

Module Zero: How to be an Effective Student Writer

*A STUDENT'S SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR WRITING IN ACADEMIA AND
BEYOND*

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What's In this Module?

- Part 1: Fundamental Academic Writing Concepts for In-class Assignments
- Part 2: Basics of mastering in-class writing assignments
- Part 3: Writing Beyond Academia

Part I: Fundamental Academic Writing Concepts for In-class Assignments

HOW DO I WRITE FOR IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS?

How do I write for in-class assignments?

- Rules of Engagement.
- Fundamentals of successful writing made easy.
- Basics of mastering in-class writing assignments.

Rules of Engagement

- This module contains the writing rules for this class
- To maximize assignment points (grade) follow this module
- We agree on the terminology in this module for this class

Rules of Engagement

Aviation vocabulary has very specific technical meanings:

- *You are expected to follow this paradigm*
- *Using official, reputable sources (e.g. FAA, ICAO, NTSB, government sources, air carrier sources, peer-reviewed scientific papers, etc.) TO EXPLAIN YOUR RATIONALE!!!*
- *Phraseology, for example*

Rules of Engagement

- Why do we use specific words in aviation?
 - Safety #1
 - Time-critical decision-making
 - No ambiguity: We are all talking about the exact same thing when it matters most!
 - E.g. Rudder v. aileron v. elevator



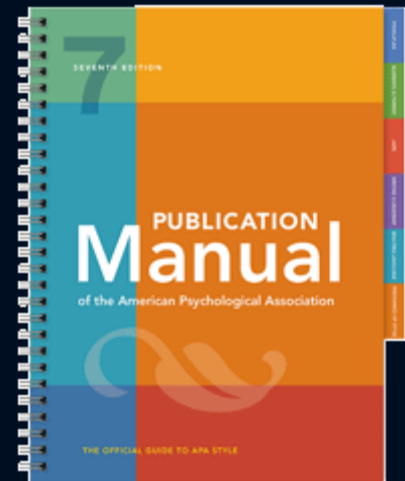
(L'Avionnaire, 2025)

Fundamentals of successful writing made easy

- Start with the Greeks, specifically Aristotle for format and form: vocabulary for basic writing concepts.
- Who is your audience? *Who is it in class?*

Fundamentals of successful writing made easy

- Reduce “noise” to a bare minimum
- You aren't on Twitter (X), reddit, YouTube, writing a blog, etc.
- Understanding Academic Sourcing (citations) for In-class Writing
- APA 7th Edition rule for formatting



The TSC is also in TSC. Health Risk Associated with e-Cigarettes and Smoking is High

sentence case

By using a public health risk due to electronic cigarette use
among young people, electronic cigarette use is a cigarette in a cigarette, and
small devices that are used in TSC, along with other chemicals and toxins.

Case for Tobacco C

Journal

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0057987>

Talbot, L. D., O'Malley, P. M., Martin, S. A., Williams, L. D., & Schickling, J. P. (2013).

REFERENCE LIST

Williams, M., Villarreal, A., Bozhilov, K., Lin, S., & Talbot, P.

last name and initials of the authors

& = "and"

(2013). Metal and silicate particles including nanoparticles

year

title of the article

are present in electronic cigarette cartomizer fluid and aerosol.

PloS One, 8(3), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0057987>

academic journal

journal title

journal title

issue number

journal title

journal title

volume number

page range

Zhu, S., Fan, L. Y., Boudreau, L., Cameron, S. E., Jansen, A., Yau, L., & Lin, M. (2014). Four

digital object identifier (DOI)

