

## How to Submit Op-Ed Articles and Letters to the Editor

Most newspapers accept op-ed pieces from guest writers who are prominent figures or members of their local community. An op-ed piece typically runs 600 to 850 words in length.

- Target the correct paper. Newspapers are much more likely to run a piece from a local person than from someone in another city or state, even if that person is an expert. When possible, publish in your hometown paper. You could also co-author with someone locally.
- Call the newspaper's op-ed page editor, introduce yourself, and say you would like to submit an op-ed article and describe the topic. Ask them if they're interested. Some newspapers don't accept unsolicited pieces, but most will. If you get a voice mail or assistant, leave a message letting them know who you are and when to expect the piece. Most places ask you to e-mail pieces.
- If you are offering the piece as a national or statewide exclusive, make that clear. They will be more inclined to accept it if they know they have an exclusive, at least in the immediate media market.
- If your piece is time sensitive (if it needs to run before a bill is voted on, for example), make that clear when you submit.
- If the paper has been covering your topic or has published opinions counter to your opinion, make that point to the editor.
- Send the piece to the editor including all relevant titles and positions as well as the address and phone number of the writer.
- Expect that the op-ed page editor may wait a week or two to publish your piece. Keep in touch and offer to supply any extra information they need. You may call approximately once a week without worrying about being a pest, and more often if it is very time sensitive.

### Submitting Letters to the Editor

- Keep it short—letters to the editor should be about five or six sentences.
- Find out how the paper prefers to receive letters to the editor – often it's done by e-mail.
- Make sure the author's address and phone number is included.
- If you're responding to an article that ran in the paper, respond within at most a week. Refer to the original article and the date it ran in your first sentence. Avoid being too negative.

*Instructions adapted from uale.org*