Template:

Op-Ed / Blog Post

Generating your own content with Op-Eds and blog posts is one powerful way to help shape the narrative and support specific advocacy goals. The byline for an Op-Ed can be an organization leader or other spokesperson; it can also be an impacted community member with first-hand experience of the issue.

This template can help you craft either an Op-Ed or a blog post. A common maximum word count for Op-Eds is 600 words. One way to start is by writing 100 words for each of the six sections of an Op-Ed, as outlined below.

Be sure to weave the California Dream narrative key messages into your writing; consistency of your message will help it to stick.

See also a sample Op Ed from Housing California, to see what this model can look like in action.

The following Op-Ed structure is adapted from The Op-Ed Project's Tips and Tricks.

Op-Ed Structure

- **Opening paragraph:** This is what grabs the reader's attention, and should ideally be connected to a news hook or something else timely. (*Learn more about what makes a news hook.*)
- **Thesis or argument:** Introduce the main argument by the second or third paragraph. (Don't save it for the conclusion.)
- **First point:** The first bucket of evidence plus context to back up your argument. One approach is to provide two pieces of evidence (such as data points or a reputable study), along with context about why these are important and how they are connected to your argument.
- **Second point:** The second bucket of evidence plus context to back up your argument. One approach is to provide two pieces of evidence (such as data points or a reputable study) along with context about why these are important and how they are connected to your argument. *(A third point can be added if necessary or relevant, but keep the word count in mind.)*
- **"To Be Sure" paragraph:** Proactively preempt your likely critics. This can be by acknowledging any flaws in your argument or by referencing a common misconception or major opposing viewpoint. Then briefly state your counter-argument to provide clarity and help bring the reader along to your viewpoint.
- **Conclusion:** This often circles back to your thesis or main argument, restating a key message or talking point.

Things to keep in mind for submitting an Op-Ed:

- Decide in advance what newspaper or other media outlet you're ideally writing for, and have a backup in mind.
- Make sure you know the maximum word count before submitting; most newspapers are strict with this. Only submit an Op-Ed that is within the word count.
- Include a suggested title when you submit. Remember to keep it very short; you can look at recently published Op-Ed titles for examples of lengths.
- Consider contacting the Op-Ed editor in advance of writing to see if they are potentially interested in the topic you're writing about. This may help you to tailor the Op-Ed to what the editor is looking for in Op-Eds and what they're not interested in.
- [Learn more about pitching Op-Eds](#) *(source: The Op-Ed Project)*

Tips for creating a Blog Post:

- This model works for crafting a blog post as well, but you have more flexibility since this will likely live on your own website.
- You're not limited in length in a blog post the way that you are in an Op-Ed, but keep in mind that many readers may not read all the way to the end. Thus, make sure to emphasize your key points in the early paragraphs.
- The tone of a blog post can be more informal than an Op-Ed, depending on the voice of your organization and the audience for the blog post.
- Use plentiful subheads and short paragraphs to keep the reader's eye moving through the post.
- Be prolific in linking to background information, especially to content on your own website, partner websites, and relevant news coverage.
- Once you've published the blog post, make sure to promote it widely on your social media channels.
- Blog posts can also be shared with reporters as additional analysis on an issue they may be covering.