
RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT #YOUTHGOV

Writing **op-eds** and **letters to the editor** about climate issues is a great way to raise the profile of climate issues in your own communities and to bring attention to the youth-led legal actions—represented and supported by Our Children's Trust—around the world. In your own voice, you can explain why you support the rights of youth to a stable, healthy climate, and you can encourage others to take action as well.

Whether it's climate lawsuits or congressional resolutions, we need people like you to demand that the courts protect the constitutional rights of youth to a stable climate. Read on to learn how to boost awareness of climate issues and support #youthgov climate cases—all from your own home!

OP-ED

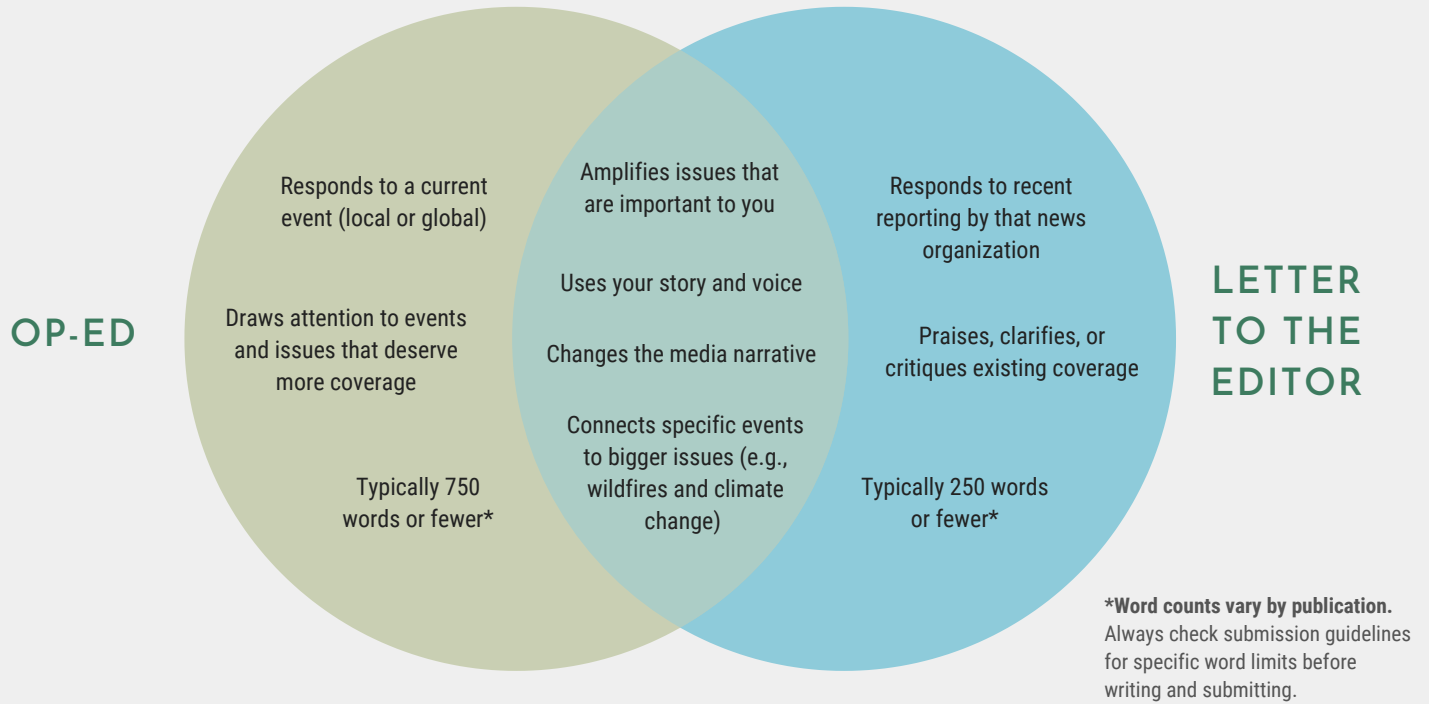
Op-eds are a way for readers of a news publication to amplify an issue that is important and not getting enough coverage. The best op-eds are written in response to a very recent or soon-to-happen event, such as a development in an Our Children's Trust case or the start of a new wildfire.

In an op-ed, you make a case for why people should know about the event, how that event connects to larger themes (like climate change), and how you are personally affected.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor are reader responses to recently published news articles or segments. In other words, a letter to the editor responds to existing coverage.

In a letter to the editor, you can express disagreement with the way a story was covered, the conclusions it drew, or the themes highlighted, and you can make a case for how you think the story should have been presented instead. The goal is to add nuance to the news coverage by sharing your own story and expertise.



WRITE AN OP-ED WHEN...

- There is a development in one of the legal actions led by Our Children's Trust (e.g., a new lawsuit is filed, an ongoing lawsuit receives a ruling, or one of their cases gets a hearing date)
- Something happens in your community that's connected to climate change (e.g., a wildfire creates air pollution or threatens your town)
- New scientific studies are released that are relevant to how your community should respond to climate change

WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR WHEN...

