



— THE 1-PAGE LESSON PLAN I USE TO TEACH

# The **Anti-Binder** Template

Throw away the 100-page script. Walk into the cockpit with one page, one objective, and a framework that actually teaches human beings. Built for CFI candidates who want to pass on the first try — and fly right on day one.

— FROM THE LEFT SEAT

# Why Scripted Binders Fail — and What to Use Instead.

The examiner doesn't want to see if you can read from a script. They want to see if you can teach a human being.



**CHRIS PALMER**

2× MASTER CFI • GOLD SEAL • FOUNDER, ANGLE OF ATTACK • SINCE 2006

If you're preparing for your CFI checkride right now, you're probably staring at a 100-page binder full of scripted lesson plans. You color-coded the tabs. You highlighted the acronyms. Or worse — you bought a pre-made one online, hoping it would save you. But there's a glaring issue.

And you're terrified of it. You know that if you sit in the right seat and read from that script, you're going to sound like a robot. You're going to firehose your student with information they can't possibly absorb, and your student's eyes will glaze over.

When you bring a massive binder into the cockpit, you're falling into an industry trap. I call it the "**Sixth Hazardous Attitude**": **The Know-It-All**. You feel pressured to prove how smart you are by cramming every detail about aerodynamics into a single lesson. That's not teaching. That's showing off. And showing off doesn't make safe pilots.

“**Consistency over impressiveness. That's what makes a safe pilot — and that's what makes a great instructor.**”

My own CFI checkride was the easiest checkride I ever took. Not because I'm a genius — but because I didn't try to be a walking encyclopedia. I treated the examiner like my very first student. I kept it simple. I focused on safety. I used a one-page lesson plan. But really, I owe it to my mentors who taught me exactly that. And I'm just passing it on.

Throw the binder away. It's making you inflexible and anxious. It's time to earn your license to learn.

**THROTTLE ON** USE THE TEMPLATE ON PAGE 04 →

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— BEFORE YOU USE THE TEMPLATE

# Every lesson is **one thing**.

Distill every flight down to a single, primary, safety-oriented objective. Everything else is secondary.

Here's what seventeen years in the right seat taught me: students can only encode one new skill at a time. Not two. Not five. One. The binder mentality assumes more input equals faster progress — it doesn't, it equals paralysis. When you build a lesson around a single safety-critical objective, the student can actually **feel the airplane** instead of trying to remember a list. That's not a teaching philosophy. That's how learning works.

A 100-page binder tries to teach everything on day one. The student's brain shuts down. They stop flying the airplane and start staring at the instruments in a panic. The fix: **pick one thing**. Teach it well. Call the flight a success.



## EXAMPLE · STEEP TURNS

The "One Thing" isn't the formula. It's teaching the student to divide attention between the horizon and the instruments while holding back pressure.

## How the Anti-Binder Works

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The template on the next page strips away the fluff and leaves only what actually matters in the cockpit.

01

### The Objective — the "One Thing"

The single most important, safety-critical takeaway for this flight. If they learn nothing else, they must learn this.

02

### The "Why" — real-world scenario

Why does the student need this to stay alive? Build Aeronautical Decision Making — not maneuver-chasing. This is what the DPE wants to hear.

03

### Key Teaching Points — max 3-4

More than four points = firehose. Keep it lean. The student cannot carry more than a handful of ideas into the right seat.

04

### Common Errors — and the fix

- ANGLE OF ATTACK · TOTALCFI
- What will they mess up, and exactly how will you correct it safely — without grabbing the controls too early?

05

### Completion Standards — beyond the ACS

# The Anti-Binder · Lesson Plan

ONE PAGE · ONE OBJECTIVE · ONE SAFE PILOT

PRINT & WRITE

LESSON TITLE

DATE

AIRCRAFT / TAIL #

STUDENT LEVEL

Private  Instrument  Commercial  ATP

1

## The Objective — the "One Thing"

What is the single, primary, safety-oriented goal of this lesson?

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2

## The "Why" — real-world scenario

Why does the student need this skill to stay alive or make good decisions?

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3

## Key Teaching Points — max 4

What are the essential steps or concepts? Keep it simple.

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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4. 

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4

## Common Errors — and the fix

What will they likely do wrong, and how will you correct it?

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- ---
- ---

5

## Completion Standards — beyond ACS

What proves the student actually understands this? (Not just the numbers.)

