

OP-ED ESSAY

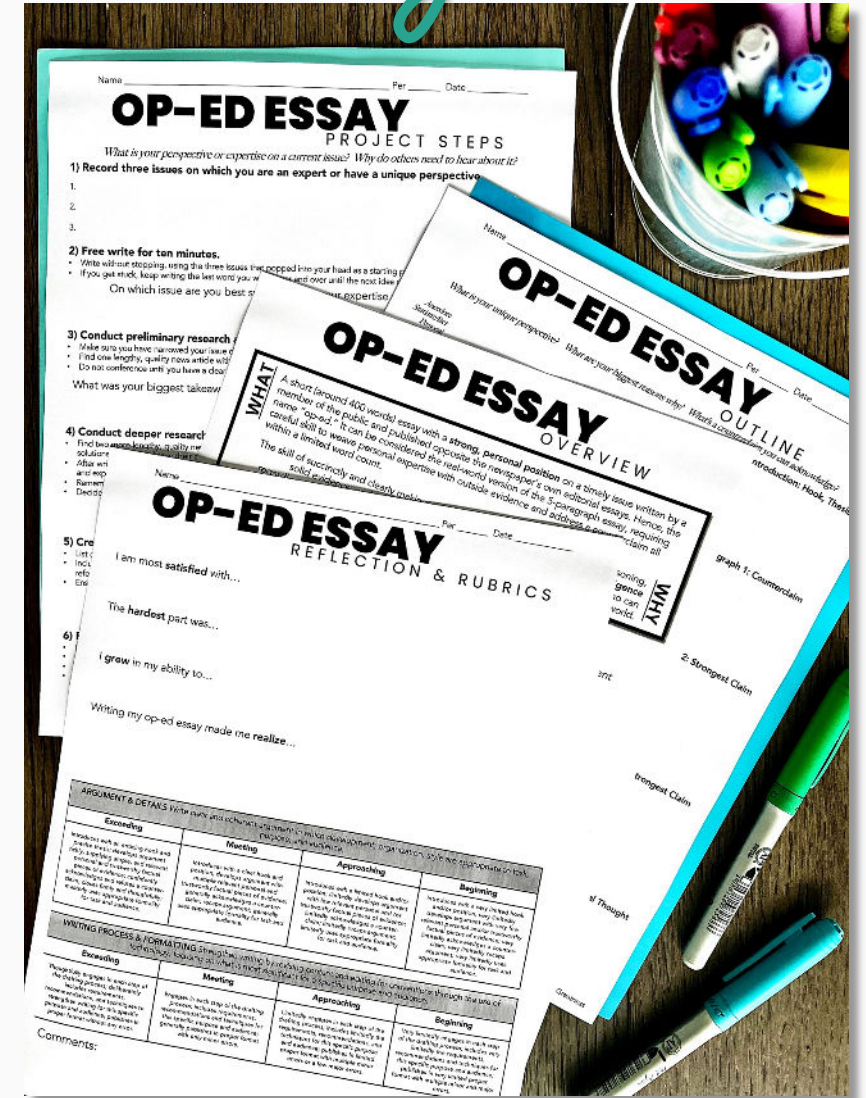
writing kit

Strengthen the real-world writing skills of crafting a powerful op-ed essay in this **complete step-by-step** kit.

SO MANY USES

Add to any unit for a real PBL
Assign instead of a regular essay
Incorporate into your Current Issues,
Civics, Social Studies, or ELA class
Use an end-of-course culminating
research project

BOTH PRINT & PAPERLESS INCLUDED



SUPPORT ALL *students*

Included forms and how-to sheets *highly scaffold the writing process* from start to finish.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Step-By-Step Project Sheet

Overview, Brainstorming, Researching & Outlining Sheets

Sample Essay, Edit Checklist

Reflections & Rubrics

Writing Skill Sheets

OP-ED ESSAY OVERVIEW

WHAT A short (around 400 words) essay with a **strong, personal position** on a timely issue written by a member of the public and published opposite the newspaper's own editorial essays. Hence, the name "op-ed." It can be considered the "real-world" careful skill to weave personal expertise with outside information in a limited word count.

