

JEA's Guide to Writing an Op-Ed

First thing's first:

1. Know your purpose: Opinion pieces seek to inform *and* persuade. Consider how your argument and the evidence you provide can convince readers of the merits of your position.
2. Focus on the craft: Opinion pieces often use rhetorical strategies such as logos (logic), ethos (ethics), and pathos (emotions); or creative writing techniques such as scenes, metaphor, and/or anecdotes.
3. Be prepared to revise: Strong opinion pieces take time to develop.

Strong opinion pieces:

1. Begin with a hook to pull in the reader
2. Take a strong stance (opinions are not pro/con, but represent one side)
3. Have an argument, and are evidence-based
4. Do not rant; op-eds are well-reasoned
5. Include research, interviews, and even quotes
6. Anticipate and address counterarguments
7. End with a punch by offering solutions or a call to action

Some questions to ask yourself before you begin an opinion piece:

1. What am I an expert on?
2. What do I have an opinion about?
3. What do I care about?
4. What upsets me about the world?
5. What would I like to change?
6. Who can help me think through my opinion and develop an argument?
7. What do I need to know more about before I start writing?
8. Where can I gather evidence to back up my argument?

As you write:

- Test your reasoning: Use your peers as resources to see where flaws in your logic or argument might weaken your opinion piece.
- Maintain a consistent tone: Tone is important for an opinion piece. It helps the reader connect with your work on the appropriate emotional level. Think about what tone is appropriate for your topic. Is it serious? Formal? Personal? Satirical? Ironic? Light-hearted? Look for places to demonstrate that tone through your word choice.
- Use different types of evidence: Using different types of evidence will help appeal to different audiences. Evidence can be statistical (numbers and data), authoritative (expert perspectives), anecdotal (stories that illustrate a point) or analogical (a comparison to understand a larger point).

For more information on opinion articles and other journalistic writing, consider becoming a member of the [Journalism Education Association](#) and gain access to the organization's complete [curriculum](#).