

Shari Marshall

**Writing Sparkle Books**  
*Memorandum*



Date: March 5, 2025

To: Cookie Smith, Author

From: Shari Marshall, Editor

Re: Stylistic Editing

Thank you for allowing me to complete a stylistic edit on Chapter 8, "Before Wheels Up." It has been a pleasure learning about you and your flying journey.

The current word count is 973, with minimal writing required to finish the chapter.

I have created and attached a Style Sheet for reference and additional information.

If you need clarification or have questions about the proposed changes, please contact me by March 19, 2025, through the email previously provided. We can schedule a Zoom meeting if required.

## Chapter 8: *Before Wheels Up*4. The Kit

The student starter kit comes in a black nylon bag bursting with books and tools. I felt spoiled and excited to have an organized package ready for me. I spent \$800.00 on the learning materials and ground school lessons, that can be done at the club or online. I try not to eye the club shirts on the rack, but inevitably one goes home with me. Teachers are the ones who usually do all the prep work, so being a student felt fun.

The kneeboard I found inside the embroidered bag fast becomes my best friend. It wraps around your left knee, a vital tool to be carried onto the plane.

I sprung for my own set of headphones that live in the flight bag, that I personalized with sparkly stickers. Among the books, is a slender hardcover book, the incredibly important, Pilot's Logbook.

With my pristine flight bag tucked under a coffee table in the lounge, going over scheduling, booking of planes, plan for my first solo flight in approximately 10 weeks, then it's time for the walk around.

There are many things to complete before taxiing and takeoff. The smile that marks my features is one of pride because I'm part of the group that knows these things. I also know that some of these items vary depending on the season. However, ~~in every season, now had great appreciation for what goes into~~ preparing a commercial aircraft for takeoff ~~involves. You have to calling and to~~ check the web for weather conditions, prepar~~ing~~ a ~~complex~~ flight plan, fill~~ing~~ out log books, calculat~~ing~~e weight and balance, ~~and~~ walk~~ing~~ around the plane ~~twice~~~~TWICE~~ doing checks, ~~and any point something can cause a delay.~~

Today Amelia and I are preparing a two-seater C-152. Most schools have phased out the older C-152s, which is sad because these planes are cheaper to rent than the four-seater C-172. They're

**Commented [SM1]:** Cookie, this is how I propose reviewing this edited chapter. I recommend accepting the edits you agree with, but leaving edits you don't agree with in place and adding a comment.

**Commented [SM2]:** This chapter relies primarily on sight. I recommend adding sound, taste, feel, and smell as appropriate.

Examples to consider:

1. The fuel smell.
2. The feel of the wooden dowels.
3. Sounds of the airplane and helicopter traffic when you walk through it.

**Commented [SM3]:** As per the structural outline, this section has been moved to the previous chapter—Chapter 7, Ground School. I have noted a few other sections being moved in or out of this chapter based on the structural outline as well.

**Commented [SM4]:** Deleted for flow and clarity in this chapter.

**Commented [SM5]:** How does this sound for an introduction to this chapter?

cramped, but if you're an average to smaller-sized person—like Amelia and me—you can save money. Amelia takes me through the walk around, counter-clockwise. First of all, sShe checks the lights, then every nook and cranny, raising and lowering, pulling, peering, and prodding parts of the plane-you don't want anything to fall off in the air.

Inside the plane, I flip on the master switch, lower the flaps, switch on the lights and the pilot tube heater, check the pilot tube is heating, check all the lights, then turn off the switches and master. With the power off, I check the wings, the ailerons, and flaps, the empennage, struts, tire treads, pressure, bolts on the tire, landing gear, prop, fan belt, antenna, and belly. I check the empennage—plane tail—including the rudder, controlled by foot pedals, the elevators, controlled by the yoke, and the trim, controlled by a vertical dial, or wheel.

When the fuel tanker comes, I watch the gas jockey unravel the hose from the shiny tanker, step up on the plane, and guide the nozzle into the waiting tank. He repeats the procedure on the other side. When he unclips the grounding wire and rolls it back onto the spool with the winch, I double-check the tanks with the dipsticks. My dad taught me how to use a dipstick to add oil to our cars, so I'm prepared for this task for the plane when necessary.

