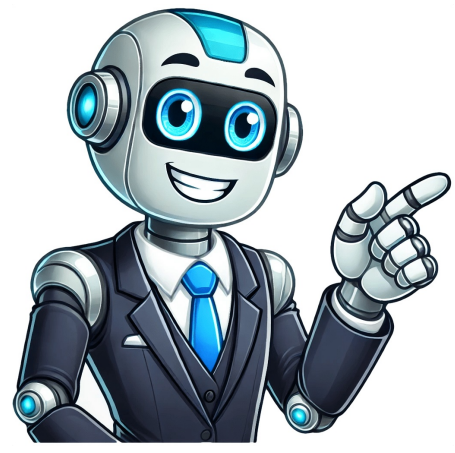


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Two years ago one of my oldest daughter's friends asked what her father did for a living. "He listens to records in his office," she confidently replied.This was not quite an exhaustive description of my duties. From her vantage point as a toddler, she could not distinguish between the physical space and the job usually performed in it. She might just as easily have gotten the impression that I am a professional viewer of Skip and Shannon Undisputed.How do I make my living, though? If I were asked to give a succinct description of my work, I would say that, believe it or not, is what writing is, and that journalism is simply a form of mass entertainment, like Hollywood or Major League Baseball, albeit one with somewhat lower average earnings potential. My job is to write things that please readers, to amuse, to clarify an inchoate feeling, to elucidate a vexed question, and at least occasionally, I hope, to inspire laughter with 800 or so words. Broadway it ain't. But order things have been called fun. Escape your echo chamber. Get the facts behind the news, plus analysis from multiple perspectives. From our morning news briefing to a weekly Good News Newsletter, get the best of The Week delivered directly to your inbox.I offer this definition in deliberate contrast to the prevailing one, which involves a kind of hypothetical constitutional role for the free press in helping some equally imaginary informed citizenry to think through the great prudential questions of our age. If I believed that this is how journalism, especially opinion journalism, really works, I would have resigned years ago in horror at the idea that I had been assigned any role, even an impossibly benighted one, in shaping the destiny of the American Republic.Which of these is closer to the truth? My instinct is that to say that while there is something to both definitions, the conditions under which the latter obtain are rare even for the most talented writers. (Did H.L. Mencken change the public's mind about a single question?) But even if they were combined, in full knowledge that aiming high is no guarantee of even hitting the rim, they would form only a partial interpretation at best an attempt to prescribe what, under something like ideal conditions, a columnist's job might involve. If I were asked instead to give a descriptive rather than a prescriptive account of the opinion-having business, to say what it looks like in practice as opposed to what it ought to be, my response would be that I am here to elicit your outrage.This admittedly rather sordid activity can take two basic forms. The first involves writing things that call attention to real or perceived injustices, which gives rise to what readers will only suppose is righteous anger. The second requires me to write more or less the same good words for to readers, who become indignant because they are so convinced of my fecklessness and ignorance as to others are my sagacity. Because I write on the internet, both kinds of readers share what I have said with others on social media, who either agree or disagree with their implicit assessment of my mental (and no doubt spiritual) capabilities, which in turn gives rise to another round of recriminations. Rinse and repeat.I am happy to admit that the first two accounts of opinion writing are somewhat polyanish. But I think that the third one, which best describes the actual opinion journalism that exists in this country right now and the means by which we are conditioned to respond to it, is actively dangerous, so dangerous that it is ultimately incompatible with the ends presupposed by either of the former accounts and, in the long run, with democratic self-government itself, and the various accounts of "the good life" apparently guaranteed by such a system.This is true for two related reasons. The first is that a society that has made outrage its primary mode of communication is incapable of being entertained, moved, or, perhaps worst of all, teased. (This reality is not immediately obvious, least of all to the outraged themselves, who mistake the dopamine hit of a fave for all of the aforementioned feelings.) The second is that those questions about taxation, infrastructure, the provision of medical care, the environment, foreign policy that a free press is meant to help adjudicate have a tendency to disappear from view, unmissed, while I issue my fourth superlative in as many hundred words about a politician's unimportant speech and you and your former coworker argue about whose basic fitness for the human race is called into question by his attitude toward what I have written (and will forget about tomorrow).There is a very real sense in which this transformation has already taken place. The underlying structural realities in American society are remarkably impervious to change, and increasingly the only important question, I think, is how soon it will be before both of our major political parties decide that a basic income scheme will absolve them of their responsibilities. Certainly it is difficult to imagine a world in which the share prices of various corporations do continue to increase at an acceptable rate, in which we do not continue to purchase cheap consumer goods made by wage slaves and a dizzying number of "services," in which, in addition to not taking drugs or spending billions of collective hours enjoying various crass forms of entertainment, we do not occasionally indulge in what amounts to gossip about insignificant events that we dignify with the name of "politics." In this country as it is likely to exist for the foreseeable future the actual underlying objects of opinion columns the unlikely passage of certain pieces of legislation, the umpteenth development in the latest meta-scandal become irrelevant except insofar as they allow the rest of the machine to function. They are a means to an end, like the horses in a numbers racket.In saying the above, I realize that I am inviting all of those things that I have apparently taken such pains to decry. While some of you are nodding along at the folly of your