

GUIDELINES FOR EDITORIAL WRITING

An editorial is an article that reflects the majority vote of the editorial board, the governing body of the journal made up of editors or invited honorable personnel. It is usually unsigned. Editorial writers build on an argument and try to persuade readers to think the same way they do. Editorials are meant to influence public opinion, promote critical thinking, and sometimes cause people to take action on an issue. In essence, an editorial is an opinionated news story.

Editorials have:

1. Introduction, body and conclusion
2. An objective explanation of the issue, especially complex issues
3. A timely news angle
4. Opinions from the opposing viewpoint that refute directly the same issues the writer addresses
5. The opinions of the writer delivered in a professional manner. Good editorials engage issues, not personalities and refrain from name-calling or other petty tactics of persuasion.
6. Alternative solutions to the problem or issue being criticized. Anyone can gripe about a problem, but a good editorial should take a pro-active approach to making the situation better by using constructive criticism and giving solutions.
7. A solid and concise conclusion that powerfully summarizes the writer's opinion. Give it some punch.

Four Types of Editorials Will:

1. ***Explain or interpret:*** Editors often use these editorials to explain the way the journal covered a scientific or controversial subject.
2. ***Criticize:*** These editorials constructively criticize actions, decisions or situations while providing solutions to the problem identified. Immediate purpose is to get readers to see the problem, not the solution.
3. ***Persuade:*** Editorials of persuasion aim to immediately see the solution, not the problem. From the first paragraph, readers will be encouraged to take a specific, positive action.
4. ***Praise:*** These editorials commend people and organizations for something done well. They are not as common as the other three.

Writing an Editorial

1. Pick a significant topic that has a current scientific angle and would interest readers.
2. Collect information and facts; include objective research
3. State your opinion briefly in the fashion of a thesis statement
4. Explain the issue objectively as a reporter would and tell why this situation is important

5. Give opposing viewpoint first with its quotations and facts
6. Refute (reject) the other side and develop your case using facts, details, figures, quotations. Pick apart the other side's logic.
7. Concede a point of the opposition — they must have some good points you can acknowledge that would make you look rational.
8. Repeat key phrases to reinforce an idea into the reader's minds.
9. Give a realistic solution(s) to the problem that goes beyond common knowledge. Encourage critical thinking and pro-active reaction.
10. Wrap it up in a concluding punch that restates your opening remark (thesis statement).
11. Keep it to 500 words; make every word count; never use "I"

A Sample Structure

I. Lead with an Objective Explanation of the Issue/Controversy.

- Pull in facts and quotations from the sources which are relevant.
- Additional research may be necessary.

II. Present Your Opposition First.

As the writer you disagree with these viewpoints.

- Use facts and quotations to state objectively their opinions.
- Give a strong position of the opposition. You gain nothing in refuting a weak position.

III. Directly Refute The Opposition's Beliefs.

- Pull in other facts and quotations from people who support your position.
- Concede a valid point of the opposition which will make you appear rational, one who has considered all the options

IV. Give Other, Original Reasons/Analogies

In defense of your position, give reasons from strong to strongest order.

- Use a literary or cultural allusion that lends to your credibility and perceived intelligence

V. Conclude With Some Punch.

Give solutions to the problem or challenge the reader to be informed.