

Opinion Essay Workshop

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Jennifer R. Farmer for the ECMC Foundation



Center for
**SOCIAL JUSTICE
LEADERSHIP**

Outcomes

- You will understand how to draft a persuasive opinion editorial.
- You will understand how to submit for consideration an opinion editorial.
- You will be better able to distinguish when you should self-publish an opinion editorial and when you should have it published on a media platform.

Agenda

- Introduction
- Identifying Barriers to Writing
- Why you should write
- Mechanics of writing
- Stay connected

Exercise

- What is your belief system about writing?

Barriers to Writing

- Comparison
- Believing you're not a good writer
- Fear
- Distractions, i.e. social media

Why You Should Write

- Your perspective is needed.
- No one can tell your story like you can.
- If you do not raise your voice, people with your background and experience are silenced.

What is an Opinion Essay?

- Guest column
- Guest essay
- Outside (of the publication) perspective.
- It runs opposite the editorial section.
- It is NOT an editorial!!

What is an Opinion Essay?

- Thought leadership.
- Opinion buttressed by fact and supporting documentation.

Difference Between a Blog and OpEd

Blog

- Opinion
- Free thought
- Different journalistic standards

OpEd

- Fact-based
- Includes statistics, links for reports, or third-party documentation.
- Held to higher journalistic standards.



Sections

Sign In

Get 1 year

Opinions



The Post's View · Global Opinions · Post Opinión · The Opinions Essay · Local Opinions · Letters to the Editor · Election 2020

Our Commitment to *Beat* Coronavirus

Click to get the latest updates: PhRMA.org/coronavirus

Where Are Opinion Editorials Located Online?



Columnist

I probably have a

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INV12661744_A00....pdf

Where Are Opinion Editorials Located?

and Listen
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wind: An
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Open Questions

Is It Robbing God to Tithe on Your After-Tax (Not Gross) Income?

The Israelites were never subject to withholding upward of 15 percent.

FREDERICA MATHEWES-GREEN, DAVID A. CROTEAU, STEVE STEWART

Should Christians Confront Mormon Missionaries When They Knock on the Front Door?

Three views.

L.L. (DON) VEINOT JR., LYNN K. WILDER, CORY B. WILLSON

Top Story

MARCH 9, 2020



SPIRITED LIFE

The Old Testament Twins We've Forgotten

Jacob and Esau get all the attention. Yet it's another pair of brothers who reveal the heart of the biblical story.



Invoice 226921011....pdf



Invoice 226921011....pdf



Coronavirus High....docx



Why Are They Important?

- Opinion essays are a great way to share an uncommon perspective or elevate an important issue:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xS9TyYPi0X0&t=67s>

How to Publish an Opinion Essay?

- Write it and submit it to the opinion editor of a publication.
- Pitch a concept to the opinion editor and wait for their feedback.
- Write an OpEd at the request of the opinion editor.

How Can I Improve the Chances of Getting My Opinion Essay Published?

- Be timely.
- Write it within 24 hours of corresponding news story.
- Pick a strong news hook.
- Offer context.
- Follow submission guidelines.

Submission Guidelines

- Follow submission guidelines. Every publication has different rules:
 - Some want pieces that are 500-800 words
 - Others want long-form essays that are 1000+ words
 - Some eschew personal opinion, and want hard facts.
 - Some eschew ableist language:
<https://truthout.org/submission-guidelines/>
 - <https://help.nytimes.com/hc/en-us/articles/115014809107-How-to-submit-an-Op-Ed-essay>

How Can I Improve the Chances of Getting My Opinion Essay Published?

- Tell the public something they do not already know.
- Include backlinks and supporting documentation to verify claims made in the opinion piece. Editors don't know something is true just because you said it. You need third-party validation for claims.

Structure of an Opinion Editorial

- Headline that inspires readers, to continue reading.
- Opening Paragraph
- Central Message
- Context that offers historical perspective.
- Supporting Data Pt. 1
- Supporting Data Pt. 2
- Anecdote
- Closing Paragraph

How Many People Can Author an Opinion Essay?

- Most publications prefer one signer.
- Some will accept two.
- If you use signers, pick unconventional partners.
- If you use signers for a local issue, ensure at least one of them is from the local community.

Who to Contact to Get Your Opinion Essay Published

- Pitch the opinion editor or the editorial page editor.
- Through an editorial board meeting:
https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-young-voices-we-arent-hearing-in-the-gun-control-debate/2018/03/21/5f77433e-2c4b-11e8-8ad6-fbc50284fce8_story.html?utm_term=.7a7895bdfde7
- By the paper's invitation: <https://bit.ly/2SoqRZK>

Tips to Help Your Piece Get Published

- Mix opinion with facts and back up the facts with supporting links.
- Say something no one else is saying. Don't just say why something is wrong, state what you're doing to resolve it.
- If you want to say something is wrong, be the FIRST person to state it.
- Infuse history.
- Avoid self-promotion.

Where Should You Publish Your Essay?

- On your website (if you want to grow your audience).
- On Medium.com (if you want to publish your piece quickly and you either don't have a blog or you don't have much traffic to your blog).
- On a third-party platform (i.e., allied organization).
- Media website (if their audience is substantially higher than yours and you need to get your piece to as many people as possible, as quickly as possible).