fellow indiscriminate parkaters at the outrage banquet, others are no doubt already taking offense at what you have decided is my unwarranted implication that you, somehow uniquely, are susceptible to this pattern. There is probably no better illustration of the futility of this endeavor. (Actually there is: in the time it took me to compose the above paragraphs, Hasbro's decision to replace Mr. and Mrs. Potato Head with an intersex vegetable companion for toddlers occasioned dozens of articles and goodness knows how many hundreds of thousands of words on social media before the company announced that nothing of the kind was taking place. This was greeted by some social conservatives as one of their greatest victories in recent years.)But it is precisely by acknowledging such difficulties that I hope we can forestall some of the worst consequences of our present situation. There are, as far as I can tell, two things that must change. Opinion columnists must write with some end in mind that is not outrage, including that of the shared variety, which will mean ignoring a great deal of what seems genuinely to demand it. Readers, meanwhile, must respond to what the former have written, if at all, with carefully considered, good-faith criticism or a simple shake of the head. (For either of these to take place, social media will very likely have to play a role in journalism very different from its present one, in which it elicits primarily anger for the sake of our points.)And finally, there must be some space, perhaps one far away from the internet (or at least the internet as it is currently conceived) in which there is simply room for outrage of any kind. There must be some way of writing and some attitude toward what used to be called "the reading life" that keeps old hacks like me this one gainfully employed and readers like you satisfied with what you have (hopefully) paid for that does not leave you and me and the rest of the country looking for meaning in the emptiness of an all-consuming object-less wrath. Instead, we must find a way to share what we think for it must ultimately be a two-way street about presidents and senators and HHS bureaucrats and policies and campaigns that allows us to remember that (in the words with which I always intended to end my last regular column for this website) "we must love one another or die." Opinion pieces and editorials play a crucial role in journalism, offering writers a platform to express their perspectives and influence public opinion. These forms of writing allow individuals to delve into a range of topics, from politics and social issues to entertainment and culture. Whether you aspire to become a journalist, a columnist, or simply want to enhance your writing skills, this comprehensive guide will provide you with the necessary tools to craft compelling opinion pieces and editorials. The first step in writing an impactful opinion piece or editorial is selecting a topic that is both relevant and interesting. Consider current events, trending topics, or issues that you are passionate about. Its essential to choose a subject that will captivate your readers and spark their curiosity. Before you start writing, its crucial to gather as much information as possible about your chosen topic. Conduct thorough research from reliable sources, such as reputable news outlets, academic journals, and expert opinions. This will help you build a strong foundation for your argument and ensure your piece is well-informed. While writing an opinion piece, its important to acknowledge and understand various perspectives on the topic. This will help you present a balanced argument and avoid appearing biased. Analyze different viewpoints, gather supporting evidence, and consider counterarguments to strengthen your piece. A strong thesis statement is the backbone of any opinion piece or editorial. It should clearly state your main argument and provide a roadmap for the rest of your article. Make it concise, persuasive, and captures the essence of your viewpoint. To ensure your opinion piece or editorial flows smoothly, follow a logical structure. Start with an attention-grabbing introduction that hooks the reader and provides context for your argument. Then, develop your points in the body paragraphs, providing evidence and examples to support your claims. Finally, conclude your piece with a compelling ending that leaves a lasting impression on the reader. Opinion pieces and editorials should be written in a clear and concise manner. Avoid using jargon or overly complex language that may alienate your readers. Instead, opt for simple and impactful language that effectively communicates your ideas. To strengthen your argument, its essential to back up your claims with compelling evidence. Use statistics, research findings, and expert opinions to support your viewpoints. This will add credibility to your piece and make it more persuasive. Opinion pieces and editorials are meant to engage and provoke thought in readers. Consider your target audience and tailor your writing style accordingly. Use rhetorical questions, anecdotes, or personal experiences to captivate your readers and invite them to think critically about the topic. After completing your initial draft, take the time to edit and revise your opinion piece or editorial. Check for grammatical errors, clarity of ideas, and overall coherence. Consider seeking feedback from peers or mentors to gain valuable insights and improve your writing. Once you are satisfied with your final draft, its time to submit your opinion piece or editorial to relevant platforms. Consider pitching your article to newspapers, magazines, or online publications that align with your chosen topic. Additionally, consider publishing your work on personal blogs or social media platforms to reach a wider audience. Opinion pieces and editorials are powerful tools for shaping public discourse and influencing opinions. By following this writing guide, you will be well-equipped to craft compelling and impactful pieces that resonate with readers. Remember, the key to success lies in thorough research, clear argumentation, and engaging storytelling. Happy writing!

