

How to Write an Op Ed Piece by *American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)*

Most daily and weekly newspapers accept outside submissions for publication on their opinion pages. Longer than letters to the editor, op-ed pieces generally run between 500 and 800 words.

Here are a couple of tips on writing an op-ed:

- Use short, simple sentences.
- Avoid jargon.
- Explicitly support or oppose something.
- Personalize the op-ed with an anecdote.
- Link the op-ed to a current news story but keep the focus local.
- Follow the particular paper's guidelines for submission closely.

Try the following outline for your op-ed:

1. Start with a personal anecdote.
2. Make your main point in the first or second paragraph.
3. Begin to elaborate two, maximum three, supporting points in the following paragraphs. Make sure your paragraphs are short and contain one main idea.
4. Use facts, statistics and studies to support your arguments. Do not, however, be overly legal. Use metaphors (sports, movies and music work best) to relate complex ideas.
5. Conclude with a paragraph that draws the piece together and links to your opening anecdote.