



Tips for Writing an Op-ed

Are you interested in writing an opinion piece to submit to a newspaper, magazine, or online publication? Here's what you need to know to get started.

- Focus on one main idea or a single theme in your op-ed.
- Timeliness is crucial. One day can mean the difference between acceptance and rejection. Be timely, and even controversial in your opinion. Look for opportunities to wed your specific area of expertise or interest with news developments.
- The first line of an op-ed is crucial. The opening “hook” may grab the reader’s attention with a strong claim, a surprising fact, a metaphor, or a counter-intuitive observation that entices the reader into reading more. The opening also briefly lays the foundation for your argument.
- Don’t ramble or deviate from your principal points. An op-ed is neither a history lesson nor an essay that slowly builds to a point. The point must be made in paragraph one.
- Always write for the lay reader. Be clear and straightforward. Use simple words, short sentences, and short paragraphs.
- Take pains to educate the reader with your special insight but take care not to condescend or preach. Keep the tone of your piece on high ground.
- Express a strong call to action. Write with verve and “fire in your gut.”
- Every good column or op-ed piece needs a strong ending which echoes or answers introduction and has been foreshadowed by preceding thematic statements.

