

The New York Times

The Opinion Pages

Search Opinion

Go



- WORLD
- U.S.
- N.Y. / REGION
- BUSINESS
- TECHNOLOGY
- SCIENCE
- HEALTH
- SPORTS
- OPINION
- ARTS
- STYLE
- TRAVEL
- JOB
- REAL ESTATE
- AUTOS



Op-Ed and You

By TRISH HALL

Published: October 13, 2013

I often go out and talk to people who are interested in getting Op-Eds published in The Times. I do it because we need you, the reader, the writer. People certainly don't write for us for the money; the payment, frankly, is peanuts. They write for the influence, for the chance to reach an audience, to say something that's been bothering them, driving them crazy, something that no one else seems to be saying.

Connect With Us on Twitter

For Op-Ed, follow [@nytopinion](#) and to hear from the editorial page editor, Andrew Rosenthal, follow [@andyrNYT](#).



We appreciate that, and we need you. We need a diversity of voices and opinions about a range of topics. Anything can be an Op-Ed. We're not only interested in policy, politics or government. We're interested in everything, if it's opinionated and we believe our readers will find it worth reading. We are

especially interested in finding points of view that are different from those

- FACEBOOK
- TWITTER
- GOOGLE+
- SAVE
- EMAIL
- SHARE
- PRINT
- SINGLE PAGE
- REPRINTS

FROM THE AUTHOR OF
MYSTIC RIVER

MOST EMAILED

RECOMMENDED FOR YOU

expressed in Times editorials. If you read the editorials, you know that they present a pretty consistent liberal point of view. There are lots of other ways of looking at the world, to the left and right of that position, and we are particularly interested in presenting those points of view.

As we become more international, we need you more than ever. Not long ago, Op-Ed meant just the two or so articles by outside writers that ran each day on the print page. Now, Op-Ed includes Sunday Review, a section with longer reported, opinionated pieces, and Opinionator, one of the most popular blogs at The Times and home to series like The Stone, on philosophy, Disunion, on the Civil War, Draft, on writing, and Private Lives, personal perspectives of universal matters.

We get a flood of submissions, but there's never too much good writing in the world. There is always room for more. So what makes the cut? That's what people always ask me, so I'll try to explain the process. Most pieces we publish are between 400 and 1200 words. They can be longer when they arrive, but not so long that they're traumatizing. Submissions that are reacting to news of the world are of great value to us, especially if they arrive very quickly. Write in your own voice. If you're funny, be funny. Don't write the way you think important people write, or the way you think important pieces should sound. And it's best to focus very specifically on something; if you write about the general problem of prisons in the United States, the odds are that it will seem too familiar. But if you are a prisoner in California and you have just gone on a hunger strike and you want to tell us about it – now, that we would like to read. We are normal humans (relatively speaking). We like to read conversational English that pulls us along. That means that if an article is written with lots of jargon, we probably won't like it.

We don't just wait for articles to arrive. Every day we have a meeting to discuss the news, to toss around ideas, to think about which writers might be good on which subjects. Whether we then reach out to a writer and ask for a piece, or take on something that was submitted to us, all articles are written on spec – no article is guaranteed publication. But once we have accepted a piece, we will do everything we can to make sure it runs on one of our platforms. Sometimes, that happens months after a piece is written, an occurrence that must be absolutely maddening to writers. We wait for what seems like a good peg, the moment when the greatest number of readers are likely to find a piece relevant and interesting.

We have several news assistants who have a variety of duties; their most important one is to read the submissions that go to opinion@nytimes.com. They pull out everything that seems to have potential and send those pieces to several of the editors. Then those editors review the

1 articles viewed recently

asimpson8
All Recommendations



1. Ink and Paper Make Comeback in Oil Towns



2. F.Y.I.
Answering a Question About a Tale of Human Sacrifice to a Tree



3. THE MEDIA EQUATION
View of #Ferguson Thrust Michael Brown Shooting to National Attention



4. POSTCARD FROM SARATOGA SPRINGS
Reporting on Racing, With Love Beyond Words

5. KOKTEBEL JOURNAL
Annexation of Crimea Divides an Artist Colony Founded on Tolerance



6. BOOKENDS
Can Writing Be Taught?



7. DRAFT
Finding My Voice in Fantasy



8. DRAFT
Failure, Writing's Constant Companion



9. T MAGAZINE
Who Is Elena Ferrante?

10. OP-TALK
Revisit the Golden Days of Long-Form With Lewis Lapham

Go to Your Recommendations »
What's This? | Don't Show

CALVARY
NOW PLAYING

submissions. If they find something interesting, then they send it to an internal group e-mail that goes to the editors in New York, Hong Kong, Paris and London who are responsible for editing the pieces on the daily pages in all our editions, in Opinionator, and in the Sunday Review. We have this internal conversation, and after four or five people weigh in, it's pretty clear whether we should take the article, or not, and if we should, what might strengthen it.

[SAVE](#) [EMAIL](#) [SHARE](#)

Get Free E-mail Alerts on These Topics

[Writing and Writers](#)

[Newspapers](#)

ELSEWHERE ON NYTIMES.COM



Is breakfast overrated?

- [Food and the dying patient](#)
- [Fish as brain food](#)

An advertisement featuring a laptop and a coffee cup. Text reads: "Professors and students, digital subscriptions to The New York Times start at \$1.88 A WEEK TRY IT NOW".