journal title

journal title

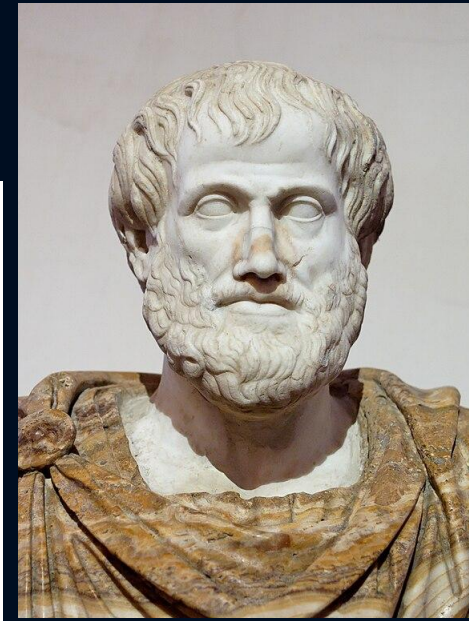
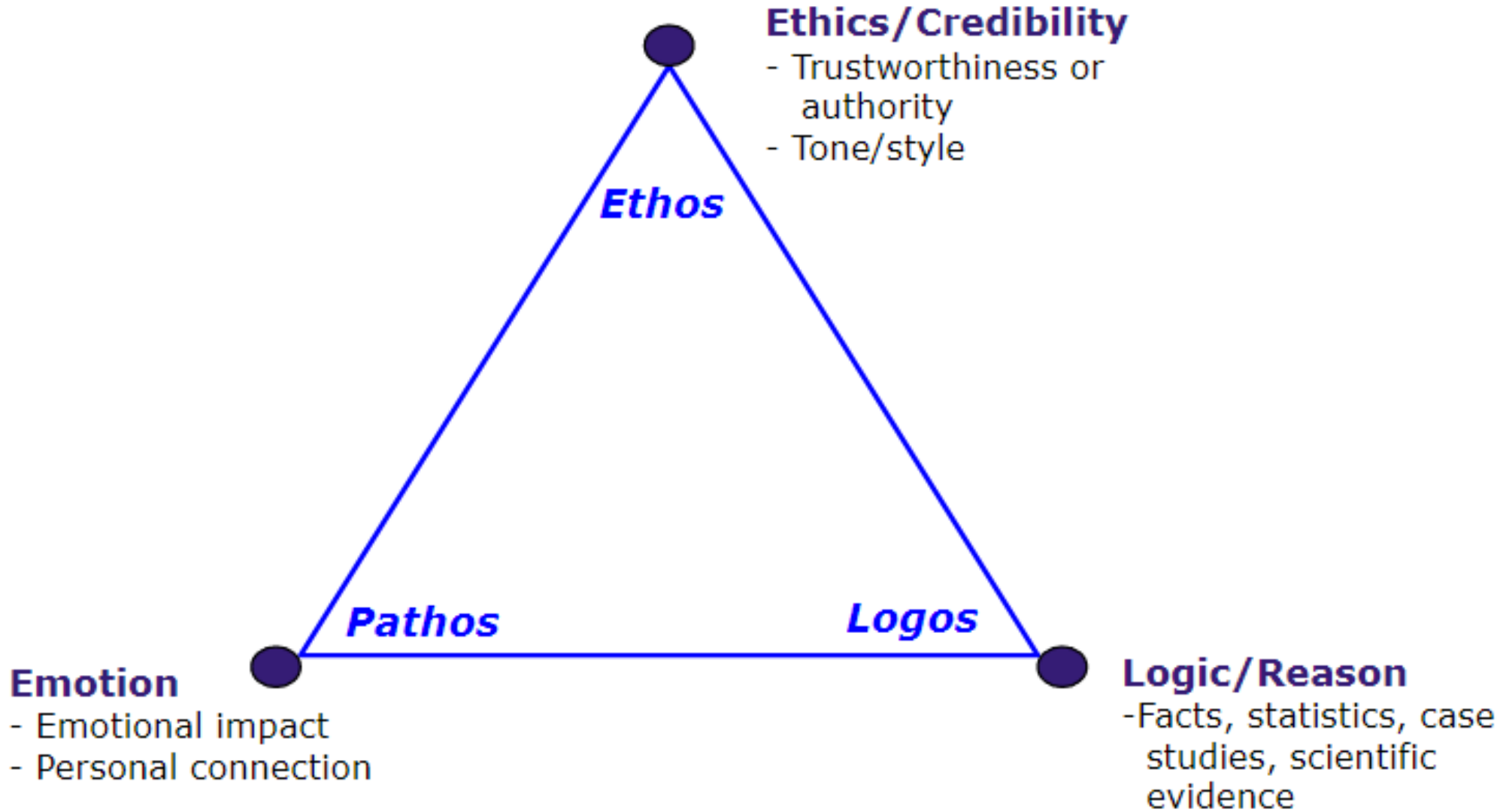
11187

Start with the Greeks, specifically Aristotle for a vocabulary of basic writing concepts to help.



"Bust of Aristotle (384--322 BCE). Marble, Roman copy after bronze original by Lysippos (4th century BCE) from 330 BCE [*Maybe*]; the alabaster mantle is a modern addition." (University of Nevada Las Vegas, <https://www.physics.unlv.edu/~jeffery/astro/aristotle/aristotle.html>)

Aristotle's Rhetorical Triangle



Roman Triclinium Rhetorical Triangle Exercise



Ethos

- Street Cred
- Why should anyone listen to you?
- Greek/latin for ethics
- *Ethos is what you do to prove to your audience that you can be trusted, that you are a credible source of information, or why the information is credible.*
- Subjective v. objective (See *logos*)

Ethos

- Assurance that the sources are good people who want to do the right thing.
- Especially important when writing an argument to an audience who disagrees with you.
- Cormier, 2025. Cruthers, 2021.



(Paramount Pictures)

Logos

- Logical reasoning, data, stats, scientific method
- ***MOST important of the three for academia!***
- Greek/Latin for logic, *logos* is where those facts come in.
- Your audience will question the validity of your claims; ***the opinions you share in your writing need to be supported using science, statistics, expert perspective, and other types of logic.*** [Always use reliable sources!]
- Cormier, 2025. Cruthers, 2021.

Logos

- However, if you only rely on *logos* your writing might become dry and boring, so even this should be balanced with other appeals. [*Always be interesting!*]
- Cormier, 2025. Cruthers, 2021.



(Paramount Pictures)

Pathos

- The “feels,” or the feelings you create in your audience.
- *Least important for academic writing, use sparingly/effectively.*
- *Greek/Latin for emotion, pathos is the fastest way to get your audience’s attention.*
- People tend to have *emotional responses before their brains kick in*
- Cormier, 2025. Cruthers, 2021.

(Paramount Pictures)



Pathos

- Be careful though. Too much pathos can make your audience feel emotionally manipulated or angry because they're also looking for the facts to support whatever emotional claims you might be making so they know they can trust you. [Reliable sources]
- Many donation campaigns draw on pathos.
- Cormier, 2025. Cruthers, 2021.