The skill of succinctly and clearly making one's argument with solid evidence, and a personal touch is a key skill regardless of one's life path. The innovators, game-changers, and movers others.

INTRODUCTION

Lead with an unmistakably strong hook

- Share a vivid personal anecdote, shocking statistic

Take a firm and clear position on a currently debated issue

- Some options include:
 - Be completely for or against **OR** be for or against
 - Approve or disapprove some recent action made
 - Make the case for a specific solution to the issue
 - Offer the unique perspective of your expertise on the issue

2 TO 3 BODY PARAGRAPHS

INCLUDING EVIDENCE SKILL SHEET

WHAT The inclusion of, not only, specific examples from other sources to support your argument, but also the sources from which they come. Evidence should be **explicitly** connected to your argument, not merely stated as coming from other sources.

WHY Empirical (researchable, data-driven) evidence and expert testimony quotes from well-respected people and organizations are by far the most credible and worthwhile types of evidence to use if you want to convince anyone of anything. By including and qualifying the source, you further add to your own credibility.

PARAPHRASED EVIDENCE

Sum up what a source is uniquely arguing/saying/voicing in a brief description, usually leading with the source's author and the type of source.

- Example: "According to a recent study by the Pew Research Center, 57% of Americans say a local library closing would hurt their families. And 95% agree that the resources their local library provides are a chance to succeed in life. Libraries are more than reading spots - learning and community growth. Trimming library hours would hurt our community and shrinking attention spans, the library provides curiosity and a safe and welcoming public space."

ANALYZING & EVALUATING SOURCES SKILL SHEET

WHAT What are the sources creating today's information and tomorrow's history. They are the voices, bring us news, inspire, inform, and give us a way to see the world. And today anyone, anywhere, can create content.

WHY Since media sources are created by truly anyone, through an ever-growing variety of ways, it has created a lot of uncertainty and "gray area" where there used to be no question about reliability. It has never been more important to have a critical eye when consuming any message before we can trust it.

TYPE: How would you classify this source?

- News - blurbs, articles, feature articles, magazine, comment
- Pod - blog, vlog, video, podcast, message board, comment
- Editorial - essay, opinion, speech, letter to the editor
- Advertisement - sponsored post, print ad, commercial, video
- Informational - documentary, biography, encyclopedia entry, infographic

AUTHOR/PUBLISHER: Who wrote it? What's their expertise? Do they have a loan or reputation?

Do they have a name provided? Job title? Background? Experience?

- Is the author's name provided? What does their "About Us" page say?
- What organization published this source? What are their qualifications? What is their mission? What is their bias?
- Is the author credible? What are their qualifications? What is their mission? What is their bias?

SOURCES CITED: What or who is referenced as sources?

- Experts in the field - scientists, historians, professionals, witnesses
- Experts in the news - news anchors, talk show hosts, news anchors, academics
- Other sources - textbooks, websites, studies, news articles, academic journals

THE MAIN IDEA: In a sentence, what's the author's main point? What's the author's main point?

- In the author's words? In the author's words? In the author's words?
- Key player documentary covers.
- This NORA two-part episode explored not only...

EVALUATION: For what is this source good or bad?

- Explain what this source is useful for and what it's limited in regard to.
- The article provided many good examples from people who were...
- While this authorial idea many articles that... they all...
- Although a blog post, it's listed by the well-regarded...

DEFICIENT: What doesn't this source cover? Why?

- Background or history of the topic
- More information on the other side of an issue
- More in-depth coverage of a component of the topic
- An update since this source was written

OP-ED ESSAY SAMPLE ESSAY

REMEMBER Lead with a strong hook and clear position. Mix a few pieces of sourced evidence with personal expertise. Connect back to the hook in closing.

