



Tips for Writing an Op-ed

- 1) **Op-eds should be kept between 500-800 words**
 - Op-eds, articles Opposite the Editorial Page, are opinion pieces to raise awareness and influence public policy on timely and important issues.
 - Refer to the publication's guidelines on submitting an op-ed.
- 2) **Make your argument up front.**
 - An op-ed should be timely and clearly state your argument on an issue and then be supported with compelling evidence and facts.
 - Determine your audience and the overall goal of the op-ed. To raise awareness about an issue? Pass a bill? Increase U.S. development assistance?
 - Consider using key messages from the Child Marriage Talking Points.
 - An inverted story approach also can be effective; you begin with a personal story (see Personalization below) and make "the ask" at the end.
- 3) **Use simple and concise sentences.**
 - Grab the reader's attention at the beginning of the opinion piece.
 - Write in short, declarative sentences.
 - Avoid clichés and jargon.
- 4) **Personalize the op-ed.**
 - Conversational writing and personal stories will draw a reader into your opinion piece.
 - Local newspapers are interested in your experience and any local connections to your opinion piece. If you have experience working in developing countries, highlight that fact to give your opinion piece more credibility.
- 5) **If possible, link the op-ed to a current news development or local event.**
 - Make your op-ed both timely and of interest to your community.
- 6) **Follow the publication's guidelines.**
 - Every newspaper or publication has specific guidelines for submitting an op-ed. Read closely and follow them.
- 7) **Let ICRW know of your efforts. Contact our media assistant.**