Kairos

- Aristotle's rhetorical triangle "*floats*" in Kairos.
- *Ancient Greek* word meaning "*the right or critical moment.*"
- Timeliness.
- Term that refers to the elements of a speech that acknowledge and draw support from the particular setting, time, and place that a speech occurs.
- In modern writing *kairos* can also mean "setting."
- Essentially, know your audience!
- Cruthers, 2021.

Kairos

- *Know your audience!*
- E.g. The perfect gun control speech delivered at an NRA convention = poor timing/don't know your audience
- Who is your audience in class?
- Who is your audience outside of class?
- *Note what Kairos is doing in this picture*



(Baert, 2020)

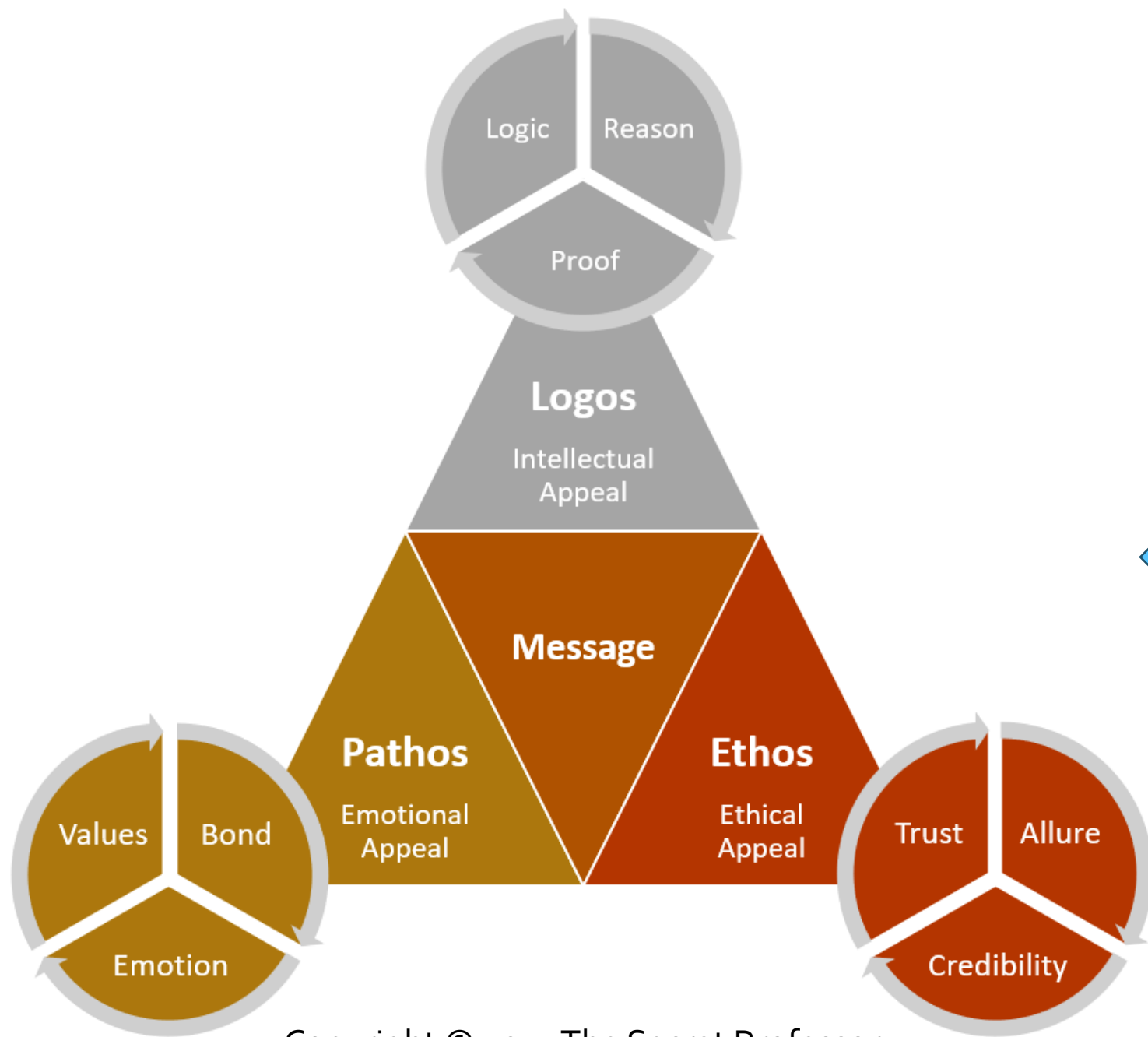
Kairos

Tipping the scales?

