

TIPS FOR WRITING OP-EDS

Focus your topic. Clearly identify the problem and how it affects individuals and the community.

Think about your audience. Who is affected by the problem? Who will read the op-ed? Often these are two different groups that overlap.

Make a bold statement. Open your op-ed by making a bold statement that forces the reader to read on. You will spend the rest of the article backing-up your opening statement. Make the opening statement one that won't allow the reader to stop reading.

Defend your statement. Your op-ed should total between 500-700 words. Your opening statement will be about 25 words and the conclusion will be about 100 words. The rest will be devoted to defending your opening statement. Use facts and statistics, but only those that apply directly to your opening statement. Cite information from outside sources. These could include documents, studies, surveys, public statements, white papers, books, articles, etc.

Appeal to emotions. A factual argument will make people agree with your statement. Emotion will compel people to take action.

Propose a solution. Conclude your article with at least one clear, bold proposal for solving the problem you have identified.

Quick op-ed formatting tips:

1. Use a common typeface like Arial or Times in 10 or 12 pt. Double space.
2. Write in short sentences.
3. Speak in a bold, active voice that leans upon nouns and verbs, not adjectives and adverbs.
4. Avoid jargon.
5. Put your name, address and phone number at the top of the page.
6. Suggest a headline based upon your opening statement.
7. Include a paragraph at the end that explains your qualifications.
8. Place a "-30-" at the bottom of the last page to indicate the end.
9. Enclose a brief cover letter that summarizes the op-ed and your expertise.