

# Writing an Op-Ed

An op-ed often carries more weight than a Letter to the Editor. It presents a point of view with much greater detail and persuasion than a short letter allows.

## What is an op-ed?

- ◇ Another way of contacting the media
- ◇ An opinion piece run on a newspaper's opinion-editorial page
- ◇ A written piece by members of the community rather than by journalists
- ◇ The focus is typically local and the topic is usually a current issue

## Careful planning is key.

**OBTAIN GUIDELINES** — Call and ask the editorial page editor or op-ed editor for the newspaper's op-ed policies for submission such as length (usually 700 or 800 words).

**TALK TO THE EDITOR** — Try to arrange an appointment with the editorial staff to discuss your unique qualifications for writing an op-ed and the issue's urgency. Use the meeting to sell your issue, your organization and yourself. Some newspapers will not take time to meet with you and will make the decision solely based on your article. At the very least, the editor might have useful suggestions on how to write your article and improve its chances of being published.

**LOCALIZE IT**— Adopt a local angle in your op-ed, even on a national issue. Since you're probably competing for space with nationally syndicated columnists, a local angle can make your article more appealing.

### Exclusivity

Most papers require exclusivity; you may only submit your op-ed to their publication. If they decline to print it, you are free to submit the piece to another publication.

### Follow Up

Be sure to follow up within a week after submitting an article to ensure that it was received and to answer questions the editor might have.