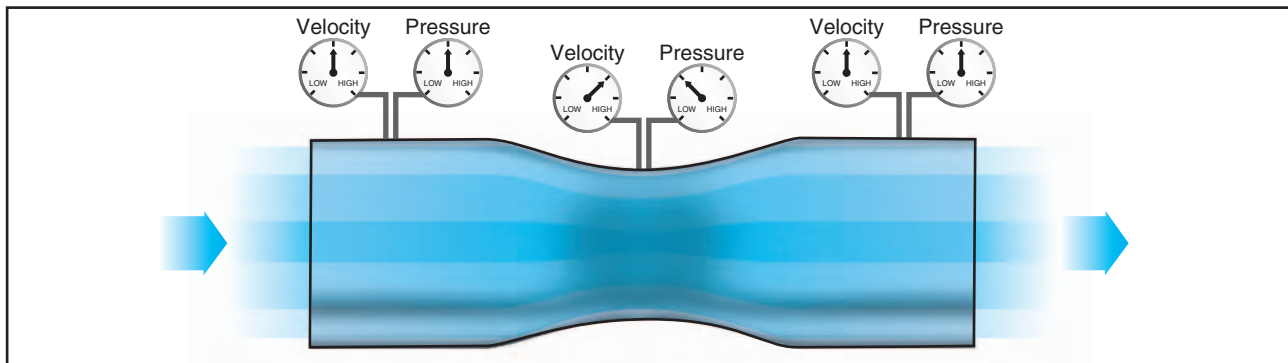


Figure 2-4. Air pressure decreases in a venturi.