

Tips for Letters to the Editor:

- Write about something timely
- Make it local – write about how something affects someone/something in your area
- Keep it focused – short and snappy
- Use plain language – avoid jargon
- Put most important thing first, then decrease in importance, then end with a memorable conclusion
- Limit it to about 200 words or fewer
- Include your name, town, daytime phone number, and email address (the latter two won't be published – don't worry)

Tips for Op-Eds:

- Write about something timely
- Make it local – write about how something affects someone/something in your area
- Keep it focused – short and snappy
- Use plain language – avoid jargon
- Limit it to 500-800 words
- Include your name, organization, title, daytime phone number, and email address (the latter two won't be published – don't worry)

Basic Op-Ed Structure (from TheOpedProject.org):

- I. **Lede** (Around a news hook)
- II. **Thesis** (Statement of argument – either explicit or implied)
- III. **Argument:** Based on evidence (such as stats, news, reports from credible organizations, expert quotes, scholarship, history, first-hand experience)
 - a. 1st Point
 - i. evidence
 - ii. evidence
 - iii. conclusion
 - b. 2nd Point
 - i. evidence
 - ii. evidence
 - iii. conclusion
 - c. 3rd Point
 - i. evidence
 - ii. evidence
 - iii. conclusion

Note: In a simple, declarative op-ed (“policy X is bad; here’s why”), this may be straightforward. In a more complex commentary, the 3rd point may expand on the bigger picture—historical context, global/geographic picture, mythological

underpinnings, etc.—or may offer an explanation for a mystery that underpins the argument— eg., why a bad policy continues, in spite of its failures.

- IV. “To Be Sure”** paragraph (in which you pre-empt your potential critics by acknowledging any flaws in your argument, and address any obvious counter-arguments.)
- V. Conclusion** (often circling back to your lede)