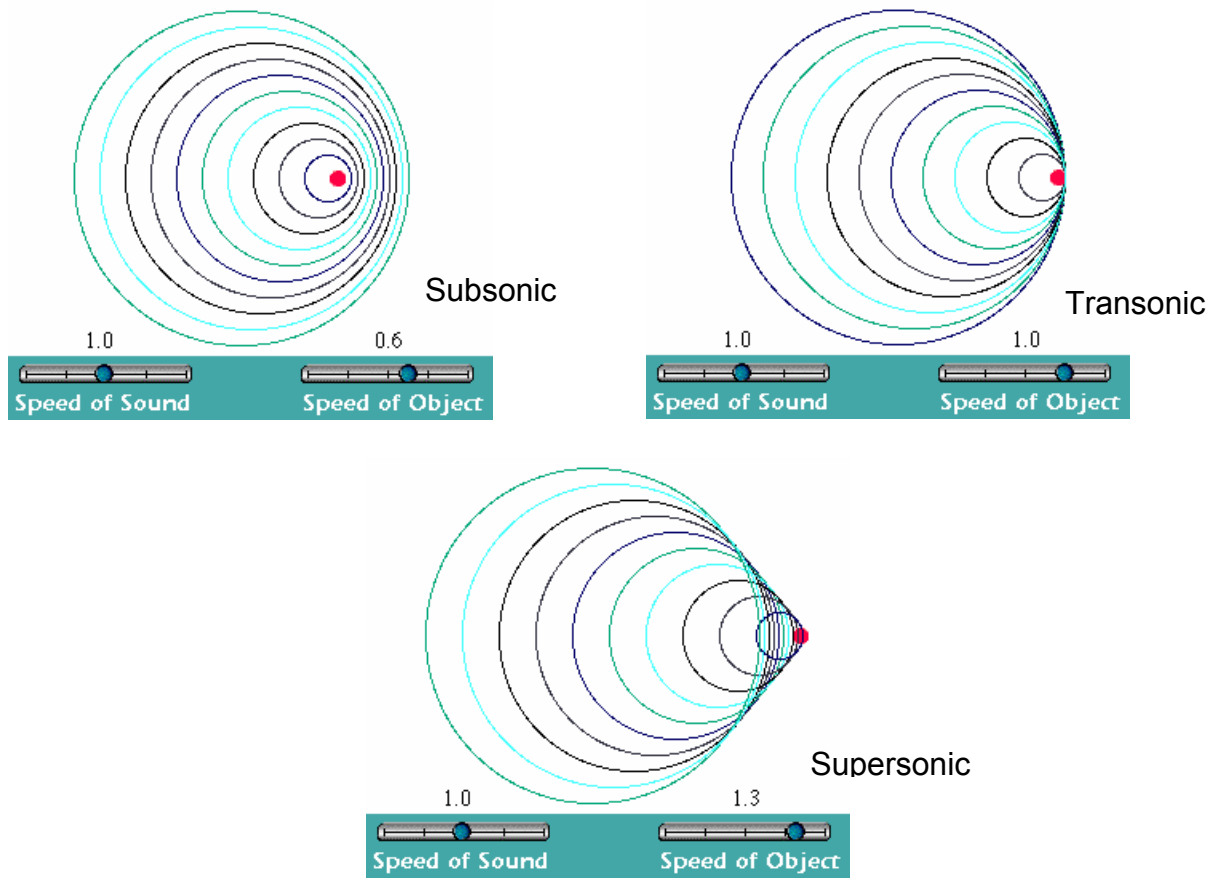


What is a "Sonic Boom"?



Every so often, just the right combination of conditions and events occur to create a fascinating event. On the left, an FA-18 is caught passing through the sound barrier. Not only were the percent humidity, density and temperature just right, there just happened to be a camera in the vicinity to capture the moment. The FA-18 is actually in transonic flight, with normal shock waves emanating from behind the canopy and across the wings and fuselage. The condition will last for only an instant, and once supersonic flow exists completely around the aircraft, sharp-angled sonic cone, as in the F-14 on the left, replace the normal shock waves. The odds against getting shots like these are staggering.

