

## CHARACTERISTICS OF EDITORIAL WRITING

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An editorial is an article that presents the newspaper's/magazine's opinion on an issue. It reflects the majority vote of the editorial board, the governing body of the newspaper made up of editors and business managers. It is usually unsigned. Much in the same manner of a lawyer, editorial writers build on an argument and try to persuade readers to think the same way they do. Editorials are meant to influence public opinion, promote critical thinking, and sometimes cause people to take action on an issue. In essence, an editorial is an opinionated news story.

### EDITORIALS HAVE:

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1. Introduction, body and conclusion like other news stories (in the introduction, you should provide an objective explanation of the issue first - to provide context)
3. A timely news angle (which means it is presently in the news and/or of interest to the general public/audience)
4. Offer a few opinions from the opposing viewpoint - in order that you may be able to refute them later in the essay
5. Your opinions delivered professionally manner. Good editorials engage issues, not personalities and refrain from name-calling and petty persuasion tactics (unlike rants).
6. Alternative solutions to the problem or issue being criticized. Anyone can gripe about a problem (like in a rant), but a good editorial should take a pro-active approach to making the situation better by using constructive criticism and giving solutions.
7. A solid and concise conclusion that powerfully summarizes the writer's opinion. Give it some punch.

### FOUR TYPES OF EDITORIALS WILL

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1. EXPLAIN OR INTERPRET Editors often use these editorials to explain the way the newspaper covered a sensitive or controversial subject (called 'covering one's butt'). School newspapers may explain new school rules or a particular student-body effort like a food drive.
2. CRITICIZE These editorials constructively criticize actions, decisions or situations while providing solutions to the problem identified. The immediate purpose is to get readers to see the problem, not the solution.
3. PERSUADE Editorials of persuasion aim to immediately see the solution, not the problem. From the first paragraph, readers will be encouraged to take a specific, positive action. Political endorsements are good examples of editorials of persuasion.
4. PRAISE: These editorials commend people and organizations for something done well. They are not as common as the other three.

### WRITING AN EDITORIAL

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1. Pick a significant topic that has a current news angle or is relevant to you as a human and that would interest readers.
2. Collect information and facts; because you're going to begin with an objective (not choosing sides) identification of the issue, you will have to do some research to discover *facts and expert opinions that both support and refute your own opinions*
3. Explain the issue objectively as a reporter would and tell why this situation is important
4. State your opinion briefly in the fashion of a thesis statement - this is the editorial's PROPOSITION
5. Give opposing viewpoint first with its quotations and facts
6. Refute (reject) the other side and develop your case using facts, details, figures, quotations. Pick apart the other side's logic.
7. Concede a point of the opposition – they must have some good points you can acknowledge that would make you look rational - not unwilling to accept other viewpoints.
8. Repeat key phrases to reinforce an idea into the reader's minds - just do it creatively.
9. *Appeal to the logic and emotions of the reader by using loaded words/phrases and rhetorical devices - remember, you are trying to get your reader to agree with you.*
10. Give a realistic solution(s) to the problem that goes beyond common knowledge. Encourage critical thinking and pro-active reaction.
11. Wrap it up in a concluding punch that restates your opening remark (thesis statement) in different but inspiring words.
12. Keep it to 500 words; make every word count; never use "I"

### A SAMPLE STRUCTURE

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- I. Lead with an Objective Explanation of the Issue/Controversy  
Include the five W's and the H. (*Members of Parliament in effort to reduce the Canadian budget, are looking to cut funding from public television stations like the CBC. Hearings were held ...*)  
\* Pull in facts and quotations from the sources which are relevant. This makes your argument stronger.  
\* Additional research will be necessary in order to strengthen your argument and convince your audience to agree with your viewpoint.
- II. Present Your Opposition First  
As the writer, you disagree with these viewpoints but you need to acknowledge that they exist before you tear them down. Identify the people specifically who oppose you. (*Politicians feel that these cuts are necessary; other cable stations can pick them; only the rich watch public television.*)  
\* Use facts and quotations to state objectively the opinions of your opposition.  
\* Give strongest positions of the opposition. You gain nothing in refuting a weak position.
- III. Directly Refute The Opposition's Beliefs.  
You can begin your article with transition. (*Politicians believe public television is a "sandbox for the rich." However, statistics show most people who watch public television make less than \$40,000 per year.*)