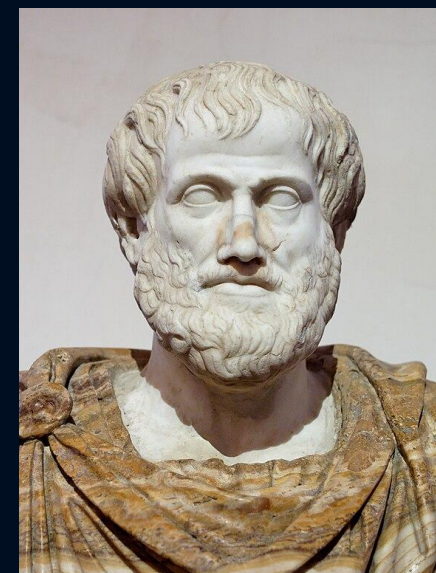


(Baert, 2020)

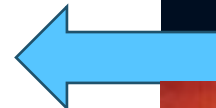




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(Paramount Pictures)

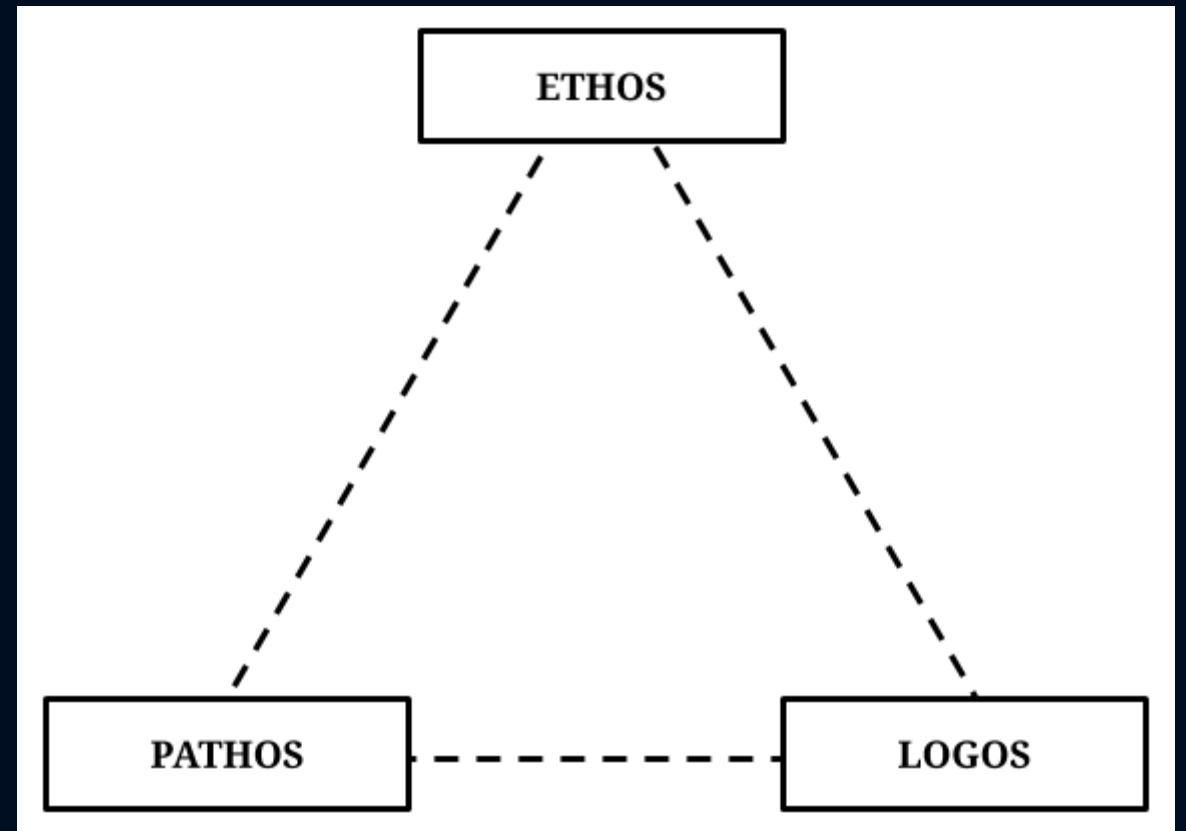


Ethos

Logos

Pathos

Kairos



Part 2: Basics of mastering in-class writing assignments

HOW DO I GET BETTER?

- Editing your own writing for maximum points.
- Avoiding common errors made by “students”
- Student *hacks*

Basics of mastering in-class writing assignments

1. RTFQ: Read The F***ing Question (ethos)
2. Breakdown the Assignment (ethos):
 1. Answer ALL Questions Asked!
 2. Complete ALL the TASKS are required by the assignment?
3. Don't add your own questions (Kairos)
4. Individualize/Develop your own strategy! (ethos/kairos)

Basics of mastering in-class writing assignments

Correct spelling/grammar – reduce “noise” (pathos and Kairos)

Edit your writing for maximum points (pathos and Kairos):

1. Your content reads clearly
2. Your content is interesting
3. Your content logically builds upon itself
4. Always stay on topic (pathos and Kairos)
5. Self-Edit using “less is more” strategy: concise, clear, critical analysis

Basics of mastering in-class writing assignments

Add graphics, charts, pictures, art, etc. (pathos and Kairos)

ALWAYS use logical, fact-supported, precise critical analysis (logos)

ALWAYS Use *reputable sources* to support your
conclusions/opinions/critical analysis (ethos and logos)

Example Assignment

Questions:

1. Identify, and describe, all the different controllers the aircrew talked to in the video. For example, describe when the aircrew talked to a controller working in a control tower versus a controller working in a radar facility.
2. Describe how the pilots and controllers communicate with each other. Do they use special words and phrases?
3. What procedures or practices did you observe the aircrews and/or controllers use to increase situational awareness (SA)? Were there visual cues to increase situational awareness? Why is situational awareness important?

For maximum points comment on at least 2 other student posts.