The wings are the fuel tanks, so I you have to hop on up to the footholds to reach the red cap. I'm not unless you are tall enough to reach the caps from the ground and I'm not anyway near that tall. You uUntwisting the cap, I put in the wooden dowel in to double-check the amount in each wing. I You have to be quick to reading them before the gas evaporates in the wind and heat. Most schools/rentals use clear plastic tubes you a person can put a your finger over the top in order to seal the gas sample into the tube but, my flight school has the vintage wooden dowels.

Under each wing is a nipple—a tit—that I push you stiek a metal prong into. I milk the nipple, and “milk” causing gas in to flow into a cup with the prong attached to it, and I examine

**Commented [SM6]:** This is pasted here from Chapter 3, “Flights of Fancy.” I made modest edits to improve flow and clarity.

**Commented [SM7]:** Does the walk-around have to be performed counter-clockwise? If not, consider removing.

**Commented [SM8]:** This is pasted here from Chapter 9, “PIREP.” I made modest edits to improve flow and clarity.

Please ensure that the order for these activities is accurate and reorder as needed.

**Commented [SM9]:** Consider including a bit of information about how you are feeling about reaching this point in your training. It can be as subtle as noting that there is excited energy in your movements as you complete each check.

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**Commented [SM10]:** This is pasted here from Chapter 9, “PIREP.” I made modest edits to improve flow and clarity.

**Commented [SM11]:** How would your father feel if he could see you in this moment? Does it mirror how you feel about yourself?

the blue fuel for any contaminants. ~~(Some students call it a tit.) like~~ For example, any water.

~~Water that may have got into~~ the fuel falls to the bottom, ~~as would anything else,~~ like bits of rust.

After you scrutinize the cup, you throw the fuel on the ground; ~~an offering~~ to the runway deities for a safe flight.

~~For safety and attention to detail, I double-check the tanks. This is one of the few areas of my~~  
~~life I have a free pass to be meticulous. If I didn't double-check the tanks, in this case, Amelia~~  
~~and I would be too nose-heavy for take-off. We needed more weight behind the nose to get~~  
~~safely off the ground.~~

~~Ensuring the tanks are filled properly is important for takeoff and a safe flight. The lowest~~  
~~I've seen tanks is three gallons per side. This doesn't meet the club's minimum of six gallons of~~  
~~reserve fuel, or one hour's fuel, plus the amount of fuel needed for your trip. For circuits, we~~  
~~needed at least one hour's fuel on top of that, so twelve gallons is the minimum. For mine and~~  
~~Amelia's low combined weight, full tanks are preferable. If I don't double-check that the tanks~~  
~~are properly filled, we might not be able to take off.~~

When we finish the walk-around procedures, ~~Amelia~~ ~~she~~ shows me how to walk safely amongst the plane and helicopter traffic. We go back to the briefing room ~~at the flight club~~, past the stimulators and other student-instructor pairs ~~in conference~~. She uses ~~an adorable,~~ miniature, metal, ~~yellow~~ plane to give me a lecture on ~~the~~ attitude and movement of aircraft.

**Commented [SM12]:** What happens if there is water in the fuel? Consider including a couple of sentences about this here.

**Commented [SM13]:** Are pilots superstitious? I recommend a brief explanation of this.

**Commented [SM14]:** This is pasted here from Chapter 9, "PIREP." I reworded "be obsessive, compulsive, paranoid" to "meticulous" for conscious and inclusive language purposes.

**Commented [SM15]:** This is pasted here from Chapter 9, "PIREP." I made modest edits to improve flow and clarity.

**Commented [SM16]:** You have been developing Amelia's character over the proceeding chapters. This paragraph offers an opportunity to provide readers with another glimpse at Amelia and your student-teacher relationship. Things to consider:

- Does she take advantage of learning opportunities like this one? How do you feel about that? Is she always inventive with her teaching methods, like using the miniature plane? How does that impact your learning?

**Commented [SM17]:** Why do you return to the briefing room? Are you and Amelia flying today or were you just learning how to do the walk around? Please clarify.