### YOUR ENGLISH 621 EDITORIALS WILL CONTAIN:

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- 500 - 600 words maximum
- 2 expert opinions (minimum)
- must be properly cited (in-text)
- must include a works cited (referenced using Citation Machine)
- informal cover page
- double-space
- each student must provide an e-copy
- editorials will be submitted to the Guardian. Any published editorials receive automatic 100%.

ENGLISH 621 ASSESSMENT - THE EDITORIAL ESSAY				
Categories & Criteria	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Introduction & Proposition	This editorial is written with an outstanding lead to bring the reader into the story. Proposition is strong.	This editorial is written with an interesting lead to bring the reader into the story. Proposition is clear.	This editorial is written with a lead but it needs to be more interesting. Proposition is ordinary, but present.	This editorial is written with a boring lead which does not encourage reader to continue. No clear proposition.
Background	This story contains an abundant amount of background information about the issue.	This story contains some background information about the issue being debated.	This story contains very little background information about the issue at hand.	This story contains some background information about the issue being discussed.
Opinion	This article has a clearly stated opinion toward the beginning of the article which continues throughout.	This article has an opinion that could be stated more clearly using better wording.	This article has an opinion which is somewhat confusing.	The writer is very confusing about his/her opinion on the issue.
Support for Proposition - expert opinion - researched fact	Writing contains at least 2 outstanding, distinct, logical reasons for the stated opinion. Factual support is present through research.	Writing contains at least 2 reasons for the stated opinion (distinct from each other and logical for the argument, if not very obvious).	Writing contains only one really valid reason for the opinion given, and one debatable reason. Dutiful research is not terribly apparent.	Writing does not contain any valid reasons for the given opinion. No attempts made to gather expert opinion or factual support.
Audience - achievement of purpose	All of the reasons are written to convince the appropriate audience. Purpose has been achieved.	Some of the writing would concern the intended audience. At times, the focus wanders from the intended audience.	Very little of the written piece contains reasons would concern the intended audience.	None of the written work contains arguments and/or reasons that address the intended audience.
Rhetorical Devices - logical and emotional language - loaded words/phrases	Writing contains many vivid examples of rhetoric, logical/emotional language, and loaded words/phrases	Writing contains some attempts at rhetorical devices, logical/emotional language and loaded words/phrases	Attempts (some awkward) at rhetoric and logical/emotional language fall short or do not propel the piece.	Very little evidence of rhetorical devices, logical/emotional language, or loaded words/phrases.
Transitions - connecting 'thought blocks'	The writer uses effective words throughout the article to make transitions between ideas.	The writer uses some transitions between each idea. Some are weaker, which detracts from the writing.	The writer uses only a couple transitions between ideas. Other sections stand alone - unlinked.	The writer uses few transitions between ideas/order, leading to a disjointed and confusing reading.
Conclusion & Recommendations	The writer ends the article giving very specific and outstanding recommendations for the reader to take action. Piece ends with compelling 'parting shot'.	The writer ends the article giving specific - albeit conventional - recommendations for the reader. Writing ends with an adequate 'parting shot'.	The writer ends the article giving at least 1 ordinary recommendation for the reader. Editorial concludes with a weak attempt at a 'parting shot'.	The ending of the story does not give any clear recommendations for the reader to take action. Editorial concludes abruptly, no 'parting shot'.
Mechanics	The writer uses all correct grammar and spelling throughout the editorial. Sentence variety and word choices are outstanding.	The editorial contains mostly correct grammar and spelling. Some attempt at variety in word choice/sentence fluency.	The editorial contains several grammar and spelling mistakes. Word choices are simple; sentence fluency lacks variety.	The editorial contains many grammar and spelling mistakes. Word choices are weak and sentence choices are simple.
Peer Revision Score				4 Points
Totals				40 Points