Breakdown the Assignment

1. Count the number of QUESTIONS that need to be answered in this assignment. (6)
2. Count the number of TASKS required by the assignment. (2 *MINIMUM* comments = “at least”)
 1. Offset unsure Q&A with more comments, it might help
3. Make sure your answers are answering what is being asked!
4. Know the Rubric!
 1. Don't leave points on the table
5. Answer and move on!

| Discussion Rubric | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|--------|
| You've already rated students with this rubric. Any major changes could affect their assessment results. | | | | | |
| Criteria | Ratings | | | | Pts |
| Clarity, Grammar, and Spelling | 25 pts Outstanding No grammar or spelling errors and statements always comprehensible | 20 pts Excellent Very few grammar and spelling errors that do not impede understanding | 15 pts Good Some grammar and spelling errors that may impede understanding | 0 pts Incomplete Many grammar and spelling errors and unreadable or incomplete | 25 pts |
| Critical Analysis/Critical Thinking | 25 pts Outstanding Exceeded expectations | 20 pts Excellent Good content analysis supported by reputable sources | 15 pts Good Poor content analysis or lacks supporting evidence/sources | 0 pts Incomplete Did not complete the assignment as instructed | 25 pts |
| Provides Value to the Reader | 25 pts Outstanding Exceeded expectations | 20 pts Excellent Contributes to a better understanding of the presented topic | 15 pts Good Adds somewhat to the presented topic, but may not be very valuable or interesting | 0 pts Incomplete Did not complete the assignment as instructed | 25 pts |
| Mechanics and Communication | 25 pts Excellent Exceeded Expectations | 20 pts Outstanding Minor Errors | 15 pts Good Structure is acceptable but can be improved | 0 pts Incomplete Did not complete the assignment as instructed | 25 pts |
| Total Points: 100 | | | | | |

Example Assignment

Questions:

1. Identify, and describe, all the different controllers the aircrew talked to in the video (1). ~~For example, describe when the aircrew talked to a controller working in a control tower versus a controller working in a radar facility.~~
2. Describe how the pilots and controllers communicate with each other (2). Do they use special words and phrases? (3)
3. What procedures or practices did you observe the aircrews and/or controllers use to increase situational awareness (SA)? (4) Were there visual cues to increase situational awareness? (5) Why is situational awareness important? (6)

For maximum points **comment on at least 2 other student posts.** (2 Tasks)

Sample Rubric

- **Grade yourself before you submit!**

| Discussion Rubric | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|--------|
| You've already rated students with this rubric. Any major changes could affect their assessment results. | | | | | |
| Criteria | Ratings | | | | Pts |
| Clarity, Grammar, and Spelling | 25 pts Outstanding No grammar or spelling errors and statements always comprehensible | 20 pts Excellent Very few grammar and spelling errors that do not impede understanding | 15 pts Good Some grammar and spelling errors that may impede understanding | 0 pts Incomplete Many grammar and spelling errors and unreadable or incomplete | 25 pts |
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| Total Points: 100 | | | | | |

Correct spelling and grammar

Eliminate the “Noise”

- Poor spelling and poor grammar create **noise** that detracts from your message
- We are NOT writing online: X, reddit, etc. (Kairos)

Don't waste your reader's time!!

- Don't write a book nobody wants to read (don't waste your time with needless volume!)
- Clear, concise, critical analysis (logos)
- Get to the point...and stay on point! (ethos)
- *Keep opinions to a bare minimum (pathos)*



Eliminate the “Noise”

Rarely, if ever, use Hyperbole! (logos over pathos)

Don't be overly technical. (Kairos)

Don't just use big words – use the correct words!

You are not the subject of your material (ego)

Edit your own writing for *maximum points*

- Read your writing back to yourself OUT LOUD! and see if it makes sense
 - You will catch 99% of grammar/spelling errors this way
 - You will catch continuity errors this way
 - You will improve your writing this way!
- Use *Text-to-Speech* (TTS) and have the computer read it for you
- Have someone else read your writing OUT LOUD



Edit your own writing for *maximum points*

- If English is your second-language (ESL) and you are struggling
 - Get a tutor, family or classmates to help you
 - Take ESL courses
 - Practice a LOT
- You need to get better to maximize your employment opportunities