Writing opinion pieces and editorials can be a powerful way to express your perspectives and influence public opinion. Here are the key takeaways from this writing guide: Choose a relevant and engaging topic that captivates your readers and sparks their curiosity. Conduct thorough research from reliable sources, such as reputable news outlets, academic journals, and expert opinions. This will help you build a strong foundation for your argument and ensure your piece is well-informed. While writing an opinion piece, its important to acknowledge and understand various perspectives on the topic. This will help you present a balanced argument and avoid appearing biased. Develop a clear and persuasive thesis statement that captures the essence of your viewpoint. Structure your piece effectively with an attention-grabbing introduction, well-developed body paragraphs, and a compelling ending. Use clear and concise language, avoiding jargon and complex terms that may alienate your readers. Incorporate compelling evidence, such as statistics and expert opinions, to strengthen your argument. Engage with your audience by tailoring your writing style to resonate with them and using rhetorical questions or personal anecdotes. Edit and revise your work to ensure clarity of ideas, coherence, and grammatical accuracy. Submit your opinion piece or editorial to appropriate platforms, such as newspapers, magazines, or personal blogs, to reach a wider audience. To further enhance your writing skills and gain valuable insights into the world of modern journalism, consider enrolling in the NYU Modern Journalism online course and certificate program offered by Yellowbrick. This program provides a comprehensive curriculum designed to equip you with the knowledge and skills needed to excel in the field of journalism. Remember, writing opinion pieces and editorials is not only about expressing your own views but also about engaging with your readers and influencing public discourse. With practice and dedication, you can become a persuasive and impactful writer in the world of journalism. Opinion piece articles are a good way to get your research into the public domain. Here are some tips on how to write. An opinion piece is an article, usually around 800-900 words, that presents an opinion and builds an argument for something to be done. It is NOT a report about research, but an informed opinion about the implications of research for action. Opinion piece articles are sometimes called "op-eds." The empty shelves in the supermarkets are a stark reminder of the potential of climate change to impact our food supply. (From Croakey) In politics, as in life, there are always colliding truths. There is no legal reason or historical precedent for the Indigenous people to Parliament referendum to be a detailed proposal. The reverse is true. Referendums pose simple questions and parliaments take care of the detail. (From smh.com.au) Once you have grabbed the readers attention, explain the context. What is this article adding to the debate, and why should readers continue? Now elaborate on your dot points. Use examples and description to bring colour and interest to what you write. Put in plenty of statistics and references to research (hyperlinked rather than endnotes) to back up your argument. Put the most important information higher up as people often dont finish the whole article. Make sure there is a call to action what you would like people to do, how they should act or what should they change as a result of your argument? Try to link paragraphs (the end of one paragraph leads into the start of the next) so the article reads as a coherent argument. The final paragraph is often a call to action, above. Or it could be a conclusion that provides a summary referencing the issue you began with and paints a positive picture of how the world would improve if your advice were followed. The aim is to leave the reader satisfied that you have answered the issue, and that they know what to do with this information. Indeed, maternal obesity is a societal issue that we must all tackle with a shared vision to protect women health during pregnancy and the health of their children, our next generation. (From MJA Insight+) We all deserve to live and work in places that intrinsically support, rather than detract from, healthy choices and behaviours, and therefore our health itself. (From The Conversation) These measures to provide sustainable and attractive career opportunities will ensure a pipeline of trained public health researchers and the prioritisation of public health for the good of all in Australia. (From Croakey) Write how you speak. The more conversational, the better. Use plain English do not use jargon. Try and simplify every word you use. The Conversation asks authors to write as if speaking to an educated 16-year-old. For other media, that should be a 12-year-old. Explain complex ideas as you would in a conversation with a non-expert. Different media outlets have different requirements for pitches. In general, in your pitch you should: Here are some opinion piece examples for students, researchers and health system professionals who are writing for a policy audience. Articles published by The Conversation and Croakey are generally opinion pieces. A Centre for Disease Prevention and Control lets work together to be clear on the problems it must solve. Intouch Creating systems of leadership in prevention research. 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