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## Instructor Notes & Debrief

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# Completed Example

POWER-ON STALLS • TAKEOFF / DEPARTURE STALLS

FILLED IN

LESSON TITLE

Power-On Stalls (Takeoff / Departure)

DATE

— example

AIRCRAFT / TAIL #

C172 N2423U

STUDENT LEVEL

Private  Instrument  Commercial  ATP

## 1 The Objective — the "One Thing"

Recognize the physical & aerodynamic signs of an approaching stall in a high-power, nose-high phase of flight — and recover immediately, minimal altitude loss.

## 2 The "Why" — real-world scenario

Short field, tall trees. You pitch up to clear the obstacle. Stall horn blares. Instinct says "pull back harder" — that instinct will kill you. Train them to push the nose down — right now, no hesitation.

## 3 Key Teaching Points — max 4

1. Clear the area. Two 90° clearing turns. Look outside.
2. Configure. Slow to normal lift-off speed, takeoff pitch, takeoff power (no less than 65%) — simulate departure.
3. Bring to aerodynamic, coordinated stall. Let the student observe, then invite them to try one of their own.
4. Recover. At the aerodynamic break: reduce AOA, level wings, then add power as needed. Don't dive.

## 4 Common Errors — and the fix

- Forgetting right rudder. Guard the pedals — "feel the ball, step on it."
- Secondary stall on recovery. Brief on ground — "smooth nose down, don't shove, don't yank."
- Aileron to pick up a dropping wing before reducing AOA. At the stall, ailerons can exacerbate the stall and cause a spin. Reduce AOA first, then use coordinated aileron and rudder to level the wings.

## 5 Completion Standards — beyond ACS

Student acknowledges cues of the impending stall and recovers promptly after a full stall occurs. Heading  $\pm 10^\circ$ . No secondary stall. Calm, not panicked. Per PPL ACS PA.VII.C. Student can say the real-world "why" back to me, unprompted.



## Instructor Notes & Debrief

Monkey see, Monkey do: talk the student through the whole thing, have them watch and observe, then have them try on their own with your guidance.

— THE NEXT STEP · HAVING THE TEMPLATE IS 10% OF IT

# Knowing how to teach it without freezing up is the other 90%.

You can have the cleanest lesson plan in the world. But if you freeze when your student makes a dangerous mistake — or if your anxiety bleeds into the cockpit — the lesson falls apart. **The checkride isn't an interrogation of your knowledge. It's an evaluation of whether you can shepherd a student safely.**



## TOTALCFI · ONLINE COURSE

The complete course for CFI candidates who want to pass — and teach well on day one.

On-demand video · Printable resources · Lifetime access · [angleofattack.com/cfi-course](http://angleofattack.com/cfi-course)

## — WHAT YOU GET INSIDE TOTALCFI

- **Quiet Confidence.** Use body language & cockpit presence to instantly calm nervous students — and yourself.
- **Scenario-Based Training.** Build lessons that stick — not just maneuver-chasing.
- **The “One Thing” Framework.** Distill every lesson down to one safety-oriented objective so students actually retain what you teach.
- **Handle the Unexpected.** What to do when a student freezes on the controls, panics in turbulence, or makes a dangerous mistake you didn't brief.
- **The Sixth Hazardous Attitude.** Recognize when you're overteaching to prove how smart you are — and how to stop before you lose the student.
- **Pass the Oral.** Stop firehosing the DPE. Prove you have real Aeronautical Decision Making.
- **Survive the First 30 Days.** Exactly what to do on day one so you start strong & build a reputation.
- **The Sculptor Method.** Sequence training from big concepts to fine details — stop trying to carve the eyelashes on day one.
- **Teach Any Learner.** Adapt to visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners without losing the thread of the lesson.
- **Build a Debrief That Sticks.** Turn every post-flight conversation into a learning moment that carries into the next lesson.

## COST OF FAILURE VS. PREPARATION

Examiner fee	\$1,500+
Plane rental	\$550+
Retraining	\$425+

A CFI BUST COSTS **\$2,475+**

**\$279** TOTALCFI ENROLLMENT  
✓ 30-DAY MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE

ENROLL IN  
TOTALCFI →



## BE A SPARK PLUG

Professionalism is not a certificate. It's behavior. I'll see you inside.

P.S. Questions? [info@angleofattack.com](mailto:info@angleofattack.com) · Follow [@angleofattack](https://twitter.com/angleofattack) · © Angle of Attack  
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