Sam Student, samstudent@school.edu, 555-555-5555, Seattle, Washington

INCLUDE AN INTRIGUING HOOK AND CLEAR POSITION

As a junior at Salish High School, my days are a constant of soulless bells, chaotic hallways, and crowded classrooms. But once that last bell rings, the Greenwood library branch has been my refuge 2 to 3 days a week this year—a quiet haven where I do my homework (3 AP classes this year) and find some calm. Yet, plans to shut its doors at 5 pm and be closed on Mondays and Tuesdays threaten this. Not just for me but the dozens of others using this community resource at any given minute.

For many students, the library isn't just about books; it's an after-school refuge, a place where we can hang out without being accused of loitering or required to buy anything. It's a place where we can find anything and everything—explore topics that our classes rush through or simply don't touch.

In a 2-bedroom apartment with three other people, and often one more, I don't have a dedicated desk in my bedroom or a quiet kitchen table where my teachers recommend I study. I go to the library.

In the library, I know with certainty I'll have an undisturbed table with space to spread out and a quiet focus without interruption. And I know Raymond, who always has the afternoon shift, will be there to say hi and ask if I need help with anything. Usually, I don't, but his presence is a ways there.

Other students come in and out to study, relax, play the provided board games, and check out books. I'm not just one person asking the city council to reconsider these cuts. I'm simply speaking on behalf of my peers.

Research Center, 57% of Americans say a local library closing would hurt their families. And 95% agree that the resources their local library provides are a chance to succeed in life. Libraries are more than reading spots - learning and community growth. Trimming library hours would hurt our community and shrinking attention spans, the library provides curiosity and a safe and welcoming public space.

My local branch for my good grades and hopes for college, I urge our city council to reconsider these cuts.

The library's role in shaping us. We must safeguard this community asset for generations. We must lift up, not limit, its role.

So, let me serve as my public shout-out to Raymond, who encouraged me to get involved into work when I first asked for his help. Thank you, Raymond!

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Op-Ed Essay Project Steps

- Record these issues on which you are an expert or have a unique perspective.
 - TYPE HERE
- Free write for ten minutes.
 - Who should respond, using the three issues that excited you the most as a starting point.
 - Put your ideas, ideas, feelings, and feelings on paper and use them to guide your writing. Don't worry about grammar or spelling.
 - On which issue are you best suited to offer your expertise or unique perspective?
 - TYPE HERE
- Conduct preliminary research and create a plan for your essay, then conference.
 - Make sure you have researched your issue from a variety of angles and have your own unique perspective.
 - Find one lengthy, quality news article with evidence to complement your research. Create and save the citation.
 - Do not conference until you have a clear, complete, and well-researched idea for your essay.
 - What was your biggest takeaway from the conference that will help you write your op-ed essay?
 - TYPE HERE
- Conduct deeper research and outline your essay.
 - Find one more lengthy, quality news article or scholarly source that sheds another side of the issue and/or provides more evidence.

FREQUENTLY ASKED *questions*

What grades is this best for?

It was designed for **high school students**. However, if your middle school students are strong writers and you are looking for a more real-world writing exercise, this could work. Be sure to examine the preview and product description closely to decide if this resource is a good fit for your students.

Is this editable?

The planning, outlining, and rubric forms are available in print PDF and an editable Google Doc file that can be customized to meet your student's needs. The how-to reference sheets are available in print PDF and non-editable Google Slides.

Can I use this in a homeschooling setting?

Definitely! **Step-by-step forms** for brainstorming, outlining, and editing forms and **detailed how-to sheets** with a sample essay and skill sheets guide you and your student(s) through this complete writing process for this writing format and skills.

What standards does this support?

Several! This kit supports writing, research, and social studies standards from various states, including:

- Develop writing by planning, revising, and editing
- Conduct research to answer a question; gathering relevant information from multiple authoritative sources
- Introduce, develop, and support a claim with relevant evidence; address the counterclaim
- Follow proper grammar and punctuation conventions; create a works cited
- Produce clear and coherent writing that is appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience