

MEDIA SUPPORT KIT: HOW TO WRITE AND PITCH AN OP-ED

WHAT IS AN OP-ED?

The op-ed section of a newspaper is a place for readers to share their opinion on a topic of their choice. The author is someone unaffiliated with the publication who has a strong opinion on the subject they are writing about. They might be a recognised expert or someone with a personal connection to it. If you want to take your message to a wider audience, you can try pitching an op-ed to your local newspaper.

WRITING AN OP-ED

When writing your op-ed, remember:

- Your job with an op-ed is to convince the reader of your point of view, so be clear about the argument you are making and don't waste time getting there
- Keep the body of your article under 750 words (or as specified by the newspaper) Write in short, sharp sentences and paragraphs: each paragraph should be at most three sentences long and convey one idea central to your argument, with each point leading logically to the next

- You can open with an anecdote or a surprising fact, something that will draw your reader in and make them want to know more
- Explain why this issue matters — why should people care?
- Address common counterarguments to your position (but don't seek out new ones if they aren't already being made loud and clear)
- Write in your own voice — use plain English, avoid jargon, and don't talk down to your readers
- Get someone with good spelling and grammar to proofread your op-ed before submitting

TIP

The Op-Ed Project is a fantastic website for anyone wanting more advice on how to write and pitch a successful op-ed. Includes tips and tricks, a list of top US publishers, and lots of other useful information.

PITCHING YOUR OP-ED

Email the opinions editor at your chosen publication. Include your op-ed (paste the text below your introduction and include it as an attachment in whatever format is specified in their guidelines) and a brief introduction with your pitch.

The pitch should:

- Summarise the story and hook in one or two sentences
- Justify why this story is newsworthy and of interest to the paper's readers
- Explain why you have chosen this publication as the best platform for your story

You should also tell the editor a bit about yourself. Include your contact details, relevant qualifications, and connection to the issue.

TIP

Most newspapers have guidelines on their websites for submitting op-eds. Editors receive dozens of pitches for op-eds every week, many of which don't fully conform to the guidelines. Making sure you tick all the boxes is an easy way to move your submission to the top of the pile.

OP-ED EXAMPLES

Below are some links to successful op-eds about overdose or IOAD:

- [Annual Overdose Report 2020: Penington Institute CEO, John Ryan](#)
- [We are all one: responding to B.C.'s toxic drug crisis](#)
- [For the Overdose Epidemic, Stop Leaving Public Health Tools in the Toolbox](#)
- [Overdose awareness more important than ever](#)
- [Don't Forget the Opioid Epidemic as we Battle COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

For more advice on media engagement, contact the IOAD campaign team at: info@overdoseday.com