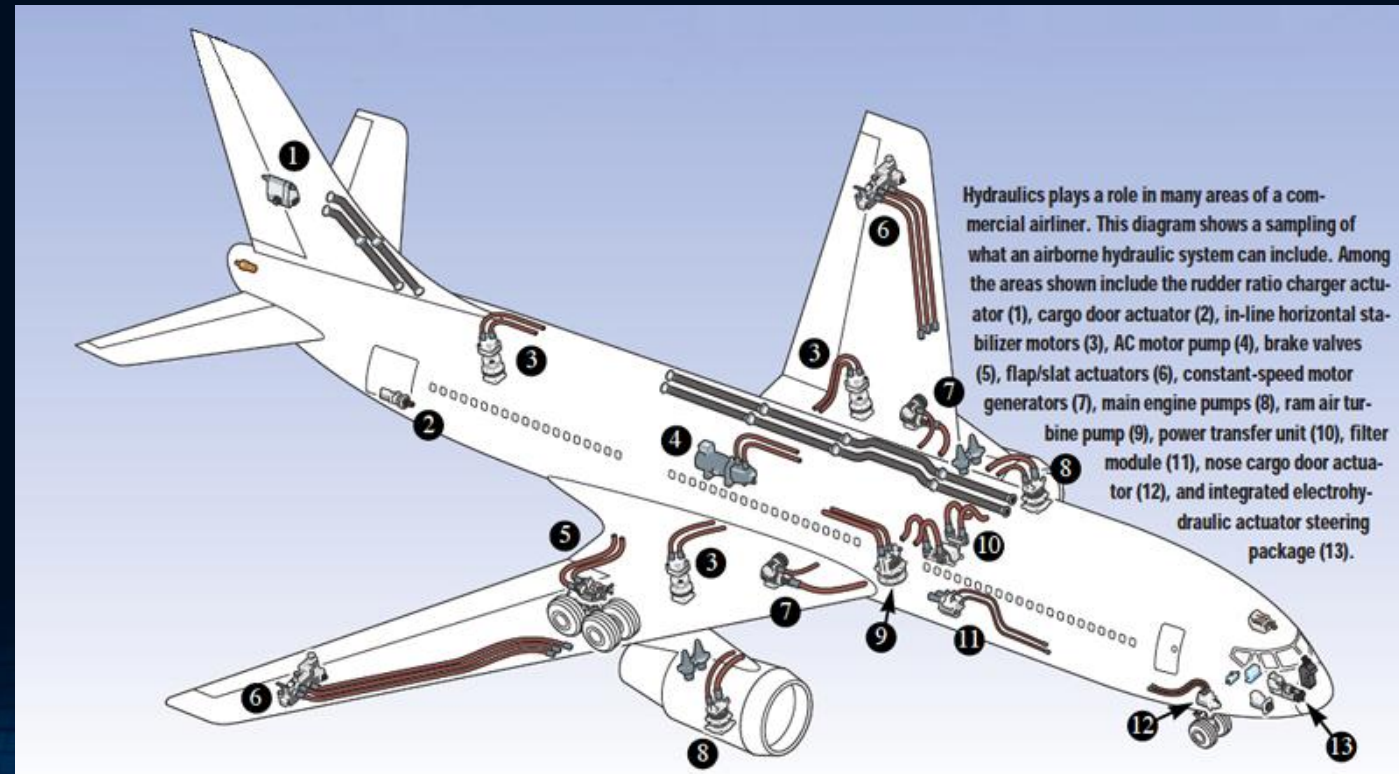


(Lacinai, 2022)

How to write opinions

Example Bad Opinion: *"I think Boeing 737 hydraulic systems are too complicated and lead to a lot of flight crew errors during emergencies."*

- *Why doesn't this work?*



“I think Boeing 737 hydraulic systems are too complicated and lead to a lot of flight crew errors during emergencies.”

Why doesn't this work?

- **“I” is the subject – don’t make yourself the subject – [who is “thinking”?]**
- **“think” – the author is not a subject matter expert – you have zero B737 time, your opinion on this topic is NOT relevant (zero ethos)**
- **“are too complicated” – for whom? Pilots? New pilots? Non-pilots? How? Provides no value. Meaningless.**
- **“lead to...” how does the author know this? What evidence do you have? Give us the logos!**
- **This entire statement has zero critical analysis or supporting sources.**
- **Conclusion: *This statement provides no value for the reader!***

How to write opinions

The Fix: “According to a 2022 study by Alpha & Bravo, 56% of Boeing 737 crews reported that airborne hydraulic emergencies demand 30% more checklist time, even for experienced aircrews! Are Boeing 737 hydraulic systems too complicated? Do B737 pilots need better checklists?”

- The author is gone – *no more ego*
- A peer-reviewed scientific study provides the *logos*
- The reader is asked to form an opinion from the available facts
- The author has steered reader opinion by only presenting facts and questions. [Ethos and logos steering pathos]



Good: According to a 2022 study by Alpha & Bravo, 56% of experienced Boeing 737 crews reported that airborne hydraulic emergencies demand 30% more checklist time than any other aircraft system emergencies. Are Boeing 737 hydraulic systems too complicated? Do B737 pilots need better checklists?

