



HOW TO WRITE AN OPINION-EDITORIAL

The op-ed section of a newspaper allows readers to share their opinions. Someone like you who can share direct insights is the best person to write an op-ed.

The following pointers will help you get your op-ed piece published:

1. **Keep it brief.** Newspapers have limited space and editors do not have the time to cut your piece down to size. In general, 750 to 800 words will do.
2. **Make a single point.** You only have 750 to 800 words. Make one point clearly and persuasively.
3. **Avoid jargon.** Simple language ensures that all readers, even non-experts, can understand your point. For example, do not use acronyms or technical language.
4. **Use examples.** Illustrations, anecdotes and personal stories are persuasive tools. They help explain complicated issues and bring them to life.
5. **Make a specific recommendation.** This is an opinion piece. State your opinion on how to improve matters. However, opinions should be based on fact and should avoid advocacy.
6. **Draw in the reader.** Your first paragraph should draw the reader in by using a dramatic vignette or a well-stated argument.
7. **Give readers an action step.** Be sure to remind the community how to learn more about rotavirus, vaccines and ways they can join efforts.
8. **End with a bang.** Your final paragraph is as important as your opening paragraph. Be sure to summarize your argument in one strong final paragraph.
9. **Follow up.** Most op-ed editors will respond to you within a week. If you have not heard back in that time frame, or if your piece is particularly time sensitive, you can make one follow-up phone call to be sure it was received and ask about its status.

Make sure your op-ed is double-spaced with wide margins. List your name, address, phone, fax and e-mail contact information at the top of the opinion piece. Find out from your local paper the best way to make a submission. Instructions for submitting an op-ed are usually at the bottom of the op-ed page or on the paper's Web site. Some newspapers like to receive them by mail, others prefer faxes, while others favor e-mail.