Exercise

- I'm going to give you a couple prompts and I'd like you to write the first thing that comes to mind:
 - Reproductive rights
 - Housing insecurity
 - Food insecurity
 - Climate crisis
 - Secondary education

Writing Tips

- Use the notes app on your phone if you have an iPhone.
- Talk and record yourself discussing the issue that is important to you and then transcribe it.
- Write a little everyday until your piece is finished.



“ I can’t emphasize
this enough.”

If you’re trying to get media
coverage, pick the right
angle and news hook.”

– JENNIFER R. FARMER
The PR Whisperer

www.philanthropy.com/article/5-Ways-to-Get-the-Attention-of/242190

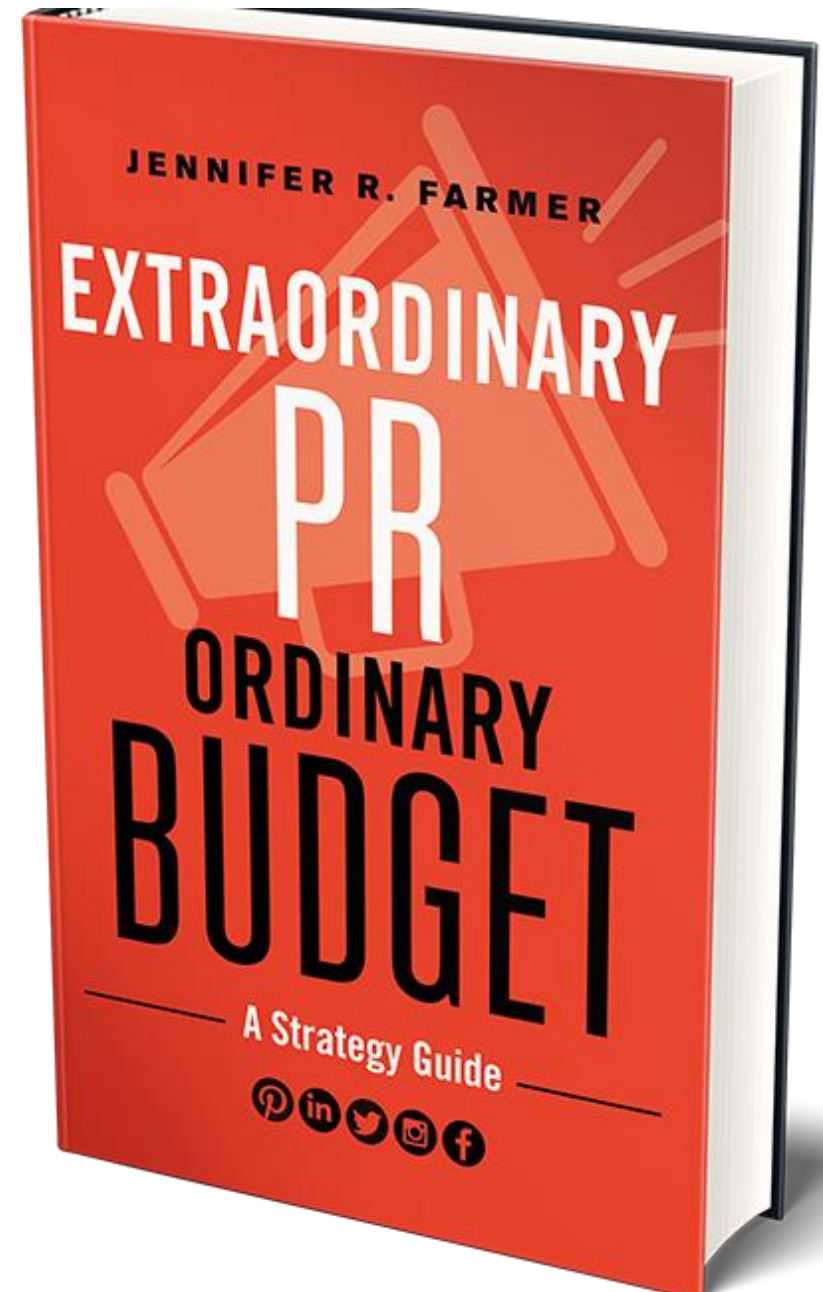


pr_whisperer

www.spotlightpr.org

Resources

- The Case for Opinion Essays:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xS9TyYPi0X0&t=67s>
- The OpEd Pages Explained:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/03/insider/opinion-op-ed-explainer.html>
- [5 Ways to Get the Attention of the Media](#), The Chronicle of Philanthropy, January 10, 2018
- The Media is Contracting. Now What?
<https://www.jenniferrfarmer.org/>
- Opinion Words and Phrases:
https://www.scholastic.com/content/dam/teachers/blogs/genia-connell/migrated-files/opinion_words_and_phrases.pdf



Stay in Touch

- You may see this book: “Extraordinary PR, Ordinary Budget.”
- My Twitter/IG media handles are @pr_whisperer and FB is @prwhisperer.
- My personal website is www.jenniferrfarmer.org