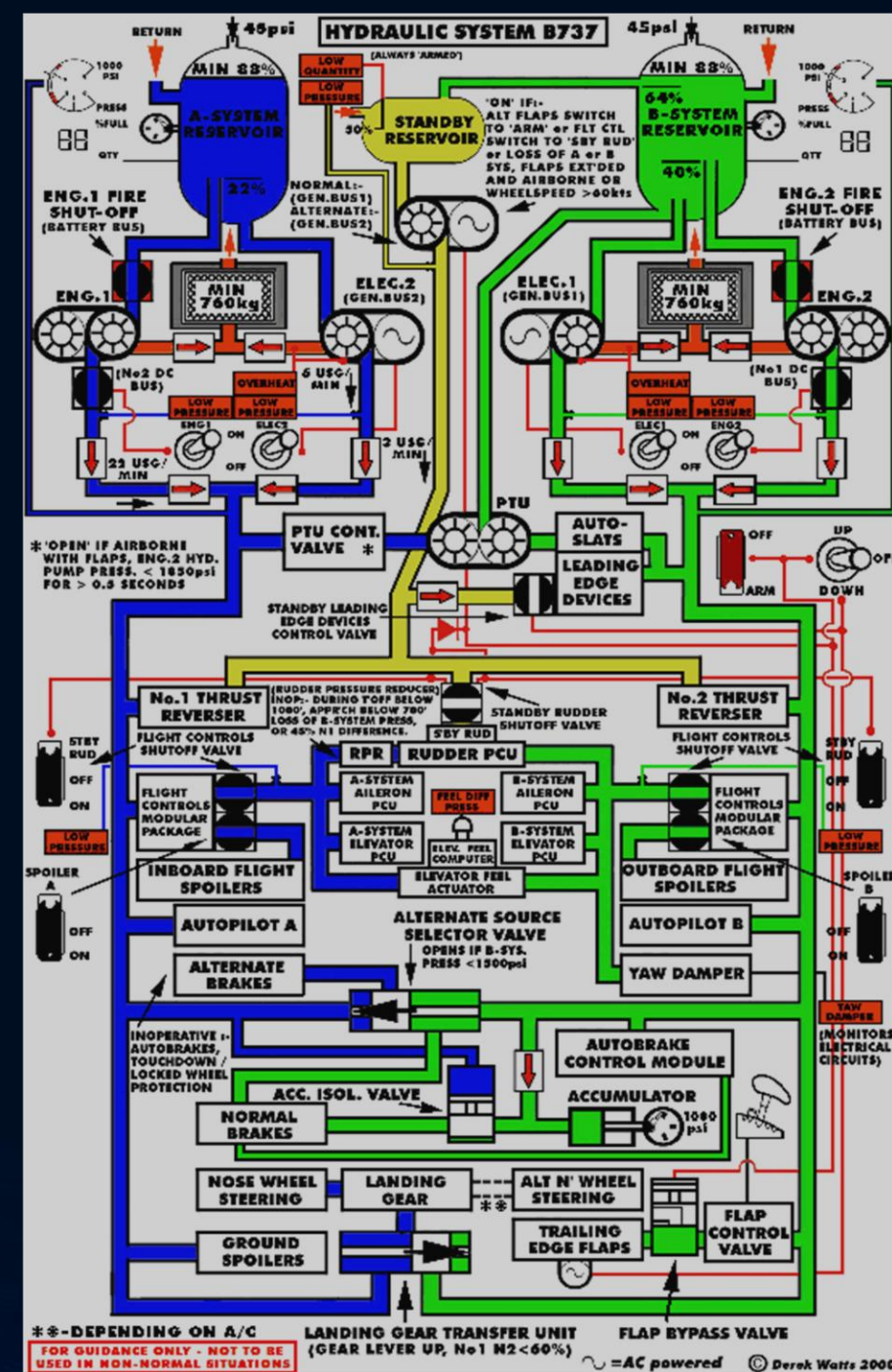


Bad: I think Boeing 737 hydraulic systems are too complicated and lead to a lot of flight crew errors during emergencies.

You could rewrite your original statement:

One could argue, from the study, that Boeing 737 hydraulic systems are too complicated for most Boeing 737 flight crews and this factor could logically lead to increased flight crew errors during in-flight emergencies (Delta, 2018).

Example of Boeing 737 Hydraulic System (Watts, 2000)



RTFQ: Read The F*ing Question (ethos)**

Breakdown the Assignment (ethos):

Correct spelling/grammar – reduce “noise” (pathos and Kairos)

Edit your writing for maximum points (pathos and Kairos):

Add graphics, charts, pictures, art, etc. (pathos and Kairos)

ALWAYS use logical, fact-supported, precise critical analysis (logos)

ALWAYS Use *reputable sources* to support your conclusions/opinions/critical analysis (ethos and logos)

Provide value to the reader

Part 3: Writing Beyond Academia

WHY WILL ANYONE OUTSIDE OF ACADEMIA READ WHAT I WRITE?

- **Who is your audience outside Academia?**
- **Why will anyone read what you write?**

Who is your audience outside Academia?

- Peers (professional aviation audience)
- Boss
- Professional publications
- Grad School
- Union/management
- Legal
- Technical Writing



(The Ohio State University, 2025)

Why will anyone read what you write?

You must provide value to the reader!

Why will anyone read what you write?

1. You must provide value to the reader!

Example: According to the Federal Aviation Administration, U.S. Civil Airmen Statistics, the estimated number of active Airline Transport Pilot certificates (ATP) increased from 174,113, in 2023, to 179,194 in 2024. An increase of 5,081 active ATP certificates in only one year. Does this make it more difficult to become an airline pilot?

Well, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook for 2023-33, airline and commercial pilot job growth outlook...

Honolulu Star-Bulletin 1st EXTRA

ESTABLISHED 1891

8 PAGES—HONOLULU, TERRITORY OF HAWAII, U. S. A., SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1941—8 PAGES

★ PRICE FIVE CENTS

WAR! OAHU BOMBED BY JAPANESE PLANES

(Associated Press by Transpacific Telephone)

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 7.—President Roosevelt announced this morning that Japanese planes had attacked Manila and Pearl Harbor.

SIX KNOWN DEAD, 21 INJURED, AT EMERGENCY HOSPITAL

Attack Made
On Island's

CIVILIANS ORDERED OFF STREETS

The army has ordered that all civilians stay off the streets and highways and not use telephones.

