# **What is an Op-Ed (opinion editorial)?**

An op-ed, or opinion editorial, is a narrative essay that presents the writer's opinion or thoughts about an issue. Op-eds can raise awareness about a particular topic or aim to persuade/convince others, and can establish the writer as an expert on a subject. You have done the research: you are the expert!

Identify your audience: What kind reader are you writing to?

Op-eds are most commonly published in daily newspapers. Aim for 750 words. Some op-eds are written by newspaper staff or syndicated writers. Many are submitted by the publication's readers.

### Writing an Op-Ed

**Decide on a hook.** Try to sum up your message / your opinion in a single sentence to begin, then think about facts and anecdotes to support your initial point.

Create an enticing/exciting beginning—a first line or opening designed to capture readers’ interest. There are many different types of hooks, but a strong hook will grab readers, usually by throwing them into the middle of some dramatic action or by generating curiosity about an interesting situation or important question.

The purpose of a hook sentence (or scene) is to grab attention and give your reader a reason to invest their time and energy into your writing. The perfect hook will make sure your reader’s mind stays focused on your piece of writing, allowing them to be fully immersed in the argument of a persuasive essay. Hooks are crucial. Here are some ways to create a hook:

* **Your title is your first hook.**
* **Drop your readers into the middle of the action**.
* **Form an emotional connection**.
* **Make a surprising statement**.
* Ask a question that gets your reader thinking.

Example of a Hook: (by WWolf)

When was the last time you had someone over to your house when you cooked food for them and you ate together? I was just asking myself this question about myself. And rather disturbingly, I think the last time that this happened would have been in September 2016 in Kyrgyzstan.

When was the last time you went out for a restaurant to eat food with a friend or family member? For me, this would have been multiple times in Colombia in December 2019. Again that's kind of disturbing because it means that for at least 2 months when I was back in the United States pre-pandemic, I didn't either of these things. And disturbing because that is so contrary to my life for decades. The pandemic and also living in cities that are absolutely not my chosen places to live but places I have just fallen into for various family reasons, Sun City Center and Iowa City, really has distorted my life.

**Forget objectivity; be subjective.** An op-ed is about your opinion and perspective. Put your argument forward in a persuasive, authoritative manner. Don't be afraid to be passionate in arguing your point.

**Be clear.** Write as if you are debating with a friend. Use clear language that is easy to understand, but do not use informal language or slang.

**Keep it straight to the point.** State your message / opinion clearly, back it up with facts and examples, then finish up. Your op-ed should be about 750 words.

**The Basic Op-Ed Format**

**The Introduction: Create a Lede (leading sentence or paragraph) that acts like a HOOK:** Try to grab readers right away with your first sentence; make them want to read more. Start with an interesting story or example that encapsulates your point.

Also important in the introductory part:

* Get your message up front.
* Identify who you are and why you have a reason to write on this topic.

**The Body -- Supporting paragraphs (3 or 4 paragraphs):** Now that you've stated your point and grabbed readers' attention, build on your lead with facts, statistics, and anecdotes. Refer to your research in your own words but DO NOT copy or paste it into your supporting paragraphs. You can also use story-telling in the form of personal example or personal narrative.

**The Conclusion -- Wrap it up:** A good way to end is to refer again to your message and provide a solution or a call to action. In the concluding paragraphs, take your argument a step further and leave readers with information about what needs to be done next. You can give a manifesto. Try to win your reader’s hearts with specific aims or goals. If you're trying to move people to action, be sure to answer the question, "What can I do?" Make the final concluding paragraph as compelling as the first one.