



Op-Eds are short essays that appear next to the editorial pages in newspapers. They are a fantastic tool for citizens working to influence local or regional policies, bring a new perspective to an issue, or react to new developments in the community.

Here are a few tips for writing successful Op-Eds:

- Introduce yourself to your newspaper's op-ed page editor by telephone or e-mail and request the publication's op-ed guidelines. Then follow them.
- Determine your goal. What do you want to achieve through your op-ed? Do you want people to behave differently or take a specific action? Keep this goal in mind as you write.
- Select one message to communicate. Op-eds are short - typically around 800 words - so you only have room to make one good point. A focused message will help you impact readers.
- Be controversial. Editors like essays with strong opinions that will spark conversation.
- Illustrate how the topic or issue affects readers. Put a face on the issue by starting your essay with the story of somebody who has been affected or begin with an attention-getting statistic.
- Describe the problem and why it exists. This is often where you can address the opposing viewpoint and explain your perspective.
- Offer your solution to the problem and explain why it's the best option.
- Conclude on a strong note by repeating your message or stating a call to action.
- Add one or two sentences at the end that describe your name and hometown. If you are credentialed in the topic area, include your title and credential information.
- If you feel passionate about a particular issue, keep a folder of op-ed ideas or thoughts. This will make writing on short-notice a little easier when you do want to respond to an issue in the news.
- Clip the contact information and names of your newspaper's editorial Board members from the paper and file. This will make submitting your op-ed easier and save you from having to search for the information at a later time.
- Have someone proof-read your piece before you submit! Feedback to make your arguments more effective will only make your case stronger.

