

SHARING YOUR STORY:

TIPS FOR CRAFTING AN OP-ED *OR* LETTER TO THE EDITOR

What is an op-ed?

It is an opinion piece written for an editorial section of an outlet page by a person who, by title or experience, will matter to readers. It usually runs from 600 to 750 words.

What is a letter to the editor?

Letters to the editor represent the opinions of readers and normally run from 200 to 300 words. They are often a specific reaction to a piece or article previously published by the outlet.

HOW DO I START?

What's the one thing you want to communicate?

Say something! In your voice

Write in one declarative sentence what you want to say: e.g. "Why Congress should fund more research into migraine treatment"

Hint: This isn't easy

Then what?

- Make your points—do your research.
- What are three facts that support your sentence?
- Facts matter—emotion is important, but emotion alone won't inform.

Anything else?

What do you want your audience to do—is there a call to action?



CONSTRUCTION TIPS:

- **Engage** the audience in your first sentence
- Use your "**sell point**" early in the piece
- **Make your points**
- Write your **last sentence as your call to action** and/or why it matters.
- Edit—**look over it**—did I say it clearly? Did I say it emphatically? Did I support my sell sentence?

HOW DO I SUBMIT?

Each publication has its own rules. Usually pieces must be submitted online. They may also have unique word limits or require that you include a short bio.

Don't be afraid to follow up and see if there's interest.