

WHAT IS AN OP-ED?

Op-eds are short, timely essays that present compelling points of view with the objective of engaging audiences, spurring meaningful conversation and advancing a specific argument or solution. Op-eds are widely read by decision-makers and policymakers, and are a powerful way to galvanize action on a wide array of issues, including the global effort to end AIDS.

WHERE SHOULD YOU PUBLISH?

When writing your op-ed and identifying where to publish it, carefully consider your target audience and your advocacy goals. Publication options include:

- **LEADING NEWS OUTLETS:** Research your preferred media outlet to ensure it is a good fit by identifying recent examples of their AIDS coverage and the types of op-eds they publish. Identify and email the editor (often with the title of “Opinion Editor” or something similar) with a few sentences about why your voice and piece matters *now*. Be sure to include your draft op-ed.
- **A LOCAL MEDIA OUTLET:** Tailor your op-ed to your specific country, region and local context to engage readers and local media outlets. Local media can carry particular influence with local policymakers and decisionmakers, making these placements especially important and often more attainable than global news outlets.
- **ON A BLOG:** Blog posts are a great alternative for pieces that are shorter (400-600 words) or media outlets are not accepting for publication. They can be published on organizational websites or social media channels like LinkedIn.

INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS

POINT OF VIEW: Strong op-eds clearly present a specific argument that uses evidence to demonstrate **WHY** momentum on the #Triple10Targets is so important right now and shows **HOW** to take action to remove barriers to essential HIV services.

START STRONG: The first paragraph should be attention-grabbing with an interesting and culturally-relevant hook. It should make people want to read more. Take a look at what’s in the news, such as an announcement or a milestone. These hooks can be HIV- and health-related, but less obvious, more surprising links can work well to grab readers’ attention.

WHY NOW? Timing and newsworthiness matter. It should be clear why an op-ed is important *right now*.

COMPELLING VOICE: Your voice matters. Leverage your unique expertise and experience to explain your argument and proposed solution in powerful and compelling language.

SUGGESTED OUTLINE

To keep readers engaged, a strong structure, using a simple formula like the one laid out below, is key:

- **Title:** What is the headline you want? Keep it short, just a few words.
- **Hook + Intro:** Why is what you are writing about relevant now? Don't get too bogged down in details.
- **Thesis:** What is the problem you are trying to solve, and what is your proposed solution? The best solutions are often in three parts.
- **Key paragraphs:** Explain your proposed three-part solution. This should correspond with your thesis.
- **Conclusion:** Restates your thesis and closes with a persuasive call to action.

WRITING TIPS

- **KEEP IT SHORT:** Avoid lengthy sentences and paragraphs. One- or two-sentence paragraphs are great! The op-ed itself should be between 600 and 800 words.
- **KEEP IT SIMPLE:** Avoid technical/expert jargon and acronyms unless they're well known, like "HIV".
- **MAKE SURE YOUR ARGUMENT FLOWS:** Read the first sentence of each paragraph, in order. If those alone tell the story you want to tell, you're on the right track.
- **SHOW, DON'T TELL:** Long explanations are not effective. Use as few words as possible to demonstrate your argument and proposed solutions. Let your evidence and examples do the talking for you.
- **CHECK OUT OUR RESOURCES:** Visit our [resources](#) page, where you'll find a wealth of data and insights to help enhance your op-eds.
- **GIVE YOURSELF AMPLE TIME:** Build in time for edits and revisions. Have a friend or colleague review your piece and provide feedback.