- A news source you read reports on legal actions led by Our Children's Trust or mobilization efforts led by Earth Guardians
- A news source you read publishes a story about youth climate movements but does not mention Our Children's Trust or Earth Guardians
- You want to boost awareness of Our Children's Trust cases in a smaller publication (like a school newspaper) that may not have an op-ed section

TEMPLATES

Writing in your own voice and from your own experiences will always be the most effective way to write a memorable, inspiring, and compelling op-ed or letter to the editor. However, there are some tried-and-true structures that you can follow to help you brainstorm, organize your thoughts, and create a clear and polished final draft. Use the templates below if you want some help getting started.

OP-ED

Provide Context (5-7 sentences)

- Describe the specific recent event you're responding to.
- Connect that event to the issue you're writing about (e.g., climate change)
- State your main point.

Give Examples (10-15 sentences)

- Explain why this issue matters to the readers of this publication, giving specific, local examples.
- Describe the consequences of inaction or lack of awareness.
- Establish your own stake in the issue.

Call to Action (5-7 sentences)

- Describe what steps are necessary for improvement and how people can help.
- Cast a vision for the future.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Provide Context (2-3 sentences)

- Name the article you're responding to and the date it was published.
- Identify a specific quote or point you're commenting on.

Make Your Point (4-5 sentences)

- Explain why you agree or disagree with the article and what you think was stated well or left out.
- Provide evidence and examples that show why your point is important.

Call to Action (2-3 sentences)

- Tell readers why they should care and learn more about the topic at hand.
- If appropriate, express support of the paper for their coverage of the issue while also asking for better, broader, or more detailed future coverage.

WRITING TIPS

- **Act quickly.** News moves fast, so write and submit your op-ed or letter to the editor within a couple days of the event or article you're responding to.
- **Speak clearly and proudly from your identity** (e.g., "As a young person..." or "As a parent of two young adults...").
- **Keep it specific and to-the-point.** Ask yourself: *What would I say if I only had 10 seconds?* Start writing from there.

EXAMPLES

TAKE INSPIRATION FROM WHAT OTHERS HAVE WRITTEN

COVID-19 shows that we must trust in science to solve problems; science is telling us we need to address the climate crisis now

Op-ed by Delaney Reynolds (youth plaintiff in *Reynolds v. State of Florida*)

Published by *The Invading Sea*

My mom, little brother and I are 'climate refugees' from Florida

Op-ed by Luxha Aliheligi Phillips (youth plaintiff on *Reynolds v. State of Florida*)

Published by *Tampa Bay Times*

Isaac Augspurg: Standing up to climate change

Op-ed by Isaac Augspurg (youth plaintiff on *Reynolds v. State of Florida*)

Published by *The Gainesville Sun*

Your view by 2017 Parkland grad: Why I sued the federal government over harmful air pollution

Op-ed by Sophie Kivlehan (Parkland High School graduate and youth plaintiff on *Juliana v. United States*)

Published by *The Morning Call*

LEARN MORE

CLICK TO READ ABOUT OCT'S ONGOING LEGAL ACTIONS IN THE U.S.

[Juliana v. United States](#)

[Held v. State of Montana](#)

[Sagoonick v. State of Alaska](#)

[Chernaik v. Brown \(Oregon\)](#)

[Aji P. v. State of Washington](#)

**[Petition for Rulemaking:
Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission](#)**

[Reynolds v. State of Florida](#)

**[Petition for Rulemaking:
North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality](#)**

ABOUT US



OUR CHILDREN'S TRUST

Our Children's Trust is a non-profit public interest law firm that provides strategic, campaign-based legal services to youth from diverse backgrounds to secure their legal rights to a safe climate. We work to protect the Earth's climate system for present and future generations by representing young people in global legal efforts to secure their binding and enforceable legal rights to a healthy atmosphere and stable climate, based on the best available science.

We support our youth clients and amplify their voices before the third branch of government in a highly strategic legal campaign that includes targeted media, education, and public engagement work to support the youths' legal actions. Our legal work – guided by constitutional, public trust, human rights laws and the laws of nature – aims to ensure systemic and science-based climate recovery planning and remedies at federal, state, and global levels.

EARTH GUARDIANS

Earth Guardians is an intergenerational organization that inspires, informs, engages and invests in its impactful community of over 300 youth activist crews across the world. We provide the platform, resources and the collaborative opportunities necessary to elevate their voices and strengthen the positive impact they are having in their communities and the world.

Now with thousands of engaged youth on six continents, Earth Guardians has given youth a voice and direction worldwide to become effective leaders and make measurable change in their communities. Earth Guardians continues to develop the resources to build a stronger collaborative network to cultivate and support this large wave of youth engagement.

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

Email Jecca Bowen at jecca@earthguardians.org

REFERENCES

American Geophysical Union. (2020). Science communication: How to write an op-ed or letter to the editor. <https://www.agu.org/Share-and-Advocate/Share/News-media/Write-op-ed>

National League of Cities. (2020). Tips for writing an op-ed or letter to the editor. <https://www.nlc.org/tips-for-writing-an-op-ed-or-letter-to-the-editor>

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