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**HOW TO:  
WRITE OP-EDS**



## WHAT IS AN OP-ED?

OP-EDS GET THEIR NAME BECAUSE THEY ARE TYPICALLY PRINTED IN NEWSPAPERS OPPOSITE FROM THE EDITORIAL PAGE. OP-EDS ARE OPINION ARTICLES, NORMALLY AROUND 500 TO 750 WORDS IN LENGTH.

**“** *The goal is to supply readers with a steady stream of big ideas and provocative arguments, and to entertain them. It should be an exciting experience and often a challenging one. The objective is rather to afford greater opportunity for exploration of issues and presentation of new insights and new ideas by writers and thinkers who have no institutional connections.*

By: Remy Tumin

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/03/insider/opinion-op-ed-explainer.html>

**”**

THIS TOOLKIT WILL OUTLINE HOW YOU CAN IMPACT ISSUES IN YOUR OWN COMMUNITY, STATE, AND COUNTRY THROUGH AN OP-ED.



# WHAT ARE THE STEPS?



So you've decided you want to write an op-ed! Here are some steps (and suggestions) to get you started.

## OP-ED ROADMAP



## OP-ED ROADMAP, CONT.

### WHAT ISSUE DO YOU WANT TO WRITE ABOUT?

Consider your own experiences and what you may have expertise in. Stay current with your issue choice and consider the points you want to get across and what your op-ed may accomplish.

### IDENTIFY NEWSPAPER/ MAGAZINE/ ONLINE NEWS

After you know what you want to write, you can call look up your choice of news outlet and their options for op-ed submission. Not all outlets will accept op-eds so make sure to double check their site, call the office, or send an email. An editor may tell you they can't promise to print it, but you can still submit to see if it will be published.

### WRITE YOUR 500-750 WORD OP-ED

Op-ed editors have many submission and they will want someone who can make their point in 750 words. Make sure when you are writing to use plain language. Remember your readers may not be the expert you are! Make sure you can back up what you say and include new aspects of an issue and why readers should care.

### TIE IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, IF POSSIBLE, AND PUBLIC INTEREST

Opinion page editors look for op-eds that advance the public discussion of an issue and that are interesting and compelling. Readers are more likely to trust you if you can share your experiences in line with an issue.

### SEND IN YOUR OP-ED WITH SHORT ENGAGING EMAIL

Write an email that summarizes your key points. Remember to include your hook to interest the editor along with your name and contact information.

### REPEAT EFFORTS IF REJECTED AT ONE OUTLET

One or two days later, if you have not heard back, call to see if the op-ed editor has had a chance to review the piece. If the piece is rejected, you are free to submit it to a different outlet. However, make sure you don't submit an op-ed to two outlets at the same time. Submit it to one outlet and, if they turn it down, move on to the next.

# WHERE TO SUBMIT

Choose an outlet and read their most recent issues/post to make sure you won't be covering something just talked about. Most online and print outlets are open to receiving op-eds.



Check out the [Op-Ed Projects' list](#) of top online and print publications that accept op-eds and how to submit.



Reach out via email or phone to your school's newspaper to get your piece in online or print.



Your neighborhood or community may have a local paper, newsletter, or email list, see if they will post your published op-ed, or just send it to them if your issue is local



Don't forget to send your own work out to your connections or use social media to share your work!

# OP-ED OUTLINE

## I. Introduction

- a. Hook: The beginning is your chance to capture your reader's attention! What can you start with that will compel your audience to pay attention? Perhaps an anecdote or surprising fact?
- b. Context: Now back up a little bit. Explain what the issue is at hand. In a few lines, provide some background and context.
- c. Thesis: Finally, make an argument. Tell your reader where you stand on this issue.

## II. First body paragraph

- a. Evidence #1: Describe the central piece of evidence that supports your position.
- b. Tie Back: Make sure to connect this evidence back to your main argument, explaining to readers how it supports your thesis statement.

