

## Welcome to the wonderful world of opinion writing!

### The basics

- We are looking for 650-word op-ed or first person column
- Please include a short bio (two sentences max) and a headshot
- If you have any photos that you think would help illustrate your piece/please send them along.
- Please fill out the attached contributor form

### Things to consider when writing an opinion:

Think about what your headline might be (we can always work to improve it), but it will help you to focus your piece.

The goal is to have a dynamic thesis with a new argument that hasn't been written 10x before.

Get to the point right away.

Avoid easy arguments such as, "It's time for X in Canada" (Why is now the time? Why not tomorrow? Two days from now?) and "We need to start talking about X" (OK, but your column is talking about X. Done. Now what?)

Arguments must be backed up with evidence -- facts. Opinion doesn't mean anything goes. If you are making a scientific claim we need to see where you are getting that information from. You don't need to include a link in the body of the piece, but please include it along with your piece.

Try not to use jargon that only an insider on the subject would know. Also, avoid language that might be difficult for readers. They should be able to understand what you are writing without a dictionary at hand. There's no need to say "verisimilitude" when you can just say "it felt real."

Consider the counterpoints and how those critical of the column might respond. Try to pre-emptively address those points in your column.

A good column doesn't necessarily need to include a call to action. A column that changes the way people think is just as valuable as one that urges them to act.

*Some examples for inspiration:*

- [Vaccinating inmates protects us all. To say otherwise is just a cheap attempt to gain votes](#)
- [Our neighbour killed our dog. Then the criminal justice system failed her and our family](#)
- [Schools might be the best place to teach mask culture — and fight racism](#)

### Things to consider when writing a first person column:

When writing a personal essay, write from your heart. You are uniquely positioned to write this piece, so what insights can people learn about you from reading this piece?

Your story should be something that our readers can relate to through your writing, because it might be something they too have experienced or it offers a unique perspective on a situation.

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### *Examples of a First Person:*

- [How the pandemic triggered memories of going hungry — and how sourdough soothed my fears](#)
- [I'm Muslim and didn't celebrate Christmas growing up. But my Canadian kids had other ideas](#)
- [Our 9-year-old child Ryder is transgender — but parenting isn't about labels](#)

### **Some examples of a good bio:**

- Aline Bouwman is a recent queer graduate of Trinity Western University and the former editor in chief of the school's student newspaper.
- Surat Singh is a third-year student at the University of British Columbia, studying psychology. He is also an ambassador for the South Asian Mental Health Alliance, which raises awareness about mental health for the South Asian community in B.C.