At the flight club, we holler out our weight as nonchalantly as if it were our favorite hockey player's jersey number, except with no judgment. I don't like to tell anyone my weight, but weight is one of the many numbers we need for our calculations to see if we can take off and land safely. I have to redo calculations for my and my instructor's combined weight, as I discovered when I gained five pounds throughout my training. There is a doctor's scale shoved along one wall in case we need to weigh our unsuspecting passengers.

I have other instructors I fly with when Amelia isn't available. They're the standard weight for males—200 pounds. So, when flying with the big guys, we can't have over eighteen gallons of fuel onboard, and no luggage, or we won't be able to fly safely. I can feel these weight differences in the way the plane handles, depending on who is sitting in the right seat. When Amelia is sitting there, we take off like a rocket and gain altitude quickly. However, when one of the other instructors is in the right seat, I can feel the plane labor until it reaches altitude and the plane has to work harder to get to the turning points.

One of the biggest differences between summer and winter flying is deicing.

All the work that goes into preparing a plane for wheels up and the personal skills—detail-orientated, exceptional memory, decisive, disciplined—manage the potential risks and improve flight safety.

I go back to my six year old hybrid car with the mashed in dented front passenger door still high on post flight adrenaline. The car badly needs bodywork after I had to turn sharply to avoid a pedestrian, who ran in front of me when exiting a downtown parkade. That's almost as scary as a bird flying into a plane. However, I'm waiting to fix it when I finish my flight training. I'm putting off all expenses possible until training is done. (I'm going to get pretty sick of seeing that

**Commented [SM18]:** This is pasted here from Chapter 3, "Flights of Fancy." I made modest edits to improve flow and clarity.

Does this happen before or after the walk around?

**Commented [SM19]:** This is pasted here from Chapter 9, "PIREP." I made modest edits to improve flow and clarity.

**Commented [SM20]:** I recommend writing a paragraph about deicing, including what it is, how it is done, and why it is completed. To pull it all together, I recommended a deicing photograph from your pictures be placed at the end of this chapter.

**Commented [SM21]:** Does this work for the beginning of the conclusion paragraph? Please add your feelings of accomplishment and overcoming as a lead into the next chapter, "Yoke in Hand."

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dent.) When I see bargain flights advertised, I marvel at the novelty of other people flying me places for such little money.

On the drive home from the airfield through congested Lower Mainland traffic, I practice the radio call signs in the phonetic alphabet on the license plates ahead of me; 123 Alpha Zulu Della, 635 Bravo Lima Foxtrot for the day when I need to talk to the tower. As I crawl towards yet another bottle-necked bridge, I look forward to heading back to the skies again in a week and think about the exercises I'll be doing before my solo, like stalls, spins and spirals. At first, they sounded scary but now I feel that squeal of joy begin to bubble up. I anticipate what it will feel like in the stable training aircraft with my veteran pilot/instructor to guide me for this thrill of a safety net.

Wish me luck and hope to see you out there. I already have one friend taking an intro flight more fun to fly with a co-pilot. She's a chick over 50 too.

However, it's weeks later before I come back for a lesson, as it's wiser for me get my medical certificate before I start training. At my age, I don't want to be disappointed to find that I'm not able to continue due to a medication, medical problem, or condition.

I don't have to wait too long to see an Aviation doctor in the city. The doctor is brilliant. I do well with all of it, including the lengthy colour blindness test until it comes to the vision test. It's not surprise to me that I can't make out any letters on the eye chart without my glasses, but the doctor tries to help me; he's so kind, so I let him know, I know I'm not Commercial pilot material without corrective eye surgery, even then I'd still need to wear glasses, I have no intention of going down that path—this is for pure fun.

There's no delay in getting my certificate and this is where I get a huge break. Some student pilots have to wait for up to six months to get their certificates when the demand is high, and

**Commented [SM22]:** I have deleted this section because it doesn't fit with the chapter's narrative and themes. Do you agree?

**Commented [SM23]:** Cookie, it's been a pleasure working on this project and I look forward to working with you again.

Shari Marshall

even longer in the US during and after the government shutdown, where anything that had to pass through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) got stalled. As soon as my certificate arrives in May, I can book a lesson.

**Commented [SM24]:** Move this section to the previous chapter—Chapter 7, Ground School.