

HOW TO WRITE AN OP-ED OR LETTER TO THE EDITOR

OP-ED VS LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Op-eds and letters to the editor (LTEs) differ in length, purpose, and submission steps. Use the table below to compare them and choose the format that fits your message.

	OP-ED	LETTER TO THE EDITOR
Length	600 to 800 words	150 to 250 words
Purpose	Builds a fuller argument with a few points and sources	Makes one clear point, often reacting to a recent event or article
Tone	Persuasive and informative	Concise and personal
Sources	Should link to facts inside the text	Can include one fact or link if the publication allows
Publishing timeframe	Takes longer to place, at least a few days	Quick placement, sometimes the next day
Best option if:	You need space, have a few points with sources, want a broader audience	You have one clear point and/or want it published quickly

OP-ED OUTLINE

- State your thesis or main point in the first paragraph
- Open with a “hook” – a short story or clear fact that grabs attention
- Add two to three supporting points with links to sources
- Note one counterpoint and give a brief response
- Close with what should happen next
- Use short paragraphs and plain language

LETTER OUTLINE

- Make only one point
- Start with your point in the first line
- Use a local example from your life or neighborhood
- Add one fact or link if the paper allows it
- End with a clear ask
- Include your name and city

HOW TO SUBMIT

Go to the paper’s website and open the Opinion or Submit page. Check whether you are sending a letter or an op-ed, the word limit, whether they want exclusive rights, and how to send it. Trim your piece to their length and tailor it to that paper’s readers. If sending via email, write a clear subject line that matches your title and paste the full text in the email body. If they use a contact form, paste it here. Include your name, city, phone number, and a short bio. Attach a headshot only if they ask. Send to one outlet at a time if they require exclusivity. If you do not hear back after a few days, send a short follow-up or revise and try another outlet.