



How to Write Op-Eds & LTES

What is an Op-ed?

“OPPOSITE THE EDITORIAL PAGE”

- The most effective op-eds are about an ongoing news story or provide a different perspective
- Connect policy arguments with real people and their stories (Including you!)
- Before writing, know the paper’s submission guidelines and to whom it should be sent
- 700-800 is a common length, but every paper is different

What is an LTE?

“LETTERS TO THE EDITOR”

- Keep it short; about 100-150 words
- Use LTEs to correct inaccuracies – focus on the facts
- Include at least one line that explains the situation/
previous article the letter is referring to
- Send them quickly; same day if possible

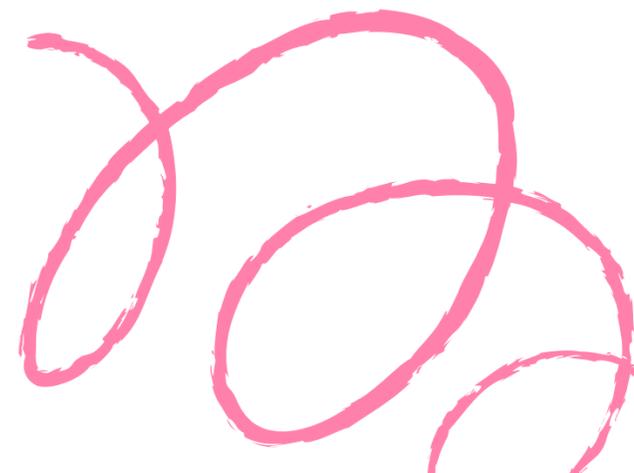
Placing an op-ed/LTE

WHERE TO PLACE OP-ED/LTES

- Start with your local paper
- Statewide papers are also a good option
- Don't send it to multiple places at once

WHEN TO PLACE OP-ED/LTES

- Speed is key, especially for LTEs or an op-ed reacting to a specific news event



Who should be the author?

- Keep it local
- No more than two authors

Writing an Op-Ed/LTE



How to decide on a topic

- The best topics are reacting to recent news: a public figure's comment, a major news story/trend, or an event like an election
- It's especially compelling if the topic connects to your personal life
- Make a clear argument, ideally with a call to action

Outline

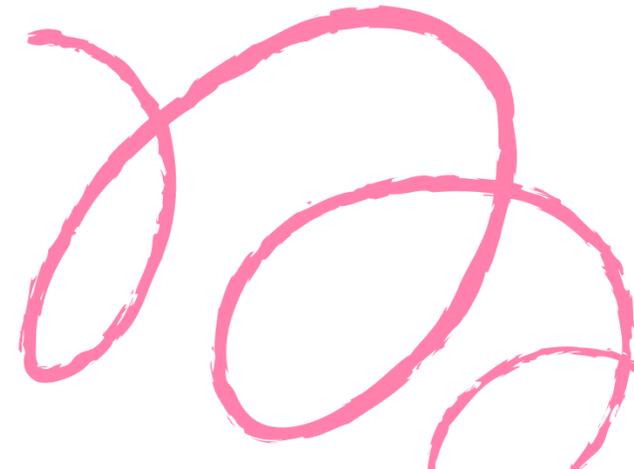
THIS IS A STARTING POINT

- First sentence: The hook
- Your “why”
 - Show why it’s timely/urgent
 - Include your story
- Supporting points and facts
- Conclusion:
 - Connect it back to the personal
 - Last sentence: Call to action

What is your hook?

THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PARTS

- Want it to be relevant to the news/local events:
 - Anniversary of a news event
 - Reaction to proposed bill/election
 - A personal story related to something happening in the news



Urgent hooks

- “Republicans in North Carolina have passed a sweeping abortion bill that further restricts access to abortion care — a bill filled with medical misinformation, misdirection and false narratives about abortion.” - NC Program Director Janice Robinson, [The Charlotte Observer](#)
- “Pennsylvania House Republicans are blatantly trying to hold on to their power and push their out-of-touch agenda.” - PA Program Director Ronna Dewey, [PennLive](#)

Personal hook

- “When I was in college, a friend confided in me that she had an abortion after being raped at a party. That’s the moment I knew I was pro-choice. Up until then, I had never really thought about where I stood on the issue of abortion. That wasn’t something that was discussed in my family or in my friend circle. But if I was in my friend’s shoes, I would have done the same thing.” - Story Producer Jill Jonassen, Cincinnati Enquirer

Tell your story!

MAKE YOUR POINT CLEAR (YOUR “WHY”)

- Show how the news connects to you or share a personal experience
- Don't be too complicated; you should be able to summarize your argument and call to action in two sentences
- No need to sound formal or academic

Make it personal

- “As the head of a national network of suburban women working together to defeat right-wing extremism, I can tell you that Roe's overturn has ignited a fire burning deep within America. Women are seeing how right-wing politicians—from school boards to state legislatures to courts to Congress—have been working hard to push their out-of-touch agenda on the majority of us.” - Founder Katie Paris, Newsweek

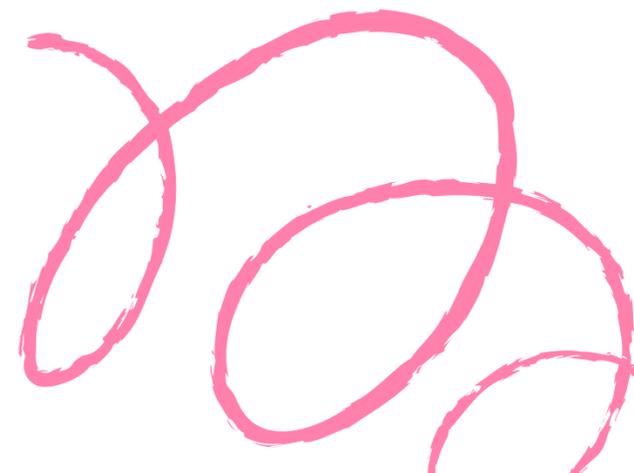
Weave in facts

- “Data from the Trans Legislation Tracker shows that just this year, an unprecedented 566 anti-trans bills have been introduced – a number expected to grow as the 2024 election inches closer. These include restricting what sports teams kids can play on and what bathroom they can use at school.”
- Story Producer Jill Jonassen, USA Today.

How to end

GO BACK TO THE PERSONAL AND RESTATE ARGUMENT

- Reiterate the point you're making
- Connect it back to yourself
- Emphasize the urgency
- Have a clear, specific call to action



Call to action

- “I call on Cotham to show that her conscience is more bothered by this terrible bill than it was by the mean tweets she said contributed to her party switch. She must push to stop this dangerous bill from becoming law.” - NC Program Director Janice Robinson, The Charlotte Observer
- “So I’m asking you to protect the right to reproductive health care and our ability to make our voices heard. Vote NO in August. Vote YES in November. Abortion access is a personal decision. Let’s keep it that way.” - Story Producer Jill Jonassen, Cincinnati Enquirer

Sending in your op-ed

DOUBLE-CHECK WORD LIMITS!

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- Don't worry about the headline
- Make sure it doesn't have any errors
- Attach the op-ed to an email
 - Email subject line: "Op-Ed Submission: [Topic]"
 - Summary of argument and call to action
- Sometimes papers will decline; sometimes they just don't respond
 - Follow up a couple days later, but only do it once

LET'S PRACTICE!

QUESTIONS?