# A Guide to Economics Article Writing and Social Media Engagement

## Nith Kosal

Sethakech

Sethakech, January 14, 2021

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- Outside of training you will be working independently on your opinion piece.
- You will bring an open, critical mind to class and willingly accept feedback from your peers and from me.

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Let's give one a read...

1. Cambodia's Agricultural Sector is in Dire Need of Revitalization

2. The World Is Desperate for More Covid Vaccines

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- ▶ Do you come away from this piece knowing more?

# Reading is a Big Part of Writing!

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▶ Was this piece timely? How?

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- ▶ **Informative**: This type of Op-Ed provides more information about an issue or debate, so that the public's knowledge on the issue is increased. For example: X thinks this, and Y think that, but here is some extra information that they do not consider.

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► What has the author included in their intro? Where have they put their evidence or explanation? Where is the solution they propose if there is one? How do they conclude their piece?

- ▶ **Reason**: Why are you writing about this now? Timeliness? Rebutting an article, quote or another Op-Ed? Why should the reader pay any attention to your article?
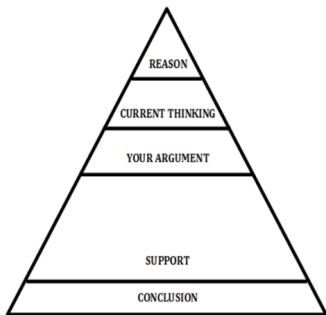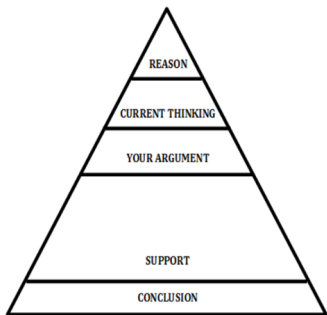
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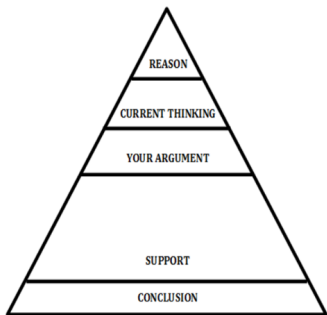
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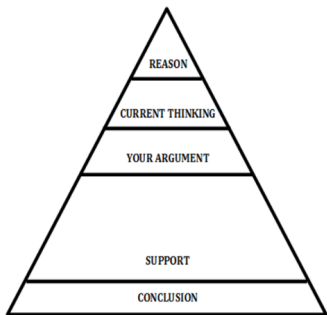- ▶ **Current thinking**: What assumption are you arguing against? Counter-arguments? What is the status quo?
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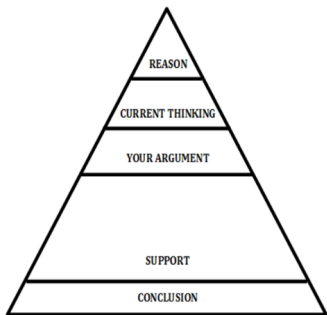- ▶ **Current thinking**: What assumption are you arguing against? Counter-arguments? What is the status quo?
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- ▶ **Conclusion**: A summary of your opinions

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- ▶ What do people absolutely have to know about a given topic?
- ▶ What will add to the ongoing conversation?
- ▶ What can you write about that no one else can? Feel free to ask our team management any and all questions. We're here to help you.

# A few ways to craft an argument...

1. Challenge an initial read.
2. Challenge a published view.
3. Explain unexpected conclusions.
4. Intervene in a debate.
5. Point out how a piece of evidence encapsulates a larger issue.
6. Point out how an insignificant moment is actually critical.
7. Point out the limits of the existing literature.
8. Point out a problem others don't usually see.

**Challenge an initial read**: The truth about your topic is not what would be expected or what would appear given the current thinking. *Example*: The general assumption is that the trade war between the United States and China will be bad for Cambodia. I'm arguing that's not true.

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**Challenge a published view**: The standard or published view of a topic needs challenging. *Example*: Cambodia treats its fight against the drug war as an issue for the criminal justice system. I'm going to argue that it would be better to treat it as a public health problem.

**Explain unexpected conclusions**: A simple, common, or apparently obvious approach to a topic has more complex, unexpected, or non-obvious implications—and perhaps explains more—than it may initially seem. *Example*: Criminalizing sex work doesn't make sex work go away. Here's what the studies of the ways legal codes deal with sex work say about how countries should be legislating this industry.

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**Intervene in a debate**: A critical debate exists on this topic, about which scholars hold conflicting views. *Example*: X thinks this, Y thinks this, here's a piece of information that neither one has considered that alters the debate.

**Point out how a piece of evidence expresses something essential about a larger issue**: The analysis of this smaller topic explains something of significance about a larger topic. *Example*: X data/research about what happens when rural Cambodian women have more disposable income tells us something larger about what Cambodia's poverty-reduction strategy should be.

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**Point out how an insignificant moment is actually critical**: A seemingly tangential or insignificant matter is actually central or essential. *Example*: X moment in Cambodia's history with the European Union that has been overlooked is actually important for understanding the current drama around the Everything But Arms agreement.

**Point out the limits of existing study on a topic**: The critical knowledge thus far accumulated about a text, issue, or idea remains limited or blinded in some significant way. *Example*: The Cambodian government says the air isn't polluted, but there are actually serious limitations in the data being gathered, because there aren't enough air pollution sensors in Phnom Penh.

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**Point out a problem others don't usually see**: A feature or element of a topic that everyone accepts as unproblematic actually has significant problems. *Example*: Phnom Penh is cracking down on traffic violations by installing traffic cameras to catch bad drivers. That might be a good thing for traffic safety, but it's a bad thing for government surveillance.

# How to sell your argument

To make your argument persuasive, Aristotle says you need to be thinking about:

1. **Logos**
2. **Pathos**
3. **Ethos**

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- **Ethos**: The reader is unlikely to trust your arguments if they cannot trust you. This means that you must present yourself as a respectable and trustworthy writer. You must stick to intellectual honesty – such as being careful not to make false analogies or bad arguments. Your language must be respectable. Beware of fallacies and bad historical analogy.

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- ▶ Could you use Logos, Pathos or Ethos to show this?

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- **What else?**

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▶ Prepare yourself to receive edits.

# Any Question!

# Thank You!