

Activity

# Instructions for Writing an Op-Ed

## Learning Objectives

Students will write an Op-Ed.

## Length

Varies

## Materials

[Instructions for Writing an Op-Ed \(Google Docs\)](#)



## Instructional Plan

### Writing an Op-Ed

Writing an op-ed (short for opposite the editorial page) can be a powerful way to express your thoughts, opinions, and insights on a particular issue. Whether it's a local, national, or global issue, your voice matters, and an op-ed is an excellent platform to share your ideas.

### Op-Ed Tips

**Relevant Topic:** Select a topic that you are passionate about and that is relevant to your audience. Consider issues impacting your school, community, or the world. Make sure your topic is current and significant to capture readers' attention.

**Research:** Conduct thorough research on your chosen topic. Collect facts, statistics, and expert opinions to support your argument. Understand different perspectives on the issue to strengthen your position and anticipate counterarguments.

**Take a Clear Stance:** Craft a concise thesis statement that clearly expresses your main argument or perspective. Your thesis should be specific, debatable, and focused on the main point you want to convey in your op-ed.

**Plan:** Have a point. Organize your op-ed in such a way that it supports that point. See below for an example of one outline you could use, and look at examples on the web and in publications that you read.

**Submit Your Op-Ed:** Choose your target publication well: large ones have more reach, but also get more submissions; a small town or neighborhood newspaper may be more likely to publish your op-ed. Follow the submission guidelines of the target publication. Include a compelling headline, a brief bio, and contact information. Be patient and persistent; op-eds may take time to get published. Remember, your op-ed is a platform for your voice, so make it impactful, well-researched, and thought-provoking.

Remember, the goal of your op-ed is to share your perspective effectively, so stay focused, be persuasive, and make a lasting impact on your readers.

### Resources:

- [Opinion | How to write an op-ed for The Washington Post](#)
  - [New York Times Opinion Guest Essays](#)
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## Recommended Structure for an Op-Ed

Heading:

- Grab attention with a strong, concise statement or question:
  - "It's Time to Rethink [Topic]"
  - "[Topic]: The Urgent Issue We Can't Ignore"
  - "Why [Your Position] Matters to [Audience]"

Opener:

- Hook the reader with a compelling anecdote, fact, or a thought-provoking question to capture attention
- Establish your credibility and connection to the topic.
- Clearly state the purpose of your op-ed.
- Keep it concise!

Body:

- Present your main points in a logical, persuasive manner.
- Support each point with evidence.
- Anticipate counterarguments and refute them with strong evidence.

Call to Action:

- End with a clear call to action, urging readers to take specific steps.
- Offer ways for readers to get involved or learn more.
- Leave a lasting impression with a strong closing statement.

Additional Tips:

- Tailor your op-ed to the specific publication you're targeting.
  - Follow the publication's submission guidelines carefully.
  - Proofread meticulously for errors in grammar, spelling, and style.
  - Get feedback from others before submitting your op-ed.
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## Example Op-Ed

[Washington Post Opinion: This one goes out to every whiny brat restaurant customer](#)

By Daphne Crawford - November 16, 2021 at 12:26 p.m. EST

*Daphne Crawford is a senior at North Oconee High School in Bogart, Ga.*

You know how, as a kid, if you were behaving like a whiny brat, your parents would say they hope you have children one day so you'll find out what it's like? Spoiler alert: No need to wait until parenthood. Just take a job in an American service industry.

When I hear about the "Great Resignation" and the government report last week that a record 4.4 million workers quit their jobs in September, nearly a million of them in the hospitality business (The Post recently reported on "the fast-food workers' season of rebellion"), I just feel jealous.

I live in Georgia and work at a chain restaurant, where my weekly paycheck depends on the \$7.25 minimum-wage-plus-tip-share combo. With taxes and other fees taking out a depressing amount, and inflation hitting 6 percent last month, the 40-hour workweek and the stress it brings make the job seem hardly worth it.

From customers berating me and my co-workers because we're out of ranch dressing for their takeout order (we all know you have some at home) to being yelled at for things I can't control (I didn't overcook your steak; I've never cooked a steak, period), to closing up after a double shift at 11 p.m. and getting less in tips than you'd see in a street

player's guitar case on a Tuesday afternoon, I'm quickly running out of patience and the willingness to work.

On top of this, I'm a high school senior taking four Advanced Placement classes, dual enrolling at my local university, submitting college applications and trying to do enough extracurriculars to convince admissions officers that I'm the next Mother Teresa or Elon Musk.

Some friends tell me I should "just not work." Really? In this economy? My social-worker mother and construction-manager father simply don't make enough to pay — along with supporting my siblings and taking care of all their other financial responsibilities — for what might be tens of thousands of dollars in tuition. My average \$350 weekly income is my measly attempt to make up the difference that federal student aid, scholarships, tuition assistance and student loans won't cover.

My deteriorating state of mind struggles to accommodate the degree of suffering inflicted on grown adults by the unavailability of ranch dressing.

I have six co-workers in the restaurant's to-go department. Several of them are working second and even third jobs. I'm the youngest; the oldest has two school-age children. I think it's fair to say we're all tired, overworked and (mentally) beaten down.

We serve all kinds of people. Some of them I go to school with; some are stressed parents; some are kind and some are awful; some are retirees; some don't know how many are in a dozen. From the restaurant worker's side, the impact of each interaction with customers rests on two things: the tip amount and how the customer behaves.

We've received \$5 tips on \$180 orders, and we still remember the customer's name. We've had a woman scream at us in a crowded parking lot during a Saturday night rush, and we still remember which car she was driving.

Don't get me wrong. We have lots of good tips and see lots of good people, too. But these negative interactions are by far the most memorable — and they're the ones that make us want to walk out midshift. They are the ones that make me go cry in the freezer, the ones that make me wonder whether my dream of going to a good college, even if expensive, is worth it.

So, a word to all those spoiled, apathetic Americans collecting their restaurant orders during the pandemic (or, if pandemic rules allow, sitting in restaurant booths and mistreating the wait staff): Try sympathizing with a 17-year-old trying her best at a job that generates 100-plus orders on weekend nights and might require preparing \$3,500 catering orders even though it makes zero difference to her paycheck.

Sorry if this seems angry or spiteful, or just a way to yell back at every nasty customer. Maybe it's a way of telling my managers how done I am. Or maybe it's just a message to the industry generally, because I'm so done with how unfair and degrading it is to the workers who make it run.