

Crafting an Op-Ed Article

What is an Op-Ed?

An Op-Ed is an opinion-based article published on a newspaper or magazine's editorial page (both print and online). While many of these articles are solicited or produced by columnists, most newspapers welcome submissions and suggestions.

Successful Op-Eds almost always respond or relate to topical issues. You can use an Op-Ed to place an issue into the public eye, but it will need to be pitched in relation to a current news issue. For example, an Op-Ed on higher education quality can be framed within the context of the current recession: "we need high-quality higher education to jump-start our economy."

Pitching an Op-Ed

To place an Op-Ed, you will need to contact the Op-Ed editor at your target publication through email or phone. Email addresses are easier to get, but phone calls are more effective. Call the news outlet's main line if you can't locate the editor's phone number.

When discussing your idea, be receptive to the editor's suggestions on how best to communicate your ideas. Editors will usually give you an honest assessment of whether they are interested in your article, but they cannot give you a guarantee they will publish it.

Once you have submitted an Op-Ed, be prepared to accept editing suggestions from the editor. If they suggest you remove a key point, you will need to explain why it is important to the piece.

Tips for effective Op-Eds

- Like media releases, Op-Eds should be conversational and avoid complicated statistics or technical language. However, they can be more in-depth. A good length for an Op-Ed is 600-700 words.
- Op-Eds should also use the 'inverted pyramid'. Put the most important information and messages first.
- Monitor the editorial page of your targeted publication closely. This will give you an idea of what they're focusing on, and will allow you to pitch your article more effectively.
- Only pitch one publication at a time – you don't want to get in awkward situation where your article is accepted by more than one outlet at the same time. Editors want unique and exclusive content. If you are turned down by your target publication, it is acceptable to pitch your article to another magazine or newspaper.