## III. Second Body Paragraph

- a. Evidence #2: Describe a second piece of evidence that supports your position. Try using a different type of persuasion.
- b. Tie Back: Again, make sure to connect this evidence back to your main argument, explaining to readers how it supports your thesis statement.

## IV. Third Body Paragraph (optional)

- a. Counter Argument: What would be the main argument of the opposing side?
- b. Rebuttal: What is your response to this argument? Why doesn't it apply to this situation/context?

## V. Conclusion

- a. Summary: In just a few lines, remind your reader of the main argument and evidence.
- b. Thesis: No need to repeat your thesis word-for-word, but remind readers what you're arguing and why they should care!
- c. Personal Comment, Call to Action, or Question: The last few sentences of your essay will linger in your reader's mind? What do you want to leave them with?

# EXAMPLE OP-ED

## A Girl's Perspective: Why 13-Years-Olds Shouldn't Be Married

*By Kiran Kochar McCabe*

*Kiran Kochar McCabe is in the 8th grade at Takoma Park Middle School. She lives in Takoma Park, Md. with her mom, dad, little sister, and three cats.*

Today is Mother's Day, the day of the year when we celebrate our mothers. But in so many countries, mothers are far too young. In fact, in many places in the developing world, girls are more likely to become mothers than to finish school. I am a 13-year-old girl who loves to read the Hunger Games and sing songs by Taylor Swift. On weekends, I like to go to the movies with my friends. It's hard for me to imagine being a 13-year-old married mother.

Did you know that by the time you finish reading this article, about 52 girls under the age of 18 will have just been married?

Consider these facts. One-third of girls in the developing world are married before they turn 18. In Niger, a country in West Africa, more than half of girls under 18 are married. If I lived there, I would likely be married with children celebrating me on Mother's Day, rather than me thinking about what gift to give my mom.

I started learning about the difficulties girls face around the world at a young age when I became involved with the global poverty-fighting organization CARE. Since the age of 7, I've attended CARE's advocacy conference each year in our nation's capital, along with hundreds of other passionate volunteers. During the conference, I visit my members of Congress to tell them why investing in a girl's education and empowerment is important. I know that compared to many others girls my age, I am very fortunate. I want to use my voice to help improve the lives of others around the world.

Through my work with CARE, I know that girls and societies will not grow and prosper if girls are married early. Girls need to get an education so they can lead empowered lives. Studies show that girls with at least eight years of education are four times less likely to be married as children. A girl with an extra year of education can also earn 20 percent more as an adult.

U.S. foreign aid has an incredibly positive impact on girl's empowerment and education around the world, and this delivers lasting change within a community. Studies show that the majority of girls who are married early come from poor families. In many countries, foreign aid helps provide those families with tools, knowledge and services to help their daughters go to school.

Many people who oppose U.S. foreign aid believe that it takes away from resources to solve our domestic issues. Most people believe that the U.S. foreign aid budget is 25 percent of our government's budget when in reality it is less than 1 percent. Cutting a budget this small won't fix our other problems. More importantly, the U.S. foreign aid budget creates a huge impact on the lives of people around the world. Programs funded by this budget help girls, women and many other disadvantaged groups get an education, become economically independent, move up in their communities, and break the cycle of child marriage.

We need to protect our foreign aid budget so we can continue to prevent child marriage. We shouldn't have 13-year-old brides and mothers in this world. As a 13-year-old girl, I am not ready to be married and have children. So this Mother's Day, while you are celebrating with your mother, think about all the child marriages and teenage mothers around the world. Join me and tell your members of Congress to keep funding the foreign aid budget so that Mother's Day is not a celebration for 13-year-old mothers.

*Original posting can be found at Huffington Post*

*Article: [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/the-next-ten-challenge/a-girls-perspective-why-1\\_b\\_7223732.html?ncid=engmodushpimg00000006](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/the-next-ten-challenge/a-girls-perspective-why-1_b_7223732.html?ncid=engmodushpimg00000006)*

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