

Basic Op-Ed Structure

From the Op-Ed Project

*THIS IS NOT A RULE! – JUST ONE WAY OF APPROACHING IT.

Lede (Around a news hook) - A lede is what sets the scene and grabs your reader's attention – it is your introduction. A news hook is what makes your piece timely, and often is part of the lede. More Information on ledes and news hooks is below.

Thesis- Statement of argument – either explicit or implied

Argument- Based on evidence (such as stats, news, reports from credible organizations, expert quotes, scholarship, history, first-hand experience)

- 1st Point
 - evidence
 - evidence
 - conclusion
- 2nd Point
 - evidence
 - evidence
 - conclusion
- 3rd Point
 - evidence
 - evidence
 - conclusion

Note: In a simple, declarative op-ed (“policy X is bad; here’s why”) , this may be straightforward. In a more complex commentary, the 3rd point may expand on the bigger picture—historical context, global/geographic picture, mythological underpinnings, etc.—or may offer an explanation for a mystery that underpins the argument– eg., why a bad policy continues, in spite of its failures.

“To Be Sure” paragraph- pre-empt your potential critics by acknowledging any flaws in your argument, and address any obvious counter-arguments.

Conclusion- often circling back to your lede

Op-Ed Headline Ideas & Examples

- Are NGO's agents of subversion?
- Does Starbucks want an honest conversation?
- End federal budget cuts; invest in science, the future
- How we can achieve a more inclusive history?
- What if we changed the way content is shared?
- The fine line of genocide history
- Why don't newspapers take unsolicited submissions seriously?
- Is big agriculture contributing to antibiotics resistance in humans?