

# Tips on Writing an Op-Ed

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"Op-ed" articles, as they are commonly referred to, are opinion articles published opposite the editorial page. They are longer and more influential than letters to the editor, and are therefore more difficult to publish.

### General Tips:

- Timing is key, make sure you submit an op-ed when the issue is hot.
- In general an op-ed is written in 500-800 words or less, double-spaced. Keep it short.
- Read other op-eds to get a feel for how they are constructed. Generally they are written in the 5 paragraph with three talking points format:
  1. The first paragraph should include a news-hook (i.e. referring to a recent event in the news), and your thesis statement. Make sure your point is well stated and concise.
  2. The three "body" paragraphs should pinpoint the three most important parts of your argument.
  3. the conclusion should be captivating and brief, make the last paragraph powerful..
- It is a good idea to have the main points of your op-ed already drafted, before a news break on your issue. This way, when your issue comes up in the news, all your article needs is the news-hook in the first paragraph, and it is ready to be sent to the editor.
- The more unique and fresh your facts are, the more likely your article is to be published; however, more obscure facts need to be well documented, and names should be double checked. Use facts, reputable quotes, and examples to support your opinion.
- Avoid clichés, tangents, name-calling, and repetition.
- Make sure you have a sort of "expertise" on the subject, and include a brief (one sentence) bio-line at the end of the article.
- Do not make the article too poetic, simple short sentences are best; and steer clear of long complex words and slang.
- Check your article for grammar and fluidity, read it out loud to make sure the thoughts flow well.
- Give it a catchy title.
- Have another person read your article before sending it in to make sure your point is clearly expressed.
- Learn where to send an op-ed before a newsbreak occurs. Check out <http://www.mediacircus.org/usnewslinks.htm> to find out how to get in touch with papers in your targeted areas.

Include a cover letter when submitting it to an editor, and assure him or her that the article has not been sent to a competing newspaper or if it was sent to them exclusively.