Evidence that the Japanese attack has re-

ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS IN ACTION

First indication of the raid came shortly before 8 this morning when anti-aircraft guns around Pearl Harbor began sending up a thun-

Hundreds See
City Bombed



WIN A 50G FORTUNE TODAY!

TODAY
Rain, windy, 58-66
TOMORROW
Partly clearing, 68
TOMORROW
Partly cloudy, windy, 66-68
Details, Page 1

NEW YORK POST

METRO
TODAY'S RACING

TV Listings: P. 183

FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 1965

30 CENTS

© 1965 News Group Publications Inc.

Vol. 102, No. 179

AMERICA'S FASTEST-GROWING NEWSPAPER

ABC AVERAGE
SALES EXCEED
360,000

HEADLESS BODY IN TOPLESS BAR



Taken kickin'
and screamin'

An angry Juan Emilio Robles tries to kick a photographer yesterday as detectives took him in to be booked for the murder last year of Chase Manhattan exec Kathleen Williams. Robles, a hulking 30-year-old ex-con, is accused of stabbing the 30-year-old victim during a bungled robbery attempt on a stairway in the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in midtown. Story on Page 14.

Gunman forces
woman to
decapitate
tavern owner

PAGE TWO

SENATE OKAYS
PREZ'S PICK FOR
ARMS CONTROL

PAGE FIVE

Koch plans to
hire 1,000
more cops

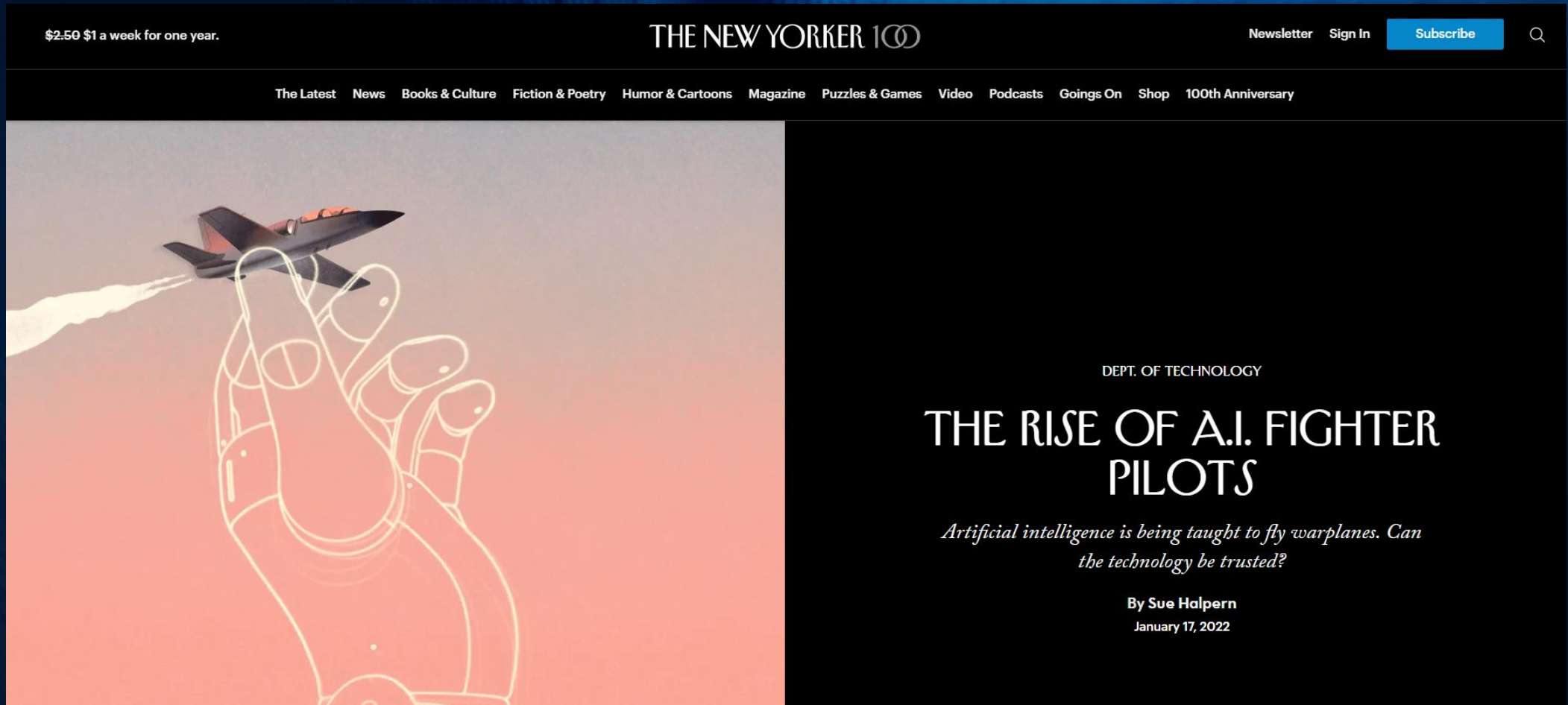
PAGE THREE

TAXING DAY FOR
1 MILLION IN N.Y.

PAGE SEVEN

Why will anyone read what you write?

2. *Be interesting!*





ANYONE?

Summary

- Rules of Engagement
- APA 7th Edition Citations
- Aristotle's Triangle
- Know Your Audience
- Breakdown the Assignment
- Eliminate the Noise
- Provide Value to the Reader

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